



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 19, 2008

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Roadside Hazard Tree Project Proposals Invite Public Comment

PRINEVILLE-Two roadside hazardous tree projects are proposed for timbered areas on the Ochoco National Forest that were burned by the Bridge and Black Canyon fires this past summer. The projects were recently initiated by interdisciplinary teams consisting of wildlife and fisheries biologists, archaeologists, hydrologists, botanists, timber and logging systems specialists.

All roadside hazardous standing trees associated with the two burns are proposed to be felled for public safety reasons. For some of the larger trees (those over 9" in diameter), there is also an opportunity to utilize the timber products as a result of this action. The timber to be salvaged is located in areas where little environmental impact is expected.

The "Bridge Creek Fire Danger Tree Abatement Project," located on the Lookout Mountain Ranger District, proposes to remove hazardous dead trees along 5.2 miles of Forest Roads that burned during the Bridge Creek Fire. This fire was initially managed under the Wildland Fire Use policy. On August 16, 2008, the fire exceeded its management boundaries after a dramatic shift in the weather created extremely active fire behavior. The fire moved in an unexpected direction and crossed over from National Forest-administered lands onto private lands and at that point, the management of the fire turned to suppression. The majority of the burned trees associated with the Bridge Creek fire will not be removed. However, the standing dead trees within 150' feet of Forest Service Roads 2630-450 and 2630-459 have been identified for removal due to their proximity to the roadway. The majority of the trees marked for removal are the ones located in the high-intensity burned portion along the 450 road. Very few trees in the moderate to low-intensity burned areas will be removed. Resource concerns for Bridge Creek include critical habitat for John Day steelhead and the proximity to the Bridge Creek Wilderness.

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The “Black Canyon Fire Danger Tree Abatement Project,” located on the Paulina Ranger District, proposes to remove hazardous dead trees along 2.9 miles of Forest Roads that burned during the Black Canyon Fire. This fire was managed under the Wildland Fire Use policy for the duration of the incident. On August 16, 2008, the fire moved out of the Black Canyon Wilderness but remained entirely on Forest Service-administered lands. The majority of the burned trees associated with the Black Canyon fire will not be removed. However, the standing dead trees within 150’ feet of Forest Service Roads 38 and 5810 have been identified for removal due to their proximity to the roadway. The majority of the trees marked for removal are the ones located in the high-intensity burned portion along the 5810 road. Very few trees in the moderate to low-intensity burned areas will be removed. Resource concerns for Black Canyon include critical habitat for John Day steelhead, the proximity to Black Canyon Wilderness, and cultural, scenic and recreational values.

Any danger trees located in the Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas will be felled but not removed, as no equipment will be allowed in those areas. Danger trees located adjacent to cultural sites will only be removed under supervision of the district archaeologist.

Both projects are expected to meet Forest-wide standards and guidelines and Management Area standards and guidelines as described in the Ochoco National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended. At this time, it is anticipated the projects can be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

A project initiation letter for the Bridge Creek project has been mailed out to interested parties; public comments are currently being accepted through January 12, 2009. A letter has also been mailed out for the Black Canyon project; a 30-day public comment period is expected to start within the next couple of weeks.

Maps of the project areas may be viewed at www.fs.fed.us/r6/centraloregon For additional information, contact Paul Cuddy at (541) 416-6500. Comments can be e-mailed to: comments-pacificnorthwest-ochoco@fs.fed.us or mailed c/o Paul Cuddy, Ochoco National Forest, 3160 NE 3rd Street, Prineville, OR 97754.

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