

BLM to Offer Sales in Areas Hit By January Windstorm

September 24, 2008

Medford, OR—The Bureau of Land Management, Medford District will offer three sales of “blow-down” timber on Thursday for the Butte Falls Resource Area. The blow-down is the result of a strong 90 mph wind storm last January that knocked over pockets of trees across a seven mile wide and twenty-five mile long swath.

The storm took place across four watersheds that total 592,111 acres and trees were blown down in about 25,000 of those acres. The proposed salvage sales will take place on 6,100 of those acres and will produce approximately 22.2 million board feet beginning this fall. Forest stands from low riparian areas to the upper ridge tops were affected by the windstorm. “The areas include trees snapped off at mid-trunk, shattered trunks, and places where you have two or three trees lying on top of each other,” said John Bergin, Butte Falls Resource Area Forester

In response to public concerns about road construction, only 0.6 miles of permanent new roads will be built for the entire salvage operation. An additional 3.8 miles of roads will be decommissioned and reseeded after the salvage is completed. BLM will also have the opportunity to de-compact old skid trails still existing from previous logging efforts. No operations are planned for riparian areas.

“There’s a big concern about the fire risk with this blow-down.” said Tom Murphy, Medford District Fire Management Officer. Fire crews working the recent Doubleday Fire experienced intense burning when the fire hit pockets of the downed trees. “We also had a tough time crawling over two or three trees at a time looking for spot fires,” noted Murphy. While the sales do not cover the entire area affected by the high winds, the areas that are included in the sales will help with any future wildfires. “Along with the salvage done along the roads earlier this summer, these projects will help us greatly by providing areas we can defend,” said Murphy.

“It’s important we move forward with this salvage project so we can provide some revenue to Jackson County before that value disappears through fire or decay,” said Chris McAlear, Butte Falls Resource Area Manager.

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