

Coastal Healthy Forest Treatments Heritage Resources

INTRODUCTION

The coastal zones of the Rogue River - Siskiyou National Forest encompassing the Chetco, Gold Beach and Powers Ranger Districts can be characterized as a dynamic landscape. For millions of years, this region evolved without the influence of humans. Over the last several thousand years, Native Americans and early settlers discovered and utilized the rivers and the surrounding terrain functioning as integral players in the evolution of the western Siskiyou mountains as they appear today.

The Forest has identified a need to treat managed commercial forests so as to provide for species diversity. The specific purpose of the Coastal Healthy Forest Treatment (CHFT) undertaking is to maintain or enhance forest health and species diversity by the manipulation of previously managed stands. The CHFT activities will be implemented over the next 5 to 10 years or more by means of smaller, area-component projects that are specific to a particular watershed or similar area. The goals and objectives of these projects will include the maintenance and improvement of forest health and diversity by encouraging individual tree and stand diameter growth, crown diameter and improved root strength. Project activities will also strive to improve habitat conditions for wildlife and fish, reduce the risk of effects from insect and disease infestations, minimize or reduce the potential for high intensity stand replacement fires and increase riparian vegetation quality. Treatments are designed to accelerate current managed stand conditions toward mature forest conditions.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Chetco, Gold Beach and Powers Ranger Districts (the coastal districts of the Rogue River - Siskiyou National Forest) propose density management and other treatments on overstocked previously managed stands across approximately 47,300 acres dispersed over the three Districts (Proposed Action, Alternative 2). The various CHFT component projects will concentrate on stands that are between 30 and 60 years of age. Project areas are located within Late-Successional Reserve, Riparian Reserve, and Matrix land allocations and treatment prescriptions would differ in accordance with the overall management objectives of these land management allocations. Density management treatments and fuels treatments would be primarily accomplished by thinning. It is anticipated that where appropriate, some of the larger diameter trees would be removed through commercial harvest. These managed stands are dispersed across the Forest landscape and are generally accessed by existing roads. No new roads would be constructed as part of these CHFT projects. A full range of logging systems will be considered, including ground based, skyline and helicopter, as appropriate to site, material size and ground conditions. The proposed projects are designed to advance the goals of the Healthy Forests Initiative, including activities that will result in improved forest management, healthier landscapes and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires.

GENERAL HERITAGE RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS

Heritage resources are considered to be one of the protection emphasis disciplines. Where there are potential effects from ground disturbing activities, archeological and historic sites require specific measures that will be consistent with the following laws and requirements:

The Preservation of American Antiquities Act, June 1906: All surveyed and inventoried cultural resource sites, including new sites discovered during operations will be protected from entry and excluded from any resource management activities. When mitigation measures are needed to protect these sites, consultation will occur to resolve the issue.

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966: The Oregon State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) will be consulted concerning proposed activities in the Coastal Healthy Forest Treatment project areas. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) will be consulted about measures to protect significant archeological sites from adverse effects, should any be identified.

All significant and potentially significant Heritage resources within the scope of the CHFT shall be protected from adverse effects through avoidance where proposed ground disturbing activities may result in unavoidable adverse effects. Mitigation will be developed in consultation with SHPO and the Advisory Council. Indian tribes with traditional territory within the area shall also be consulted regarding any proposed mitigation. Mitigation may include complete avoidance of sites, preservation of historic values, and/or data recovery through the excavation of subsurface deposits. For surface features, historic research, mapping and photo documentation may be used.

Many of the proposed activity areas associated with the Coastal Healthy Forest Treatment candidate stands were initially harvested prior to or shortly after the enactment of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) or its extended application to include properties eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Therefore, many of the proposed areas of ground disturbing undertakings have never before been surveyed for the presence of cultural resource sites.

In areas where the commercial removal of timber is proposed, it will be necessary for the agency to comply with the guidelines established in Section 106 of the NHPA. As this long term CHFT project progresses during implementation, individual and site-specific candidate stands will be validated and specific projects or sale packages will be identified. As those subsequent projects take shape, each and every component project under CHFT will have its own inventory and project specific Section 106 survey report developed and sent to the Oregon SHPO, as appropriate.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Setting

The watersheds associated with the Coastal Healthy Forest Treatment candidate stands present a dynamic landscape affected by numerous agents. The present configuration of plants, animals, and even the nature of the rivers is the product of on-going interactions between natural and human forces. These forces not only shaped human use of the area in the past, but have affected the archeological traces resulting from that use.

In the Siskiyou Mountains the climate is temperate with hot, dry summers and cool, rainy winters. The average annual temperature is 54 degrees, but winter and summer can be a time of extremes. Summer temperatures regularly surpass 100 degrees and winter storms can drop as much as 24 inches of snow in the higher elevations. Rainfall averages 50 to 80 inches on the western slopes of the mountains. Dominated by southwest winds from October to February strong Pacific storms drop sufficient rains to cause freshets to swell all the streamcourses and produce, at times, intense floods.

The Siskiyou National Forest falls within the Klamath Mountains Geologic Province. Rocks of the Klamath Mountains region are much older than those of other parts of western Oregon and the area probably contains the oldest formations in the state. Many geologic processes have had a major effect upon this region including major periods of sea floor subduction at the continental border, volcanism, faulting, intrusion, erosion, mass wasting and uplift. One of the most notable geological features of the Siskiyou are the frequent outcroppings of serpentine/peridotite and the unique plant communities which are associated with these areas. These areas are often devoid of vegetation or create open meadows, which attracted prehistoric human use as well as pioneer cattle grazing.

Although many mineral deposits exist in the Siskiyou, gold has been the most culturally significant. Its presence drew the initial non-native settlers and for several decades in the nineteenth century its presence spurred economic development. Gold ore deposits are found in the greenstones, diorites, metasedimentary rock and serpentine however, “free” gold, or coarse gold broken free by erosion and deposited in crevices and gravel bars, historically has attracted the most attention.

The topography of the region is dominated by steep, broken ridges and peaks dissected by numerous downcutting drainages. The rough topography has placed limits on the historic use of the land. Flat, open and arable land is rare and this fact prevents agriculturists from taking advantage of the area’s mild maritime climate. The Native population established their permanent villages on the lower, more gentle terrain and used the upland areas for seasonal gathering while the Euro-american settlers farmed the flat land and raised cattle, sheep and hogs in the uplands.

The natural vegetation of the area varies widely dependent upon bedrock type, aspect and elevation. The area embraces diversity, a long history, fire disturbances of long duration and varied plant communities. The mixed conifer evergreen zone has an upper canopy dominated by Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and sugar pine (*Pinus lambertiana*) however a variety of other conifers are present including: lodgepole pine, western white pine, knobcone pine, Ponderosa and Jeffery pine as well as Port-Orford-cedar, incense cedar, western hemlock and coast redwood.

The lower canopy is dominated by a hardwood community. Predominant is the tanoak (*Lithocarpus densifloras*). Also represented are golden chinquapin, canyon live oak, Oregon myrtle, Pacific madrone, red alder, big leaf maple, Oregon white oak and California black oak. Understory vegetation consists of red and evergreen huckleberry, wild rose, rhododendron and a number of others. Ground cover consists of ferns, beargrass, salal, native grasses, creeping juniper and Oregon grape. Much of the ultramafic/serpentine zone is dominated by a variety of brush species with manzanita being the most prominent. Sadler oak, huckleberry oak, coffeeberry and many other species are also present in this environment.

The aboriginal people of southwestern Oregon relied on a keen knowledge of plant life and they passed on their expertise in using them from generation to generation. Plants were used by these people in virtually every aspect of their lives. Plants were used for food, basketry, shelter, medicine, clothing, dyes, ceremonials, and even games. Edible plant products provided the basis of the diet of the native peoples supplemented by fishing and the hunting of various large and small fauna.

Blacktail deer, elk, black bear, ruffed grouse, and rabbit were food sources of earlier area inhabitants that still occur in the watersheds associated with the Coastal Healthy Forest Treatment candidate stands. Other fauna representing virtually all the species found on the Forest can also be found within the CHFT area. The coastal rivers, as well as their major tributaries, are rich fisheries. Seasonal runs of such anadromous fish as salmon and steelhead trout are a plentiful resource of the general area. Many of the smaller waterways support a population of native trout. Sturgeon and lamprey eels were also important riverine resources of the native peoples. The importance of the rivers as rich fisheries cannot be overemphasized in the subsistence patterns of the Indian people and the settlers who followed them. Anadromous fish have been economically important to dwellers in the river corridors since prehistoric times.

Cultural Background

The human use history within the watersheds associated with the Coastal Healthy Forest Treatment candidate stands can be reconstructed and interpreted by examining the physical remains and historic records of previous inhabitants, and through observable changes that are the result of human activities. Remains, examined in conjunction with information from the natural environment and historical records, can reveal patterns of human behavior and adaptation. Many surveys have been conducted within the CHFT area to identify Heritage Resources which may be impacted from various projects and activities. Survey and reconnaissance will continue and it is inevitable that “new” sites will be discovered over time.

The watersheds associated with the Coastal Healthy Forest Treatment candidate stands contain prehistoric and historic sites representing every cultural milestone in the local history. Some of the earliest sites on the Oregon coast can be found in the vicinity. Archaic to historic contact period prehistoric sites, early pioneer settlements, Indian war, mining, Depression Era sites and early Forest Service sites can all be found within the area. Lodges, vacation cabins and other recreation facilities are representative of later uses. Some sites within the watersheds associated with the Coastal Healthy Forest Treatment candidate stands are of great significance and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and many more are potentially eligible to be listed. Some of these sites may well open doors to significant discoveries of the Nation’s past, while others may only reflect the local history.

Prehistory

Paleo-Indian Cultures

The archeological record attests to a continuous human occupation of southwest Oregon for at least the last eight to nine thousand years. Study of the Marial site (35CU84, Griffin, 1983) on the Rogue River provides several carbon-14 dates beginning at 8,560 years before present (B.P.), clearly establishing the antiquity of human life in this portion of southwest Oregon.

Excavations carried out near the mouth of the Illinois River at the Tlegetlinten site (35CU59, Tisdale, 1986) unearthed materials from another ancient culture, possibly dating from two major periods of use at 6,000 and 2,000 years BP. Human adaptations in southwest Oregon appear to have changed from a moderately mobile, hunting-gathering lifestyle to more sedentary, specialized economies that focused on specific and bounded territories and relied more heavily on acorns and salmon. These changes are likely to have been influenced by the effects of population displacement and growth as a result of changing climates and environments in southwestern Oregon as well as in other areas.

The Northwest Coast Culture

Native cultures of the Oregon coast belonged to the greater Northwest Coast culture area which extends from Alaska, on the north, to Cape Mendocino California, on the south. Although populated by a wide variety of different groups speaking a variety of languages, all of these groups shared a broadly similar way of life. Differences between them were solely due to local variations of the environment. On the current evidence, this riverine/maritime culture can be traced about 3,000 years into the past.

Athabaskan speaking people occupied southwestern Oregon at the time of Euro-american contact, although they are considered relative late-comers to the region. The Athabascans may have brought with them a way of life more strongly oriented to riverine resources, displacing groups who followed a subsistence orientation characterized by a greater reliance on big game hunting in the uplands. The Athabascans are linked to changes in settlement pattern and technology which appear in the archeological record about 1,500 years ago along the coast and into the interior of southwest Oregon. These coastal groups, whose territories also extended up the coastal rivers, spoke various dialects of the Athabaskan language. Collectively these Athabascans are referred to as the Tututni, Upper Umpqua and Upper Coquille, although each band had its own name.

The Gunther Pattern, named for the distinctive, beautiful and fragile projectile points, represents the final phase of native dominance in southwest Oregon beginning about A.D. 300 and lasting until historic times. The Gunther Pattern apparently represents a second migration of Athapaskan speaking people from northern California. These populations largely occupied the coastal areas and appear to have brought with them a lifestyle fully adapted to a marine/estuarine environment. People of this time period are likely to have occupied year-round villages and may have made use of the uplands and coastal streams for gathering additional resources during parts of the year (Pullen, 1981).

The Athabaskan speaking peoples seasonally inhabited much of southwestern Oregon from the beaches to the upland forests and extending up the coastal rivers. They occupied the region from south of Bandon, Oregon to northern California extending up the major drainages like the Smith, Chetco, Pistol, and the Rogue Rivers, and the inland regions of the Coquille, Umpqua and Applegate Rivers. The bands were numerous and the locations diverse.

The general pattern of Tututni settlement, similar to all the groups, indicates that large winter villages, containing 50 to 150 individuals, were established along coastal areas, rivers and major streams. On the rivers away from the coast, these villages were located on terraces and meadows along the rivers, often at the confluence of streams. These villages served as semi-permanent habitation spots, where foods collected throughout the year could be stored for use in the winter.

The year 1856 marked the sunset of the era of Native American dominance in the area. This year marked the conclusion of the Rogue River Indian Wars. Following the wars, the majority of the remaining population of Tututni peoples were removed to the Grande Ronde or Siletz reservations. Glimpses of these people and their way of life have been made known to us through ethnographic information, the journals and manuscripts of the early white explorers and settlers, records and accounts from the Rogue River Indian Wars and prehistoric archaeological sites.

History

The historic period in this portion of southwestern Oregon begins as early as the 16th and 17th centuries with the voyages of the Spanish explorers. The earliest recorded contact between the coastal natives and Europeans is noted in the log of Captain George Vancouver in 1792. Within the next quarter century trappers and traders, including Hudson's Bay Company fur trader Alexander McLeod and an American party of trappers led by Jedidiah Smith, appeared in southwestern Oregon. Russian sea otter hunters and whaling ships of various nations also had occasional contact with the native people of this portion of the coast.

The Rogue River Indian Wars

The discovery of gold near Jacksonville and the Donation Land Act of 1850, enticed thousands of transient miners and permanent settlers to southern Oregon. Mining activity reduced many fish runs. Livestock feasted on vital native foods such as camas and acorns. Over hunting threatened deer and elk populations. The Indians of southwest Oregon, already the victims of infectious diseases, became refugees in their own homeland and were reduced to starvation. Within just a few years, the Rogue River Indians were fighting for their land and the lifestyle they had known in the past in a series of conflicts called the Rogue River Indian Wars.

Although few pitched battles occurred during the war, numerous small violent encounters and acts of revenge kept the war fires burning. Eventually, many of the Indians sought shelter and protection in the lower Rogue River canyon, and it is here along some of the wildest stretches of the river, that some of the largest battles were fought: Hungary Hill, Skull Bar, Battle Bar and the final conflict at Big Bend were all located along the Rogue River. The overwhelming number of Euro-Americans entering southwest Oregon coupled with the devastation of war, disease and starvation of the Indians finally forced the indigenous inhabitants to relinquish their homelands.

Euro-American Settlement

The removal of the native inhabitants opened the area to settlement. Early settlers and miners moved into the area often building their houses on the same river terraces that had provided homes for the native inhabitants. Some of the first permanent Euro-American settlers to the region were miners attracted to the area during the gold rush era of the 1850's. Gold served as the initial spark that ignited settlement. In southwest Oregon gold deposits were discovered in Josephine County and on the coast at places like Whiskey Run and Gold Beach (named for the gold rich, black sand deposits found there) and later in the Rogue River. Large mining districts were established in various scattered locations.

The history of mining in southwest Oregon is largely one of improved technologies and techniques that enabled faster and more efficient separation of gold and other minerals from the surrounding materials. Virtually all early mining technologies were employed including placer mining, hydraulic mining, and lode mining (Kramer, 1999). Often mineral deposits were re-worked after the initial strike played out, first by Chinese miners and later by Depression Era prospectors. Many of the documented sites in the area are related to prospecting and the mining of precious metals.

Following or accompanying the prospectors were the early settlers. Settlement in the area began in the mid-nineteenth century and continued into the 1950's (Beckham, 1978). Remoteness and difficult access precluded extensive development. Most people followed a subsistence oriented lifestyle making maximum use of available fish and game supplemented with produce grown and animals raised on small farms. Goods and services were traded, borrowed and scavenged. Population densities were and remain low. Cash earning opportunities were limited with small scale mining, the raising and sale of livestock, packing, timber production and the sale of fish providing some income to the local residents.

One alternative to this self-sufficient lifestyle was the development of large scale hydraulic and hard rock mining operations along the Rogue River and in other areas. Although temporary in nature, this industrial development was significant in the local history. Mining sites such as Mule Creek, Galice Creek, Solitude Bar and Blossom Bar are lasting reminders of this period, which existed from the end of the nineteenth century through the 1930's.

The early settlers in the area also used fire as a tool to manage meadow lands for pasture as well as for clearing the surrounding forests. Early forest management curtailed the use of fire for many years, creating the patchwork vegetative patterns we see today.

The Siskiyou National Forest was established on October 5, 1906. The early foresters duties included a multitude of jobs involved with the administration of a large timberland. The early forester's work included mapping, estimating the amount of available timber and agricultural land, law enforcement, fire protection and numerous other tasks. Various trails, lookouts, forest guard stations, camps and telephone lines were constructed in the general area during the first three decades of the Forest's history. The creation of the Forest Reserve signaled an end to the assault on the public domain by timber speculators, land fraud experts, mill owners and dishonest politicians (Beckham, 1978).

The Great Depression of the 1930's brought an influx of people to the area as numerous out of work individuals sought survival in the mountains once again undertaking a subsistence economy lifestyle. These people were also engaged in prospecting and small scale mining encouraged by the revaluation of gold. The Depression Era also saw the development of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), another important chapter in the history of the Pacific Northwest. Fire prevention and suppression, timber stand improvements, range improvements, soil conservation, road building and forest facilities construction were all undertaken by CCC enrollees.

Early mill development in coastal towns such as Coos Bay and Brookings spurred the construction of railroads for logging, with their associated logging camps and other facilities in the northern and southern portions of the watersheds associated with the Coastal Healthy Forest Treatment candidate stands. Although early railroad logging was occurring in portions of the CHFT area, logging was not to become a major regional industry until after the Second World War.

Beginning in the early decades of the twentieth century, recreational use of the area has added a new economic emphasis. Guides, packers, river floating, motorized tours, lodges and hotels have been developed to provide services to visitors. The last several decades have witnessed a considerable expansion of the recreational uses of the area as paved roads from the coast and inland valleys provided safer and easier access to the interior.

HERITAGE RESOURCES AND THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

There are numerous documented Heritage sites associated with the Coastal Healthy Forest Treatment candidate stands. These are (or were) historic mining sites, cabins, trash dumps, Forest Service administrative sites, prehistoric lithic scatters, village sites, sites relating to trapping and grazing, manipulated trees and others. In addition, potential National Register-eligible traditional cultural properties (TCP's) and sacred sites may be present. Traditional cultural properties are places, sites, structures, art or objects that have played an important role in the cultural history of a group. Sacred sites are places that have special religious significance to a group. Traditional and sacred sites are considered properties with unique social, cultural, or historical characteristics and may include ceremonial sites, places for local events, areas prized for the collection of non-timber forest products or exceptional hunting or fishing opportunities. Traditional cultural properties and sacred sites may be eligible for protection under the National Historic Preservation Act. However, many of them have not been inventoried.

Some of the above mentioned sites within the CHFT candidate stands have probably been disturbed during prior logging activities by heavy equipment and burning for slash removal purposes. Soil disruption as a result of these activities could have partially or totally buried some sites and disturbed others. Some of these sites may be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, although degradation due to prior activities and its consequences may have compromised their eligibility. Damage assessments, data recovery and protection from future damage are required for all of these culturally important locations.

Heritage surveys for each proposed component project of the Coastal Healthy Forest Treatment undertaking will be conducted and a project specific Section 106 report will be developed for each. Surveys will be designed using the SHPO approved Siskiyou National Forest Sample Survey Design (SSD; West and Steinfeld, 1983). Based on physiographic variables, it stratifies forest lands as having a high, medium or low probability of containing cultural resources. The SSD also specifies the sampling intensity for each probability area. The SSD requires that 100% of the high probability areas be surveyed while medium and low probability areas receive, respectively, 50% and 5% coverage. In addition, local knowledge and prospective likely possible site locations will be intensely surveyed when encountered.

Any cultural resource survey has the potential for missing unique and/or significant sites. Thus, procedures will be instituted for treating sites that may be found during project implementation. Avoidance or mitigation of effects will be implemented under expedited consultation with Indian tribes, SHPO and ACHP (as provided for under 36 CFR 800.111) for any new site discovered during the course of project activities.

Gary Martinek

Archaeological Technician

May 25, 2005

REFERENCES CONSULTED

Beckham, S. D.

1978 Cultural Resource Overview of the Siskiyou National Forest.
Siskiyou National Forest, Grants Pass, Oregon.

1971 Requiem For A People - The Rogue Indians and the Frontiersmen.
University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma.

Beaulieu, J.D.

1976 Land Use Geology of Western Curry County, Oregon.
Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, State of Oregon, Portland,
Oregon.

Bell, C.R.

1985 Federal Historic Preservation Case Law
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Washington D.C.

Cooper, L.

1937 A History of the Siskiyou National Forest.
Siskiyou National Forest, Galice, Oregon.

Drucker, P.

1937 The Tolowa and Their Southwest Oregon Kin.
University of California Press, Berkeley, California.

Griffin, D.

1983 Archeological Investigation at the Marial Site, Rogue River Ranch,
35CU84.
Department of Anthropology, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon.

Kramer, G.

1999 Mining in Southwestern Oregon: A Historic Context Statement.
Medford Bureau of Land Management and Rogue River National Forest,
Medford, Oregon.

Pullen, R.

1981 Identification of Early Prehistoric Settlement Patterns Along the Coast of
Southwest Oregon.
Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon.

Tisdale, L.

1986 The Tlegetlinten Site (35CU59) and Its Place in Southwestern Oregon
Prehistory.
Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Department of Anthropology,
Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon.

Various Contributors

2004 Final Environmental Impact Statement
The Biscuit Fire Recovery Project
Rogue River – Siskiyou National Forest, Josephine and Curry Counties,
Oregon.