

**Eugene District  
Bureau of Land Management  
“Eye to the Future”  
Project Update  
February 2008**



*Eugene District Office*

*February 2008*

**BLM**

**Public Lands: Use, Share, Appreciate**



As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation.

The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interest of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. Administration.

## **A Note from the District Manager**

This document is designed to serve as an information link between you and the BLM's Eugene District Office. Its intent is to increase your awareness of BLM activities and improve your opportunities to discuss these activities with us. By keeping you informed of the Eugene District's management activities and inviting your participation, we hope to continue our ongoing relationships. If you need to know the status of a project or want additional information, you can contact the project lead listed in the following text. We would appreciate any comments or suggestions you may have regarding this Planning/Project Update or how it could be improved to make it more useful to you.

The upcoming year looks to be every bit as challenging as the past. We will continue to work diligently on revising our Resource Management Plan through the Western Oregon Plan Revision (WOPR) process. The draft RMP/EIS document public comment period closed on January 11th and we received over 29,000 comments. Between now and September, we will address the comments and begin preparing the proposed Resource Management Plan and Final EIS. Additional information on the Plan Revision can be found on page 4 of this document. We are also busy with all our other programs on the district. We plan to offer 46 MMBF of timber for sale by the end of our fiscal year. Improvement projects will continue at several of our recreation sites. Restoration work to improve fisheries will continue in many key streams. In addition, we can assume that winter rains/snows will necessitate repairs to many roads and culverts. Work continues on a new joint office facility that the BLM, Forest Service and National Guard will share in Springfield. We anticipate relocation to the new facility in 2009. This document provides you with a view of the projects we would like to implement and the facilities we need to maintain for our publics in the coming months. We have the dedicated staff that is prepared to work closely with you to address your concerns and achieve reasonable solutions. I look forward to continuing our dialog and would welcome you to contact us if you are interested in a future meeting.

This document exists in two forms – the electronic version on our web page, and this companion document printed on paper. If you have Internet access you can view this document at any time and also get additional information on issues related to the Eugene District. The address is: [www.blm.gov/or/districts/eugene/plans/index.php](http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/eugene/plans/index.php)

We will continue to send you printed copies of this document unless you request to be removed from our mailing list. If you do not need a hard copy, you can help us reduce our overhead expenses and printing and postage costs by having your name removed from the District's extensive mailing list. Contact Doug Huntington on my staff, at 541-683-6415 or at [doug\\_huntington@blm.gov](mailto:doug_huntington@blm.gov).

Ginnie Grilley, District Manager

## **U.S. Bureau of Land Management Western Oregon Plan Revision**

### **What's Being Revised?**

BLM is revising the District Resource Management Plans for the Salem, Eugene, Coos Bay, Roseburg, Medford District's and Klamath Falls Field Office. These plans guide the agency's actions District's on approximately two and one-half million acres in western Oregon. Of these public lands, 2.1 million acres are managed under the O&C Lands Act and about 400,000 acres are managed under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

### **Why Revise Current Plans?**

The BLM must revise the six western Oregon Resource Management Plans now because:

- Plan revisions are a normal part of BLM's land use planning evaluation and revision cycle. Resource Management Plans (RMP's) are periodically evaluated and revised or amended as necessary. Recent evaluations of our existing RMP's have demonstrated that BLM has done a good job of meeting most of the plan's goals and objectives, but has not met the forest management goals and objectives of maintaining a steady and predictable flow of forest products to benefit local communities.
- Now is an opportunity to revise our RMP's to assure consistency with recovery plans now being prepared for the northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet.
- BLM has been challenged in court for failure to meet the intent of the O&C Lands Act of 1937 that directs BLM to manage O&C lands for, among other things, permanent forest production. As a result, BLM agreed to revise its plans in western Oregon by December 2008 in a settlement agreement.
- The controversy surrounding the implementation of the timber management portions of these existing plans has led to numerous court cases and endless process and paperwork that take BLM resource management efforts away from on-the-ground management.

### **Where are we in the Process?**

On August 10, 2007 the Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was released for public review and comment. The Plan Revision Newsletters number 7 and 8 were mailed to interested individuals and groups in August and December 2007, and included a summary of the proposed alternatives and suggestions on how to participate and provide comments. During the months of August through December, more than 70 meetings and workshops were conducted to provide the public an opportunity to become more informed and seek clarification on issues related to the document. At the public's request, the comment period was extended an additional 60 days and officially closed on January 11, 2008. The planning team has already begun to assess comments and make revisions to the document. The Final RMP/EIS is scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2008 after all comments are considered. The Record of Decision (ROD) will be completed in the fall 2008 after all required BLM planning regulatory steps have been completed.

### **Who's Involved in this Effort?**

BLM hopes to involve interested citizens, organizations and other groups in key points of the plan revision process. In addition, several public agencies are participating as formal cooperators: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, the State of Oregon, USDA Forest Service, 16 western Oregon Counties, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

### **How Do You Get Involved?**

Periodic information about the process and opportunities to get involved will be sent to interested parties. If you'd like to get on the postal or e-mail lists, contact the BLM's Western Oregon Plan Revision office at (503) 808-6629, or [www.blm.gov/or/plans/wopr/index.php](http://www.blm.gov/or/plans/wopr/index.php) or mail to P.O. Box 2965, Portland OR 97208, or contact Emily Rice at the Eugene District Office (541) 683-6776, [emily\\_rice@blm.gov](mailto:emily_rice@blm.gov)

**Abbreviations and Definitions**

**ACEC/RNA** - Area of Critical Environmental Concern/Research Natural Area

**BO** - Biological Opinion.

**CF** - Cubic feet.

**CCF** - Hundred cubic feet.

**CX or Categorical Exclusion** - Actions which do not have significant effects on the environment and for which an Environmental Analysis (EA) or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required.

**EA** - Environmental Assessment - This is a concise public document that briefly provides evidence and analysis of a proposed Federal action. It is used to determine whether further analysis needs to be done for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

**GFMA** - General Forest Management Area.

**IDT** - Interdisciplinary Team - A team is a group of resource specialists, whose participation is determined by the issues relating to the project proposal, and who conduct environmental analysis.

**LSR** - Late-Successional Reserves - One of the seven Federal land designations set forth in the Northwest Forest Plan. These reserves will maintain a functional, interactive, late-successional and old-growth forest ecosystem.

**Matrix Lands** - One of the seven Federal land designations set forth in the Northwest Forest Plan. Most timber harvest contributing to the Allowable Sale Quantity takes place in this area.

**MBF** - Thousand board feet.

**MMBF** - Million board feet.

**NEPA** - National Environmental Policy Act - A federal law which sets the systematic interdisciplinary analysis to achieve integrated consideration of physical, biological, economic, and other sciences to provide for an informed decision. The process provides for public participation in the development, review and revision of certain activities on Federal Lands.

**NWFP** - Northwest Forest Plan - A common name for the Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (April 1994). It is also used to refer to the Standards and Guidelines for Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old Growth Forest Related Species with the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl which accompanies the Record of Decision.

**O&C Lands** - Revested Oregon and California Railroad Lands.

**Resource Management Plan (RMP)** - A land use plan prepared by the BLM in accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA).

**Scoping** - An early and open part of environmental analysis that allows interested public and other Federal, state and local agencies the opportunity to provide issues, concerns and opportunities relative to proposed project actions. Scoping is required by regulation for Environmental Impact Statements

**DNA**-Documentation of Land Use Plan Conformance and NEPA Adequacy - Used to document that a BLM action has been adequately analyzed in an existing NEPA document (EA or EIS) and that no further NEPA analysis is needed.

**TABLE 1: Upper Willamette Resource Area Proposed Projects**

Name/Description	Location	Planning Status	Contact
<b>Mohawk East</b> – This project proposes to thin stands in Matrix and Riparian Reserve land use allocations to provide a sustainable supply of timber while maintaining ecologically valuable structural components, such as down logs, snags and large trees. This project also proposes aquatic restoration and road improvements.	T15S, R1W, Secs. 13 and 27; T16S, R1W, Secs. 3, 19, 25 and 27.	Work on an environmental assessment has ended. The EA was made available for public review in August of 2006. One comment was received and will be addressed in the decision documents.	Christie Hardenbrook (683-6110)
<b>Camp Run Timber Sale</b> – This project proposes to treat stands in Matrix and Riparian Reserve land use allocations to provide a sustainable supply of timber while maintaining ecologically valuable structural components, such as down logs, snags and large trees. This project also proposes aquatic restoration and road improvements.	T16S, R1W, Secs. 35, 27, and 25; T16S, R1E, Sec. 31	Work on an environmental assessment has been completed. One comment was received. A decision is expected in 2008.	Christie Hardenbrook (683 – 6110)
<b>McKenzie Tribs Project</b> – This project proposes to initiate forest management activities on approximately 1000 acres. These activities may include timber harvest, aquatic habitat restoration, and road management activities (improvement, construction, and decommissioning). The land use allocations for these sections are Matrix, Riparian Reserve and BEHA.	T16S, R1E, Secs. 33, 25 and 35	Work on an environmental has ended. The EA will be made available for public comment in October 2007. A decision is expected in 2008.	Christie Hardenbrook (683-6110)
<b>Seeley Creek Thinning</b> – This project proposes to thin approximately 800 acres on Matrix and Riparian Reserve land use allocations within the Mohawk watershed. This project is located adjacent to designated trails within the Shotgun Off-Highway Vehicle Area. Activities may include aquatic restoration and road management actions.	T15S, R1W, Secs. 7 and 19; T15S, R2W, Secs. 13 and 24	Work on an environmental assessment is currently underway. This document is expected be available for public review in Spring 2008. A decision is expected in 2009.	Christie Hardenbrook (683-6110)
<b>Calapooya II/ Big Fir Spur</b> – This project proposes to treat stands in Matrix and Riparian Reserve land use allocations to provide a sustainable supply of timber while maintaining ecologically valuable structural components, such as down logs, snags and large trees. This project also proposes aquatic restoration and road improvements.	T14S, R2W, Secs. 34 and 35 T14S, R1E, Sec. 35	Work on an environmental assessment is scheduled to begin in Spring 2008.	Christie Hardenbrook (683-6110)
<b>Blackberry Hole Salvage</b> – The Blackberry Hole Timber Sale (EA-02-24) was logged in 2005. Subsequently, a wind event caused some blowdown with in the logged units. This project proposes to salvage that blowdown.	T18S, R1W, Sec. 23	A review is scheduled to determine if this action is categorically excluded from NEPA analysis or if it will require an environmental assessment.	Christie Hardenbrook (683-6110)

<b>TABLE 2: Siuslaw Resource Area Proposed Projects</b>			
<b>Name/Description</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Planning Status</b>	<b>Contact</b>
<b>Siuslaw Resource Area Proposed Projects-Lake Creek Watershed</b>			
<b>Nutmeg Thin</b> – Pursuant to the North Lake Creek Thinning Project environmental assessment, this project would commercially thin approximately 230 acres in the North Lake Creek planning area. The project is in the Matrix and Riparian Reserve land use allocations.	T15S, R7W, Secs. 8, 15, 16, and 17, northwest of Hult Pond	The timber sale was auctioned in November 2007.	Sharmila Premdas (683-6794)
<b>Mark Time Thin</b> – Pursuant to the North Lake Creek Thinning Project environmental assessment, this project would commercially thin approximately 400 acres in the North Lake Creek planning area. The project is in the Matrix and Riparian Reserve land use allocations.	T15S, R7W, Secs. 22, and 26, west of Hult Pond	A DNA has been signed, the timber sale is now in the preparation phase and is scheduled for auction in March 2008.	Sharmila Premdas (683-6794)
<b>Tower Canyon Thin</b> – Pursuant to the North Lake Creek Thinning Project environmental assessment, this project would commercially thin approximately 302 acres in the North Lake Creek planning area. The project is in the Matrix and Riparian Reserve land use allocations.	T15S, R7W, Secs. 12, 13, and 14, northwest of Hult Pond	A DNA is being prepared. The timber sale is scheduled for auction in November 2008, pending findings in the DNA.	Sharmila Premdas (683-6794)
<b>East Chinkapin Thin</b> – Pursuant to the North Lake Creek Thinning Project environmental assessment, this project would commercially thin approximately 302 acres in the North Lake Creek planning area. The project is in the Matrix and Riparian Reserve land use allocations.	T15S, R6W, Sec. 19; T15S, R7W, Sec. 24, west of Hult Pond	A DNA is being prepared. The timber sale is scheduled for auction in November 2008, pending findings in the DNA.	Sharmila Premdas (683-6794)
<b>Salvage Sam Blowdown Salvage</b> – Commercial salvage of a 25-acre blowdown in the former Sammy Hill Late-Successional Reserve Density Management Project Area.	T16S, R8W, Sec. 1, approximately 2 miles NW of Triangle Lake.	The timber sale was auctioned in November 2007.	Janet Zentner (683-6795)
<b>January 2006 Storm Events Road Repair</b> – BLM has recently repaired two road segments: one with subsidence damage by realignment of the roadway grade; one with culvert replacement.	T16S, R7W, Sec. 22 T16S, R8W, Sec. 25	Categorical exclusions were completed. Project is completed.	Don Meckley (683-6972)

<b>Siuslaw Resource Area Proposed Projects-Siuslaw Watershed</b>			
<p><b>Upper Siuslaw Landscape Plan</b> – BLM is planning a program to treat forested stands in the Upper Siuslaw 5<sup>th</sup> Field Watershed. The planning area contains both Matrix and Late-Successional Reserve Land Use Allocations. Young stands in LSR (&lt;80 years old) would be considered for thinning to accelerate development of late-successional forest characteristics. Matrix stands would be considered for timber harvest to produce a sustainable supply of forest products to the economy.</p>	<p>Upper Siuslaw 5<sup>th</sup> Field Watershed, excluding the area covered under the “Upper Siuslaw Late-Successional Reserve Restoration Plan” and EIS.</p>	<p>An EA is being prepared. If you are interested in learning more about this process, or if you have information about important resources in this watershed, you are encouraged to contact BLM.</p>	<p>Sharmila Premdas (683-6794)</p>
<p><b>Stone Pony Restoration Project</b> – Pursuant to the Upper Siuslaw Late Successional Reserve (LSR 267) Restoration Plan and EIS, this project would treat forest stands to accelerate the development of late-successional forest structure. Density management thinning is being considered for this 660 acre project area.</p>	<p>T20S, R5W, Sec. 7; T20S, R6W, Secs. 9, 15, 19, 21, and 29; T20S, R7W, Sec. 3;</p>	<p>A DNA is being prepared; the timber sale is scheduled for auction in September 2008 pending findings in the DNA.</p>	<p>Mark Stephen (683-6439)</p>
<p><b>Bottomline Density Management Study</b> – BLM is planning to re-thin this 270 acre research site as part of a continuing effort to evaluate silvicultural methods intended to promote development of late-successional forest structure.</p>	<p>T21S, R5W, Sec. 1</p>	<p>An environmental assessment was available for public review in December, 2007. One comment was received. A decision is expected in June 2008.</p>	<p>Peter O’Toole (683-6786)</p>
<p><b>Hazelton Road Easement Project</b> – BLM is planning to replace 2 existing road easements with 2 new road easements in an alternative location. Two private landowners have constructed a new road of equivalent standard, in the alternative location. Upon granting the new easements to BLM, the old easements will be released to the landowners. Purpose of the “easement exchange” is to improve the access situation in this neighborhood.</p>	<p>T20S, R4W, Sec. 11</p>	<p>A categorical exclusion was prepared and signed on September 13, 2007. Tentative completion of the project is projected as Spring 2008.</p>	<p>Dave Schroeder (683-6482)</p>
<p><b>Non Commercial Silvicultural Projects – LSR 267</b>-Pursuant to the Upper Siuslaw Late Successional Reserve (LSR 267) Restoration Plan and EIS, this project would treat forest stands to accelerate the development of late-successional forest structure. A variety of silvicultural treatments would be applied to 20-40 year old aged stands in LSR 267. Tree densities would be reduced to provide growing space and allow trees to develop large live crowns and large limbs, and to promote a multi-layered understory. Snags and coarse woody debris would be created. Underplanting of shade tolerant conifer trees would also occur.</p>	<p>T19S, R5W; T19S, R6W; T19S, R7W; T20S, R5W; T20S, R6W; T20S, R7W.</p>	<p>The Siuslaw Resources Area is planning silvicultural treatments on approximately 300 acres in LSR 267 during 2008. A DNA for 592 acres of pre commercial thinning was signed in August and this work will be completed in November to February.</p>	<p>Mark Stephen (683-6439)</p>



<p><b>Chinook Stew Stewardship Project</b> – Pursuant to the Upper Siuslaw Late Successional Reserve (LSR 267) Restoration Plan and EIS, this is a multi-year stewardship contract project that includes commercial thinning, pre-commercial thinning, snag and coarse woody debris creation, and riparian conifer release. The strategy is to thin in young stands with marginal product value and treat adjacent areas to improve stand conditions and habitat. The value of the timber is an offset against the costs of the services received.</p>	<p>T19S, T20S</p>	<p>The contract was awarded in January 2008. The project areas are being identified, and the first project task order is planned for June 2008.</p>	<p>Mark Stephen (683-6439)</p>
<p><b>January 2006 Storm Events Road Repair</b> – BLM plans to repair two road segments that sustained slip-out damage by realignment of the roadway.</p>	<p>T18S, R8W, Sec. 25</p>	<p>A categorical exclusion was completed. Project is completed.</p>	<p>Don Meckley (683-6972)</p>
<p><b>Doe Creek Barrier Culvert Replacement</b> – Pursuant to the Upper Siuslaw Late Successional Reserve (LSR 267) Restoration Plan and EIS, three barrier culverts to aquatic species here will be removed and new migration friendly passage will be designed and installed.</p>	<p>T19S, R6W, Sec. 25</p>	<p>A DNA will be prepared prior to the installation phase of this project. The proposed project is expected to occur during the 2008-9 summer season.</p>	<p>Leo Poole (683-6289)</p>
<p><b>Smith Creek Stream Enhancement Project</b> – Pursuant to the Upper Siuslaw Late Successional Reserve (LSR 267) Restoration Plan and EIS, boulders and/or logs will be installed in stream reaches devoid of good habitat.</p>	<p>T20S, R6W, Secs. 13 and 23</p>	<p>A DNA has been prepared for this restoration work (OR090-DNA-07-03). The proposed project is expected to occur during 2008-9 summer season.</p>	<p>Leo Poole (683-6289)</p>
<p><b>Hat Trick Salvage</b> – Winter storms during December, 2006, created a 10-acre blowdown area in a GFMA stand in the Coast Range. BLM is considering whether or not to salvage some of the fallen logs.</p>	<p>T17S, R7W, Sec. 21, approximately 5 miles W of Noti.</p>	<p>A categorical exclusion is being prepared. The timber sale is planned for auction in summer 2008.</p>	<p>Janet Zentner (683-6795)</p>
<p><b>Templeton Road Salvage</b> – A wind event during the Fall of 2007 created a 10-acre blowdown in a GFMA stand in the Coast Range. BLM is considering whether or not to salvage some of the fallen logs.</p>	<p>T16S, R6W, Sec. 1, approximately 4 miles NW of Cheshire.</p>	<p>A categorical exclusion is being prepared. The timber sale is planned for auction in fall 2008.</p>	<p>Janet Zentner (683-6795)</p>
<p><b>Siuslaw Resource Area Proposed Projects-Long Tom Watershed</b></p>			
<p><b>West Eugene Wetlands Project Scheduling EA</b> – Pursuant to the West Eugene Wetlands environmental assessment, BLM proposes to implement maintenance activities which include the control of woody vegetation encroachment, the control of invasive species, reduce litter and thatch, maintain native species cover, and maintain suitable habitat for the western pond turtle on approximately 600 acres.</p>	<p>West Eugene Wetlands</p>	<p>A DNA was prepared for 2007 and the implementation phase ended in December of 2007. A new DNA is expected to be prepared for 2008 maintenance activities.</p>	<p>Sally Villegas – Moore (683-6790)</p>

<p><b>West Eugene Wetlands Project Scheduling EA</b> – Pursuant to the West Eugene Wetlands environmental assessment, BLM proposes to implement restoration and enhancement actions on approximately 150 acres of oak and prairie habitat at the Hansen/See-sil parcel. Treatments would occur over a three year implementation period.</p>	<p>West Eugene Wetlands</p>	<p>A DNA was prepared for 2007 and the implementation phase ended in October 2007. A new DNA is expected to be prepared for thinning treatments of oak habitat and other vegetation treatments in 2008.</p>	<p>Sally Villegas – Moore (683-6790)</p>
<p><b>West Eugene Wetlands Bank Mitigation Project</b> – The Proposed Action is to continue to work cooperatively with the City of Eugene to implement management actions on approximately 60 acres of BLM wetland parcels with existing and in progress Mitigation Improvement Plans (MIP). These BLM parcels are all located within the West Eugene Wetlands project area in West Eugene, Oregon. The goal for these BLM sites (with MIPs) is to continue to control invasive species and maintain the prairie systems by utilizing different maintenance treatments.</p>	<p>West Eugene Wetlands</p>	<p>A DNA was prepared for 2007 and vegetation treatments ended in November of 2007. A new DNA is expected to be prepared for 2008.</p>	<p>Sally Villegas – Moore (683-6790) Trevor Taylor (682-4888)</p>
<p><b>Transition Management, Inc. Right-of-Way Agreement E-952</b> – Transition proposes to improve 1,600 feet of roadway and construct 800 feet of new road to access their property.</p>	<p>T16S, R7W, Sec. 25</p>	<p>An Environmental Assessment is being prepared and will be available for public review in February, 2008. The project is planned for the summer 2008.</p>	<p>Don Meckley (683-6972)</p>
<p><b>Siuslaw Resource Area Proposed Projects-Wildcat Creek Watershed</b></p>			
<p><b>Walker Creek Culvert Replacements</b> – This cooperative effort between the BLM and the Siuslaw Watershed Council will use RAC funds to remove 2 aquatic species barriers in the mainstem of Walker Creek. New culvert designs will allow for passage of all aquatic species at all flow regimes here.</p>	<p>T18S, R8W, Sec. 1</p>	<p>An EA was prepared and made available for public review in August 2007. A Decision Record and FONSI have been issued. Project work is expected in summer 2008/2009</p>	<p>Leo Poole (683-6289)</p>
<p><b>Siuslaw Resource Area Proposed Projects-Silvicultural Treatments</b></p>			
<p><b>Manual Maintenance/Precommercial Thinning</b> - Manual cutting of vegetation and tree girdling in young stands to reduce competition and to reduce the density of trees is on going. The project areas from 2007 would be completed in February 2008. Additional stands will be identified in 2008 and would likely be treated in FY 2009.</p>	<p>T16S, 17S, 18S, 19S, and 20S.</p>	<p>A Categorical Exclusion has been prepared after interdisciplinary team reviews. Approximately 100 acres of manual maintenance and 200 acres of pre commercial thinning are planned in 2008.</p>	<p>Mark Stephen (683-6439)</p>
<p><b>Pruning</b> – A 2<sup>nd</sup> pruning treatment on approximately 158 acres of young Douglas-fir stands is designed to increase both the quality and value of the wood product at a future harvest date by promoting the growth of clear bole wood. The young Douglas-fir stands proposed for pruning have been previously pruned of the lower branches to a height of approximately 9 feet on the bole of the trees. The 2 pruning treatment would remove the lower branches from 9 to 18 feet on the bole of the trees. This project will be accomplished primarily by using hand tools. Slash will be pulled back from designated roads to reduce fuel hazards.</p>	<p>T18S, 19S, and 20S</p>	<p>A Categorical Exclusion review is being prepared for the project. The project is planned for March 2008.</p>	<p>Mark Stephen (683-6439)</p>

Certain activities within the BLM's forestry program have been categorically excluded from preparation of a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The purpose of a categorical exclusion is to eliminate the need for unnecessary paperwork under NEPA. Specifically, Council of Environmental Quality regulations for NEPA at 40 CFR Sec. 1508.4 state that:

*"'Categorical exclusion' means a category of actions which do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment and which have been found to have no such effect in procedures adopted by a Federal agency in implementation of these regulations (Sec. 1507.3) and for which, therefore, neither an environmental assessment nor an environmental impact statement is required...Any procedures under this section shall provide for extraordinary circumstances in which a normally excluded action may have a significant environmental effect."*

In implementation of the NEPA regulations, the BLM has developed categorical exclusions for certain silvicultural activities, such as reforestation, pre-commercial treatments, brush control, sample tree falling, and salvage, commercial thinning, and hazardous fuels reduction of limited acres. In developing categorical exclusions, the BLM demonstrated through rulemaking procedures how these actions do not typically result in significant environmental effects and set forth the methodology and criteria used to define the categories of actions. These rulemaking procedures included extensive public involvement and input regarding appropriate limits on the use of the "categorical exclusion" to assure that any categorically excluded action would remain within the effects of actions covered in the analysis for the rulemaking.

As such, in deciding whether to proceed with such actions, the BLM will review their particular conditions to ensure that no extraordinary circumstances exist that would preclude the use of a categorical exclusion. The Eugene District/Field Office maintains an on-site NEPA register that lists ongoing actions, and seeks information from the public as to whether "extraordinary" circumstances exist for any of these ongoing actions that are "categorically excluded." An "extraordinary" circumstance is one that could have significant environmental effects beyond the "ordinary" circumstances already described and considered as applicable to the excluded actions in the rulemaking procedure. These categorically excluded actions, by regulation, do not require the documentation necessary for environmental assessments or environmental impact statements. The public was also provided a formal opportunity to participate in the agency's review and approval of these categorically excluded activities. Given this context, the BLM may choose to proceed with these actions as part of the ordinary course of business in managing forest land with the posting of a notice of decision on the District internet site. This notice would advise the public of the formal administrative review process for these individual actions available under 43 CFR section 4.450. Depending on circumstances, however, the BLM may invoke, by publishing a notice in a local newspaper of record, the administrative review process under 43 CFR §5003 for certain individual forest management actions, even though they are categorically excluded from the NEPA requirements.