BLM Plans Controlled Burn on North Spit

Coos Bay, Ore. – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) plans to burn beachgrass on Coos Bay’s North Spit sometime between March 8 and March 13 to improve habitat for the threatened western snowy plover.

The controlled burn will cover approximately four acres along Foredune Road. There will be people on site to direct traffic during the burn, and minor traffic delays are possible. While the BLM plans to conduct the burn during optimal weather conditions, some smoke may be visible from North Bend and Charleston.

Using fire to remove some of the beach grass will create more open sand habitat for the small shorebird. “The plovers depend on open sand as a place to build their nests, lay their eggs and forage for food,” said Steve Langenstein, Wildlife Biologist with the BLM. “Much of the open sand has been lost due to the encroachment of European beachgrass.”

The BLM manages 1,864 acres of land on the North Spit, of which 112 acres are managed for snowy plover habitat. The BLM has completed restoration projects over the past several years aimed at improving the plover habitat to help increase the birds’ population numbers. The Snowy Plover nesting season begins on the North Spit and other area beaches on March 15.

About BLM
The BLM manages more land – 245 million surface 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.