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## Grove Thin Supplemental Cumulative Effects Discussion

In September of 2014 the 36 Pit Fire burned approximately 5,500 acres. Approximately 3,900 acres of that was on National Forest lands. This paper documents consideration of the cumulative effects of the Grove Thin project as documented in the Environmental Assessment. Cumulative effects are impacts on the environment that result from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Since the analysis in the EA was completed prior to the fire but before the decision notice was signed, it is appropriate to examine the analyses documented in the EA to determine whether changed conditions warrant further analysis.

The fire burned approximately 6.5 miles straight distance away from the nearest Grove Thinning Unit. A portion of Grove overlaps the Middle Clackamas Watershed: the 36 Pit Fire is downstream in the same watershed. Approximately 4% of the Middle Clackamas Watershed is within the fire perimeter and it is estimated that 2/3 of that area burned intensely enough to kill trees and 1/3 has live trees remaining because the fire skipped the stand or the fire burned with low intensity.

Prior to conducting cumulative effects analysis for Grove Thin, each resource specialist identified the analysis area to be used based on how far away the direct effects of the Grove actions would be felt. They then considered all of the past, present and foreseeable future actions within that area that might have additive or synergistic affects to their resource topic. The following will discuss the analysis areas used for Grove Thin and document whether there are additional cumulative effects.

Fish and Water Quality – These resources used the four subwatersheds that overlap the Grove actions (s. 3.3.4). This analysis area incorporated the Clackamas River over five miles downstream of the Grove units which is far enough that direct effects from the Grove project would not likely be measurable. The nearest point of the fire is over three river miles farther downstream from the closest subwatershed or 8.8 river miles downstream from the nearest Grove Thin unit. The stream buffers for Grove Thinning and the other PDCs to minimize sediment were found to be sufficient to prevent any decrease in water quality. Given the distance to the fire, there would not likely be any substantial or measurable cumulative effect. The fire may result in changes to water quality, but because Grove Thin is so far away, the minimal changes caused by Grove Thin would not be additive.

Geologic Stability – The analysis area used to measure geologic stability are the two earthflows that overlap Grove Thin (s. 3.5.6.4). The fire did not burn any earthflows. The nearest earthflow associated with Grove Thin is approximately 8 river miles upstream of the fire, therefore the fire would not have any effect on the stability of the earthflows near Grove Thin.

Soil Productivity – The analysis area used for measuring soil impacts are the boundaries of the Grove thinning units (s. 3.6.3). These are appropriate boundaries because actions outside these areas would have little or no affect to soil productivity within the thinning units, and the actions within and the thinning boundaries would have little or no affect to soil productivity elsewhere. The thinning units would not affect soils in the fire area, and conversely the fire has not affected soils in the Grove Thin area. The fire may affect soil productivity, but because Grove Thin is so far away, the minimal changes caused by Grove Thin would not be additive.

Northern Spotted Owls - The analysis area for cumulative effects is the area within 2.4 miles of the project actions. The closest part of the fire is another 3.6 miles past that. The fire may affect owls and owl habitat, but because Grove Thin is so far away, the thinning would not affect the owl home ranges that were affected by the fire.

Other Resources – Habitats for other species including deer, elk and snag dependent species were affected by the fire. Other resources such as botanical species, invasive plants, scenery and recreational opportunities were also affected by the fire. There would be no cumulative effects because of the distance to the Grove project area and the minimal changes caused by Grove Thin would not be additive.

I find that no additional documentation or analysis is required for National Environmental Policy Act or Endangered Species Act compliance and the project can move forward as planned.

*/S/ Jackie Groce*

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