

NEWS Release BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT OR-08-24
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BLM Western Oregon Plan Decisions Released

Portland, OR – The BLM has issued the six Records of Decision (ROD) for the Resource Management Plans (RMP) that were developed under the Western Oregon Plan Revisions. With this action, the BLM has completed its revision of the land use plans that will guide the management of 2.6 million acres in western Oregon in the BLM’s Salem, Eugene, Roseburg, Medford, and Coos Bay Districts, and the Klamath Falls Resource Area of the Lakeview District. The RMPs also comply with all applicable Federal laws including the O&C Lands Act, Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

The RODs formally adopt the Proposed Resource Management Plan (PRMP) that was put forward in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which was released in October 2008. Overall, when fully implemented, the six land use plans are expected to increase the timber harvest from current levels, increase receipts to the O&C Counties, meet the conservation needs of the northern spotted owl, increase habitat for marbled murrelet, maintain water quality, and improve habitat for Federally-listed fish.

According to BLM Oregon State Director Ed Shepard, “Substantially all of the existing older and more structurally-complex forests outside the Late-Successional Management Areas would not be available for harvest until the year 2023. This means that the issue of harvesting old growth forest on BLM lands is ‘off the table’ for the next 15 years.”

“Additionally, there are approximately 1.1 million acres of mature and structurally-complex forest today on BLM Lands. Under the plan, 100 years from now it is anticipated that there will be 1.7 million acres of mature and structurally-complex forest - a 50 percent increase from the current level,” continued Shepard.

The BLM provided a protest period that ended on December 8, 2008. In all, the BLM received 264 formal protests. The six RODs were signed after all the protests were analyzed and resolved. The BLM made minor changes as a result of the protest process.

The Final EIS, released in October 2008, was reviewed by the Governor of Oregon to determine if it was consistent with State plans, and the policies and programs that follow from those plans. Land use plans are a single step in the overall process of managing public lands and designed to guide future management decisions, but do not, by themselves authorize any on-the-ground activities. The Governor’s consistency review did not reveal inconsistencies, as defined in BLM’s planning regulations, and subsequently no additional public comment period or appeal will be offered. The BLM will continue its close working relationship with the State of Oregon to address concerns and suggestions for plan implementation.

Across all six RMPs, when fully implemented, the estimated Allowable Sale Quantity from the timber management areas will be 502 million board feet per year, an 87 percent increase over the Allowable Sale Quantity under the Northwest Forest Plan, which would be 268 million board feet.

Timber volume from future harvest is expected to come from a mixture of regeneration harvest and thinning. Approximately 65 percent of the future timber harvest acres under the plan are expected to



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be part of a vigorous thinning program. A proactive approach to thinning would take advantage of biological windows to improve stand health, enhance growth on remaining trees, or to improve habitat conditions.

When the new Resource Management Plans are fully implemented, the annual receipts to the western Oregon counties generated from BLM timber harvest from all land use categories are estimated to produce \$75 million for distribution to the counties each year and projected to produce an increase of 1,200 timber-related jobs. Under full implementation of the new Resource Management Plans, the receipts generated from BLM timber harvests are estimated to equal 85 percent of the average BLM county payments for the last 20 years.

The BLM is required by the O&C Lands Act of 1937 to produce a sustained yield of timber – to harvest no more than the forest can grow. The O&C lands are capable of sustainably producing 1.2 billion board feet per year. The harvest anticipated under the plan is 502 million board feet per year, or less than half of what these lands produce annually.

The O&C Lands Act has long been responsible for a truly unique relationship between the BLM and the 18 counties in western Oregon that rely on a sustainable flow of timber and the sharing of timber-related receipts. Fifty percent of timber receipts from lands under the O&C Lands Act go directly to the 18 western Oregon counties to be used as discretionary funds for services such as libraries, law enforcement, public health services, and roads.

Copies of the final decisions are available online at: <http://www.blm.gov/or/plans/wopr/index.php>

About the BLM:

The BLM manages more land – 258 million acres – than any other Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western States, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.

