



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Umatilla  
National  
Forest

2517 S.W. Hailey Avenue  
Pendleton, OR 97801  
541-278-3716

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**File Code:** 1950

**Date:** March 25, 2004

Dear Stakeholder:

The Rimrock Ecosystem Restoration Projects Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) is enclosed for your review. The draft supplemental EIS supplements the Rimrock Ecosystem Restoration Projects final EIS released May 2003. The draft supplemental statement documents additional information and effects disclosure and displays where specific changes are incorporated into the May 2003 final EIS; therefore, the two environmental impact statement documents must be thought of, and used together, as if they are one statement. The final EIS and the draft supplemental EIS are available at our web site:

[www.fs.fed.us/r6/uma/projects/readroom/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/uma/projects/readroom/). Please contact Janet Stefani at (541) 676-9187 or at PO Box 7, Heppner, OR 97836 if you would like a paper copy of the May 2003 final EIS.

On August 14, 2003, Ranger Rykoff decided to withdraw a portion of his decision for the Rimrock Ecosystem Restoration Projects. The withdrawal included all commercial timber harvest and precommercial thinning activities planned in the Monument Big Game Winter Range (Management Area C3). A review of the May 2003 final EIS revealed some project activities may not be fully consistent with a forest plan standard concerning habitat effectiveness index (HEI) in the C3 management area. Activities not consistent with a forest plan standard require a forest plan amendment to permit implementation. Since Ranger Rykoff does not have authority to amend the Forest Plan; as Forest Supervisor, I become the Responsible Official. To fully address the Rimrock Ecosystem Restoration Projects purpose and need, I have decided to move forward with the remaining actions (commercial timber harvest and precommercial thinning) in the C3 management area.

The preferred alternative is alternative 5, which would commercially thin 804 acres, shelterwood harvest 122 acres of heavily defoliated stands created during the 2001-2002 tussock moth epidemic, and non-commercially thin 40 acres. Alternative 5 will harvest using a harvester/forwarder on 750 acres and a helicopter system on 176 acres. All other projects described under alternative 5 are being implemented under the Record of Decision signed May 21, 2003.

If you have any questions about the Rimrock Ecosystem Restoration Projects FEIS or DSEIS, please contact David Kendrick, project lead, at (541) 676-9187. Comments can be sent to the Responsible Official, Jeff D. Blackwood, Forest Supervisor, 2517 S.W. Hailey Avenue, Pendleton, Oregon, 97801. Telephone office: (541) 278-3716, TDD/TTY: (541) 278-3995, fax: (541) 278-3730 or [comments-pacificnorthwest-umatilla-heppner@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-pacificnorthwest-umatilla-heppner@fs.fed.us). Electronic comments must be submitted as part of the actual e-mail message, or as an attachment in Microsoft Word, rich text format or portable document format only. E-mails submitted to e-mail



addresses other than the one listed above or in other formats than those listed or containing viruses will be rejected. Comments may be hand delivered to 2517 S.W. Hailey Avenue, Pendleton, Oregon, between 7:45 a.m. and 4:30 p.m, Monday thru Friday. Comments will be accepted for 45 days following the date of publication of the notice of availability (NOA) in the Federal Register. The comment period ends May 17, 2004.

Only persons who submit timely and substantive comments will be accepted as appellants. Also, for appeal eligibility, each individual or representative from each organization submitting substantive comments must either sign the comment or verify identity upon request. Persons submitting written comments should include their name, address, phone number (if possible), the title of the proposed action, and specific substantive comments on the proposed action, along with supporting reasons that the Forest Supervisor should consider in reaching a decision.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on the proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who only submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Part 215. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27 (d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied, the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address within 10 days.

Sincerely,

JEFF D. BLACKWOOD  
Forest Supervisor

Enclosure