

NEWS Release BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

3040 Biddle Road • Medford, Oregon 97504 • <http://www.blm.gov/or/medford>

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
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BLM To Reduce Fuel Hazard and Increase Forest Health Through Controlled Burns This Spring

Medford, OR--In an effort to reduce the potential for large wildfires and restore fire adapted ecosystems, the Medford District BLM will continue an aggressive fuels reduction program this spring. The Medford District has been working to reduce fire hazards on public lands since 1996. In total, almost 2,450 acres will be burned this spring. The controlled burns will primarily be understory burns, which treat the landscape as a whole and remove excess fuels from the ground.

“This is a high priority program for the BLM. We are actively committed to reducing fuels across the landscape to protect lives, property and resources. It is essential that we manage our forests to reduce the potential for a large uncontrolled wildfire,” said Tom Murphy, Fire Management Officer for the Medford District.

Much of the controlled burns will occur on high priority wildland-urban interface located on public lands across the Medford District. Wildland-urban interface refers to the homes and communities at risk to wildland fires. On the Medford District, over one-half of the public lands (approximately 500,000 acres out of 900,000 acres) are considered wildland-urban interface because of their proximity to population centers, private property and infrastructure, and important resource values.

The National Fire Plan identified 26 communities at risk in southwest Oregon near BLM lands and more than 26,000 homes intermixed with heavy fire-prone vegetation. The Medford BLM has already begun fuel treatments in or adjacent to 23 of these communities. Noncommercial fuel treatments have grown from 1,200 acres per year in 1996 to over 20,000 acres annually since 2002. Over 95% of non-commercial treatments are completed under contract, helping to support local economies.

Actual days of ignition for the controlled burns will be determined by weather and fuel moisture conditions. The burns will only occur on days when the State of Oregon Smoke Management Office indicates suitable weather conditions for smoke dispersal.

Daily updated fire information about BLM burns can be obtained by calling (541) 618-2354 or 1 (800) 267-3126. Updates are made by 9:00 am each day when burning is occurring. Please do not call 911 for burn information as it could interfere with emergency calls.

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The projects listed do not include any that will be accomplished under the President's stimulus plan. At this time, we are working with the Secretary of the Interior's office on prioritizing the stimulus projects. The specifics, including funding amounts and locations, will be announced once a final decision is made by the Secretary.

Projects

Grants Pass Resource Area

Spring burning will include the following controlled burns:

600 acres near Merlin
200 acres near Selma
100 acres near Williams

Ashland Resource Area

Planned spring burning will total 800 acres and take place in the Thompson Creek, Bishop Creek, and Sterling Creek drainages.

Butte Falls Resource Area

Controlled burns include:

210 acres in the Evans Creek area near Wimer and Rogue River.
240 acres in the Trail Creek area near Shady Cove and Trail.

Fuels specialists will also burn approximately 250 acres of piled debris.

Glendale Resource Area

A 200 acre controlled burn near Placer Road.
A 170 acre controlled burn between Coyote and Speaker Roads.

About the BLM

The BLM manages more land – 256 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.

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