

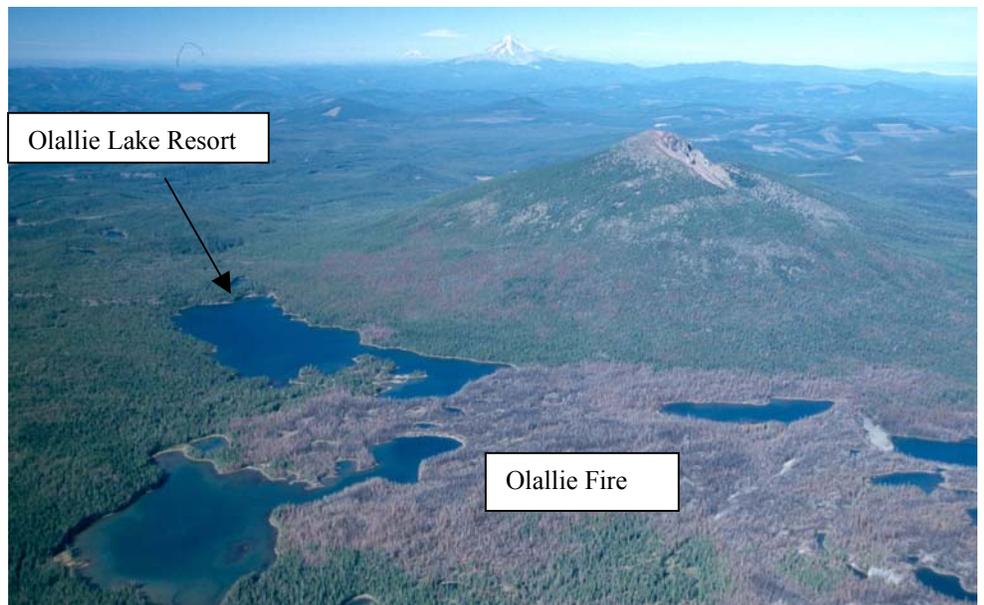
Decision Memo

Olallie Hazard Reduction

Mt. Hood National Forest
Clackamas River Ranger District

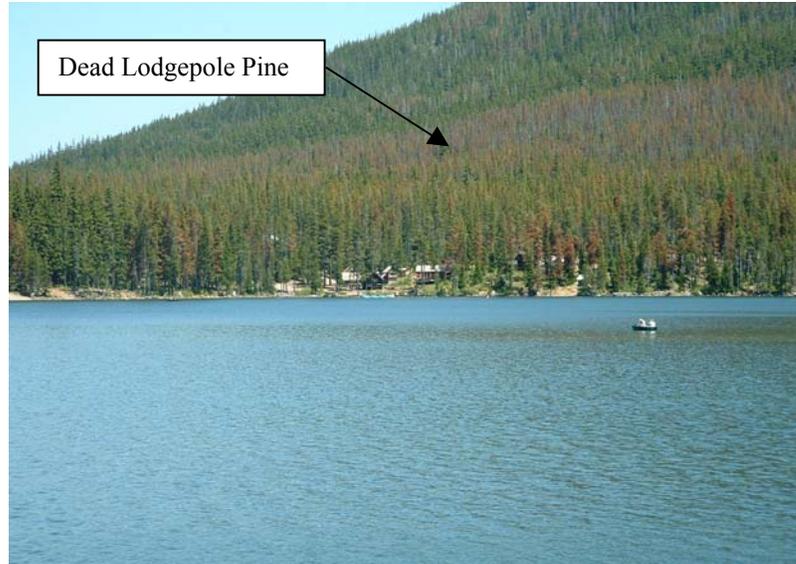
Lodgepole pine trees in the Olallie Lake area have been killed by mountain pine beetle resulting in a high fire hazard situation. The proposed action is to fall and remove the dead trees and reduce fuels to protect people, improvements, and resources from wildfire. The project is located in PB 40, T. 9 S., R. 8 E., WM, Jefferson County, Oregon.

Background - In August of 2001, lightning started the Olallie Fire, which burned out of control for several days pushed by strong winds and fueled by dead and dying trees. The fire posed a substantial threat to the Olallie Lake Resort, Paul Dennis Campground and the Olallie Lake Guard Station, but the wind direction shifted and these facilities were spared. This photo shows the burned area. It became readily apparent at that time that there was little, if any, defensible space around the resort and campground and that the lives of forest visitors were at risk.



The Olallie Lake Scenic Area attracts an estimated 140,000 people each year. Development of the Olallie Lake area began in the mid 1920's and most of the buildings have historic value. The elevation is 5,000 feet and most of the trees are lodgepole pine (10 to 14 inches diameter) that are being killed by a mountain pine beetle infestation. The dead and dying trees have resulted in a high fire hazard situation and they also would pose a hazard when they eventually fall in and around a high use recreation area.

The objective of the proposal is to create a defensible space from wildfire to protect resources and structures and to provide for the safety of visitors. This photo shows the Olallie Lake Resort and the dead trees surrounding it. Many more trees have died since this photo was taken.

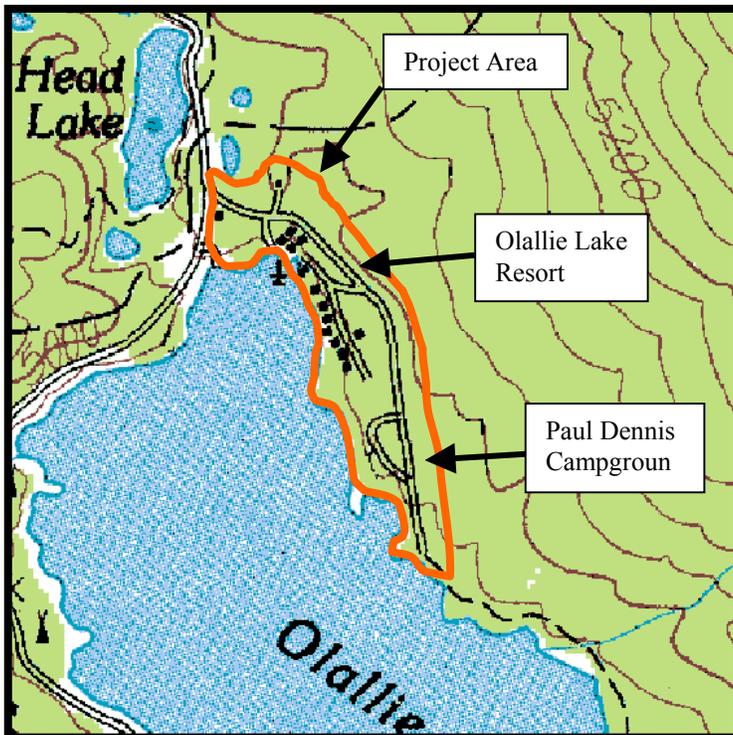


Proposed Action

The proposed action is to cut and remove dead and dying trees.

Approximately 20 acres will be treated around the Olallie Lake

Resort and Paul Dennis Campground. Trees to be cut are generally smaller than 18 inches in diameter with an average of approximately 10 inches. The trees will be yarded to an existing road with ground-based equipment and they will be hauled outside the area and placed in a pile for eventual use as firewood or other products. Rock quarries or other suitable areas will be used to stockpile logs. Selected live mountain hemlock trees will be pruned to reduce the fuel ladder effect. Slash remaining on the site will be piled for later burning. No roads would be constructed.



Reasons for Categorical Exclusion

I find the proposed action can be categorically excluded from documentation in an EA or EIS because it fits category 31.2-13, described in Forest Service Handbook id_1909.15-2003-2, July 23, 2003. This category is for “salvage of dead and/or dying trees not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than ½ mile of temporary road construction. The proposed action may include incidental removal of live or dead trees for landings, skid trails, and road clearing.” This proposal is to harvest approximately 20 acres of dead and/or dying trees. No roads would be constructed.

I find the proposed action can be categorically excluded because there were no extraordinary circumstances identified by the interdisciplinary team of resource scientists that analyzed this proposal.

- Ground disturbance and alteration of live vegetation would be minimal. There would be no adverse impacts to the following resources; steep slopes, highly erosive soils, heritage resources, Threatened and Endangered species, wetlands, roadless areas, wild and scenic rivers or wildernesses.
- The use of heavy equipment may create minor levels of short-term sedimentation. Mitigations for season of operation and erosion control would keep sedimentation to low levels. In the long term, where wildfire burn severity is reduced, there would be reduced sediment and improved aquatic habitats from project implementation.
- Northern spotted owls are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The biological evaluation indicates that the project would have No Effect.
- The project would not affect any sensitive, threatened or endangered wildlife, fish, or botanical species.

Public Scoping

This project was published in the spring and summer 2003 editions of Sprouts, a quarterly newsletter published by the Mt. Hood National Forest, and mailed to a wide audience of interested groups and individuals. Sprouts is also posted on the Forest's web site. No comments were received.

Findings of Consistency

I have determined that the proposed action is consistent with the Standards and Guidelines of the Mt. Hood Forest Plan as amended by the Northwest Forest Plan.

- The project is consistent with Forest-wide standards and guidelines and the standards and guidelines of the following land allocations: A4 - Olallie Lake Scenic Area, A10 - Developed Recreation and Riparian Reserves.
- Scenery objectives of the area have been altered by wildfire and an insect infestation. The project has been designed to minimize additional visual impacts by cutting stumps low to the ground, disposing of slash and protecting healthy trees.
- The Olallie Lake Watershed Analysis has been completed. This project is consistent with its recommendations.

- Surveys for survey and manage species were conducted where needed. There would be no adverse impacts to any of these species.
- The project is consistent with Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives.

Decision and Rationale

It is my decision to proceed with this project because it will result in improved safety and reduce resource risk.

Appeal Rights

This decision is not subject to appeal pursuant to Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR 215.4.

Implementation

Implementation of this decision may occur immediately.

Contact Person

For further information contact Jerry Hernandez.

Address: 595 NW Industrial Way, Estacada OR 97023
Phone: (503) 630-6861
Email: jhernandez@fs.fed.us

/s/ *Jeff Walter*

9/15/03

JEFF WALTER
District Ranger

Date