

Ochoco and Deschutes National Forests and
Prineville District, Bureau of Land Management
Office of Communications
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“Snow Project” Aims to Improve Public and Firefighter Safety

Bend—The Snow Fuels Reduction and Vegetation Management Project decision was signed by Deschutes National Forest Supervisor John Allen and published today. Located along the popular recreational area of Cascade Lakes Highway from Elk Lake to Crane Prairie Reservoir, this project would reduce fuels and manage vegetation to improve visitor and firefighter safety. The project also highlights protection of riparian area function, spotted owl habitat, and recreation facilities. It will also provide forest products.

In his consideration of alternatives, Supervisor Allen selected “Alternative Three” as the one most likely to reduce the risk of high intensity wildfires in the area and address the issue of fires spotting from the west and igniting heavy fuel accumulations in the forest. Alternative Three is also seen to increase protection for developed and dispersed recreation sites, including the resorts at Lava Lake and Crane Prairie.

Dead and dying trees in the Deschutes National Forest are putting recreation sites and public uses at risk, and are causing concern for public safety. The Snow Project area is dominated by the lodgepole pine species that has been impacted by beetles since the 1980s. Reduction of these hazardous fuels will benefit the campgrounds, trails, resorts, scenic views and evacuation routes in and near the project area. The Snow Project also meets many of the goals of the East West Deschutes County Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

Publishing of the Decision Notice begins the 45-day appeal period for individuals and organizations that submitted comments or otherwise expressed interest during the 45-day comment period for the environmental analysis. Appeals must be received by the Appeal Deciding Officer, Regional Forester, within 45 days from the date of publication of notice of the decision in *The Bulletin*.

For additional information about this decision or the Forest Service appeal process, contact the project leader, Pete Powers at (541) 383-4774.

