

Categorical Exclusion Determination and Decision Record for Brush Cutting, Hardwood Clump Control in the Butte Falls Resource Area

DOI-BLM-OR-M050-2009-0027-CX

Description of Proposed Action

The Butte Falls Resource Area, Medford District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposes to treat up to 900 acres burned in the 2002 Timbered Rock Fire. These acres would be treated to maintain native conifer survival and vigor and the native hardwood component by releasing the existing conifers and hardwoods from competition for moisture, nutrients, light, and growing space. This would be accomplished by manually cutting the competing vegetation (shrubs and hardwood sprouts) with chainsaws or hand tools within a 6-foot radius of the conifer, and leaving the residual trees for increased growth. Brush and hardwoods 6 inches DBH (diameter at breast height) and less would be cut and hardwoods 6.1 to 11.9 inches DBH would be girdled. Up to 2 hardwood stems, if present, would be retained within 6 feet of existing conifer trees. Hardwoods 12 inches DBH and greater would be reserved along with all conifers. In all units, severed brush and hardwoods would be cut and scattered to a depth of less than 3 feet. All vegetation outside of the 6-foot radius around the conifer would be retained.

The proposed project is located in the Butte Falls Resource Area in the Elk Creek fifth field watershed. See attached maps for exact locations of treatments. This action would occur in fiscal years 2009 and 2010.

Plan Conformance Review

The Bureau of Land Management did not scope this proposal and the public was not involved in its development. This proposal is consistent with policy directed by the following:

- *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Revision of the Resource Management Plans of the western Oregon Bureau of Land Management and Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan for the Medford District* (EIS, 2008 and ROD/RMP, 2008)
- *Medford District Integrated Weed Management Plan Environmental Assessment* (1998) and tiered to the *Final-Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program Environmental Impact Statement* (EIS, 1985).

The proposed action is in conformance with the direction given for the management of public lands in the Medford District by the Oregon and California Lands Act of 1937, Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, Endangered Species Act of 1973, Clean Water Act of 1987, Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 (as amended 1986 and 1996), Clean Air Act of 1990 (as amended), and Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979.

This proposal is consistent with management direction in the Medford District Resource Management Plan (USDI 2008, p. 41) that directs the BLM to:

- “Promote the establishment and survival of commercially desirable coniferous seedling and sapling through stand maintenance and protective treatments.”

- “Convert lands historically supporting conifer species that are currently growing primarily brush or hardwoods to conifer species suitable to the site unless the hardwoods would produce a higher net monetary return.”
- “Apply precommercial thinning to forest stands to achieve appropriate stocking levels.”

Project Design Features

1. Reserve all conifers, and all hardwoods 12" DBH and greater.
2. Cut brush and hardwoods 6" DBH and less, and girdle hardwoods between 6" and 11.9" DBH, for a 6-foot radius from the conifer bole, around the reserved conifer. Retain 1 stem from each hardwood clump, but retain no more than 2 stems within the 6-foot radius where brush and hardwoods are cut.
3. Within Riparian Management Areas, do not treat conifers, brush, and hardwoods within 35 feet slope distance (each side) of intermittent streams and within 60 feet slope distance (each side) of all perennial and fish-bearing streams.
4. Protect known Special Status plant sites using no entry buffers. Buffers will be determined based on species, proposed treatment, site-specific environmental conditions, and available management recommendations.
5. Seasonally restrict activities from March 1 through June 30 within 200 feet of northern spotted owl nest sites, unless instructed differently by the resource area wildlife biologist. The restriction may be extended up to September 30 if nesting activity is occurring at that time.
6. Refuel equipment, including chainsaws and other hand power tools, at least 100 feet from water bodies to prevent direct delivery of contaminants into a water body.
7. Pick up all trash and garbage and dispose of properly.
8. Prohibit overnight camping at the project site or in the surrounding area.
9. Operate vehicles on existing roads and trails.

Categorical Exclusion Determination

This proposed action qualifies as a categorical exclusion as provided in United States Department of the Interior Departmental Manual 516 DM 11.9, C (4) which allows for “Precommercial thinning and brush control using small mechanical devices” (release 5/8/08).

Before any action described in the list of categorical exclusions may be used, the “extraordinary circumstances,” included in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) at 43 CFR 46.205(c) must be reviewed for applicability. After review, the BLM determined no extraordinary circumstances exist that would cause the proposed action to have a significant environmental effect. The action will not require additional analysis.

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this project, contact Doug Stewart, Project Leader, at (541) 618-2264.

NEPA Categorical Exclusion Review

Proposed Action:

This action would release existing conifers and selected hardwood sprouts from competition for moisture, nutrients, light, and growing space, by cutting brush and hardwood sprouts within a 6-foot radius of conifer seedlings

The Code of Federal Regulations at 43 CFR 46.205(c) provides for a review of the following criteria for categorical exclusion to determine if exceptions apply to the proposed action based on actions which may:

1. *Have significant impacts on public health or safety.*

Yes No

Initial MS Remarks:

2. *Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.*

Yes No

Initial MS Remarks:

3. *Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].*

Yes No

Initial MS Remarks:

4. *Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.*

Yes No

Initial MS Remarks:

5. *Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.*

Yes No

Initial MS Remarks:

6. *Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.*

Yes No

Initial MS Remarks:

7. Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by the bureau.

Yes No

Initial AK Remarks: CRM report OR110-09-36

8. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.

Plants Yes No

Initial mw Remarks: survey completed

Animals Yes No

Initial JR Remarks: Seasonal restriction March 1 - June 30
32-01E-15, unit 15-2, + 32-01W-2, all units.
may be lifted if non-hesitiny status determined.

Fish Yes No

Initial LL Remarks: Small trees + Brush w/ hand tools
60 foot buffers

9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

Yes No

Initial RW Remarks:

10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).

Yes No

Initial MS Remarks:

11. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).

Yes No

Initial AK Remarks:

12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or nonnative invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).

Yes No

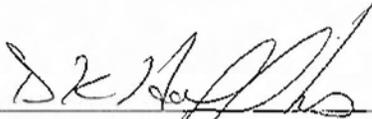
Initial mw Remarks: no off road vehicle travel will occur
no burn piles
weed treatments occurring in watershed

Decision

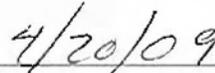
It is my decision to implement the brush cutting and hardwood clump control, as described in the Proposed Action and as shown on the attached project maps, in fiscal year 2009.

Decision Rationale

The proposed action has been reviewed by Butte Falls Resource Area staff and appropriate Project Design Features, as specified above, will be incorporated into the proposal. Based on the attached NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) Categorical Exclusion Review, I have determined the proposed action involves no significant impact to the human environment and no further environmental analysis is required.



Donald K. Hoffheins
Field Manager
Butte Falls Resource Area



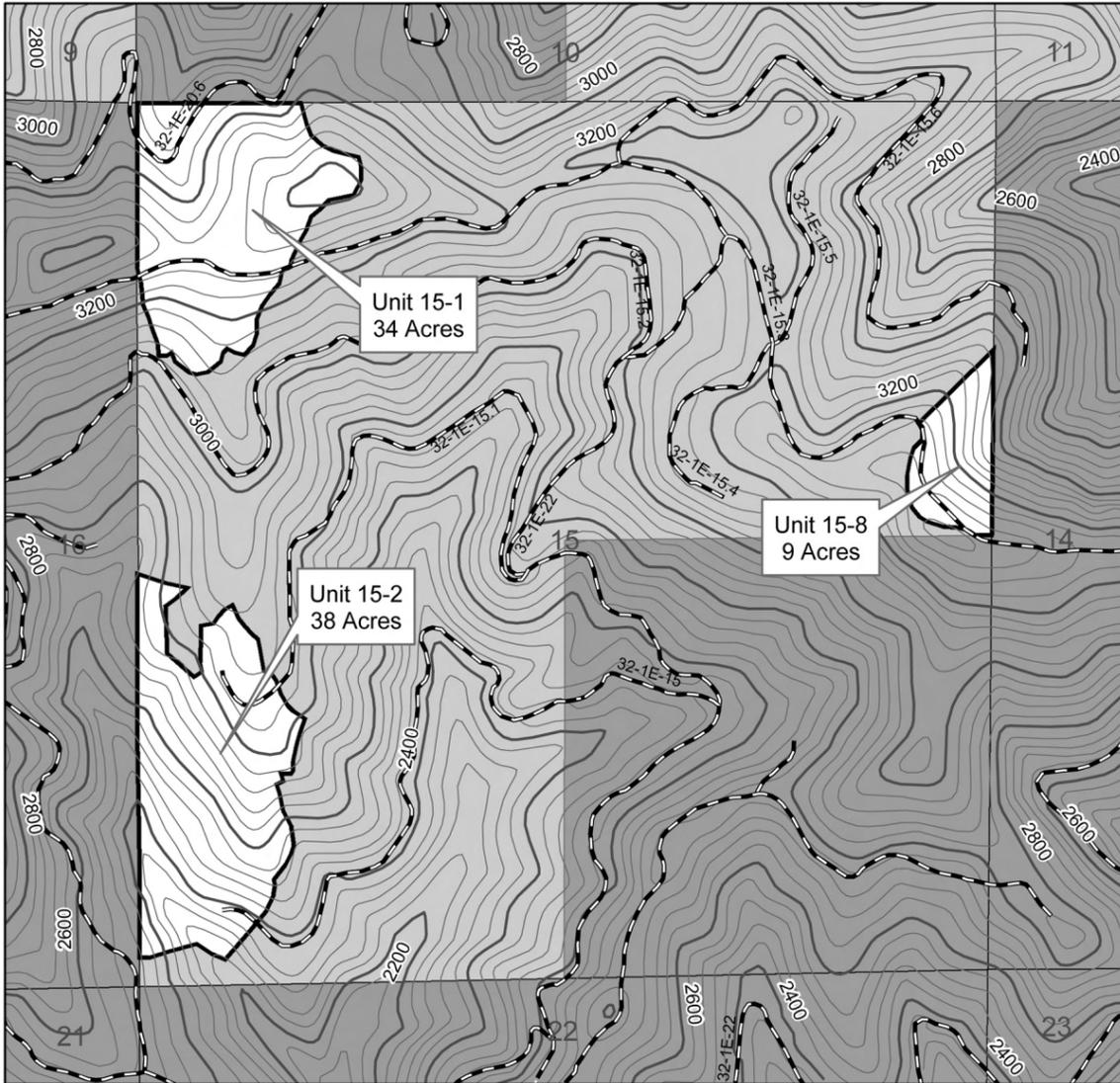
Date

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

Notice of the forest management decision to be made on the action described in this categorical exclusion will be posted on the Medford District internet website. The action is subject to protest under 43 CFR 4.450-2. A decision in response to a protest is subject to appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals under 43 CFR part 4.

Categorical Exclusion Reviewers:

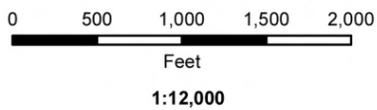
Name	Title	Date	Initials
Robyn Wicks	NEPA Coordinator	4/20/09	RW
Marcia Wineteer	Botanist	3/24/09	mw
Dave Roelofs	Wildlife Biologist	3/23/09	DR
Steve Liebhardt	Fisheries Biologist	4/16/09	SL
Shawn Simpson	Hydrologist	3/24/09	SS
Ken Van Etten	Soil Scientist	4/2/09	KBV
Al Mason	Fire/Fuels Specialist	3/19/09	APM
Ann Ramage	District Archaeologist	4-20-09	AR
Randy Bryan	Engineer	3/24/09	RRB
Trish Lindaman	Outdoor Recreation Planner	4/17/09	TL



FOI Key	Bid Item	Unit #	Acres	Treatment
165031	1-O	15-1	34	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
165036	1-O	15-2	38	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
165034	1-O	15-8	9	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
Total			81	

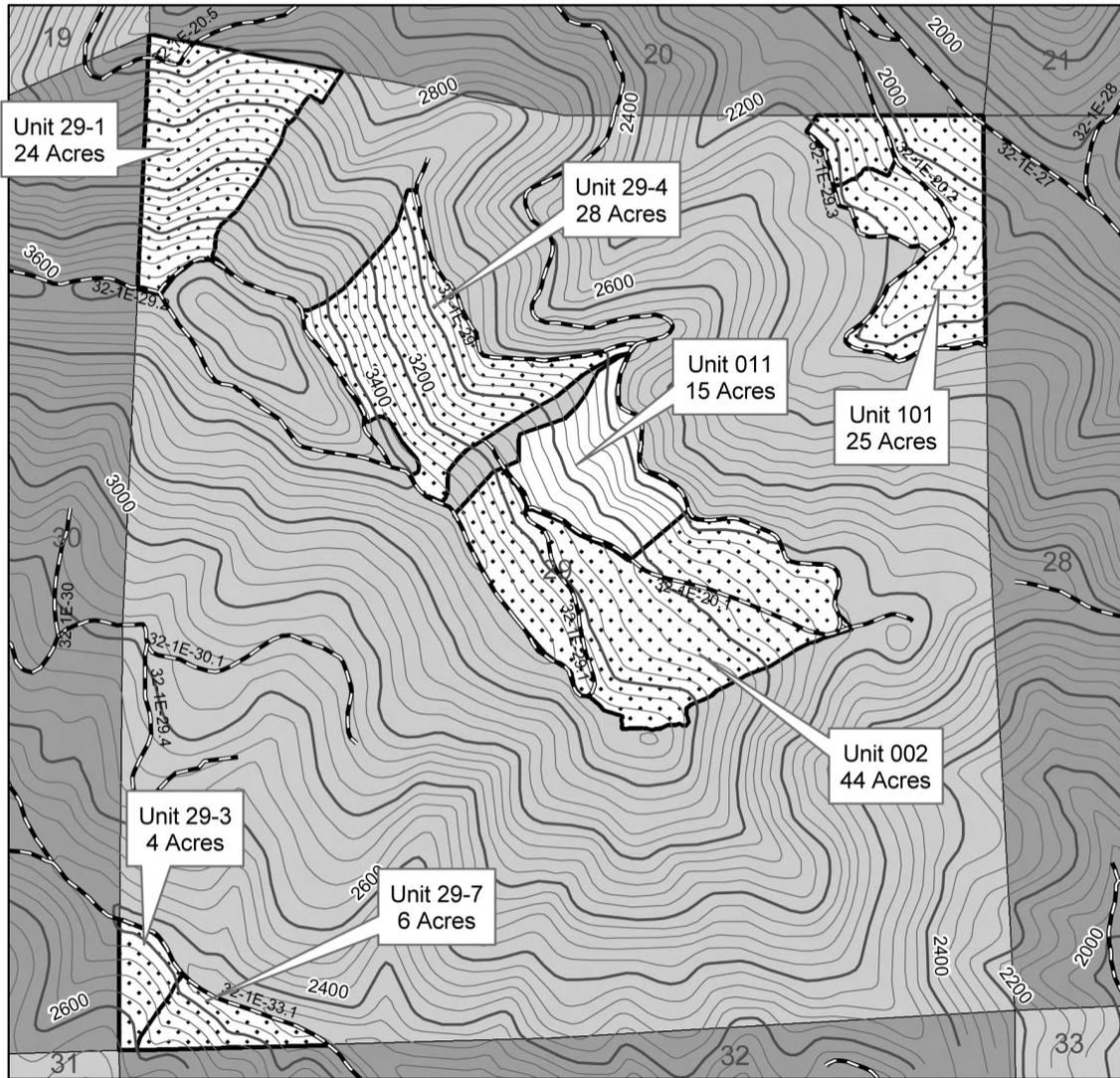
Legend

- Treatment Area
- Road
- BLM-administered
- Non-BLM Land
- Perennial Stream
- Intermittent Stream
- 100 ft. Index Contour
- 40 ft. Contour



**Map 1. Timbered Rock Fire Area
 T32S, R1E, section 15**





FOI Key	Bid Item	Unit #	Acres	Treatment
160363	1-O	002	44	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
160363	1-O	011	15	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
162577	1-O	101	25	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
164439	1-O	29-1	24	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
162333	1-O	29-3	4	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
161449	1-O	29-4	28	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
162333	1-O	29-7	6	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
Total			146	



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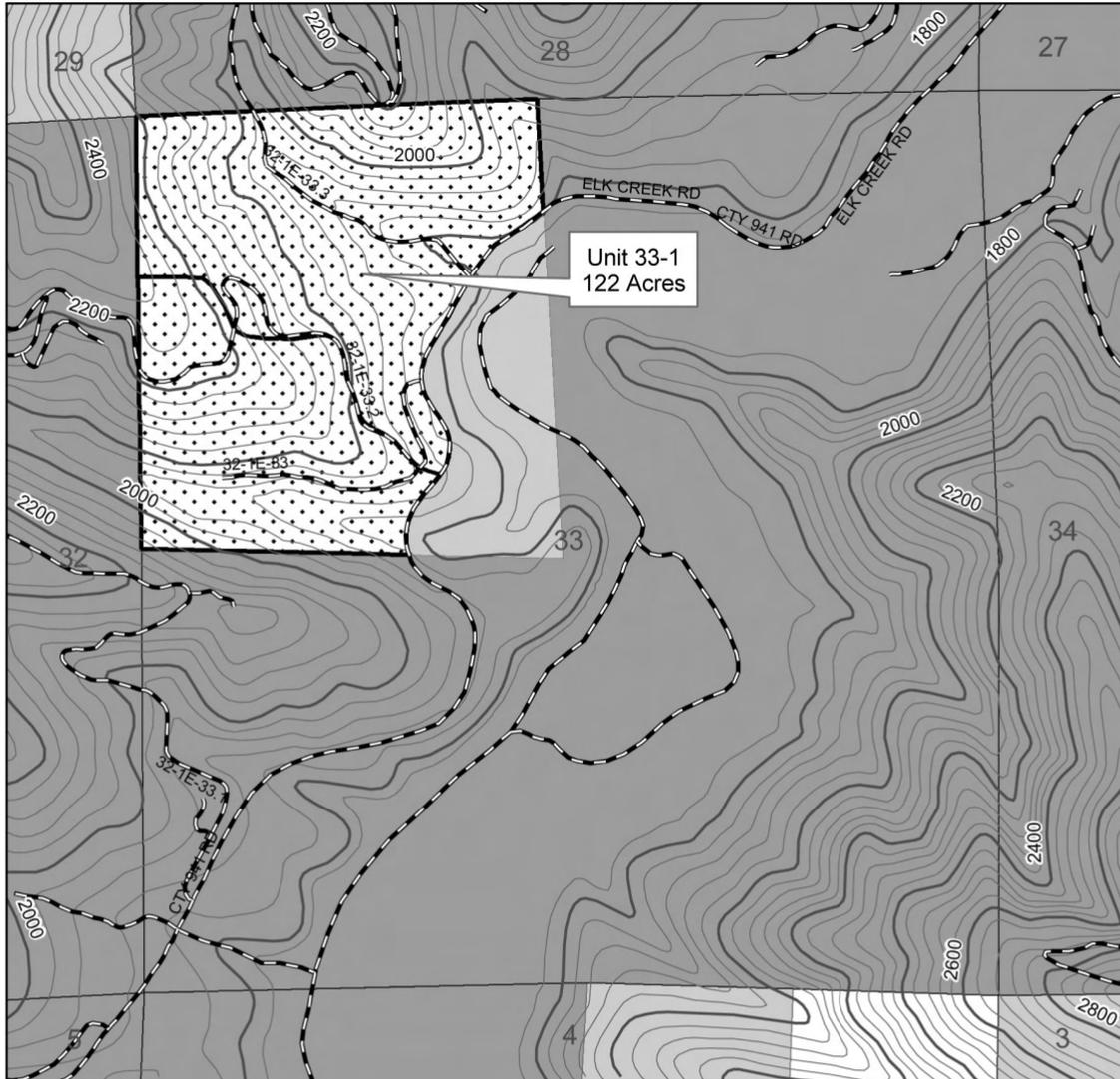
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- Treatment Area
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- BLM-administered
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MEDFORD DISTRICT
Butte Falls Resource Area
March 2009

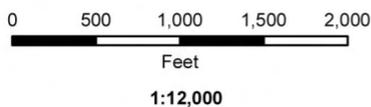
**Map 2. Timbered Rock Fire Area
T32S, R1E, section 29**



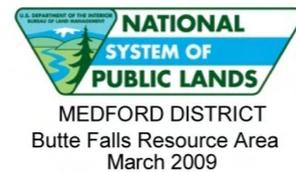
FOI Key	Bid Item	Unit #	Acres	Treatment
161900	1-O	33-1	122	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
160378				
160382		Total	122	
161902				

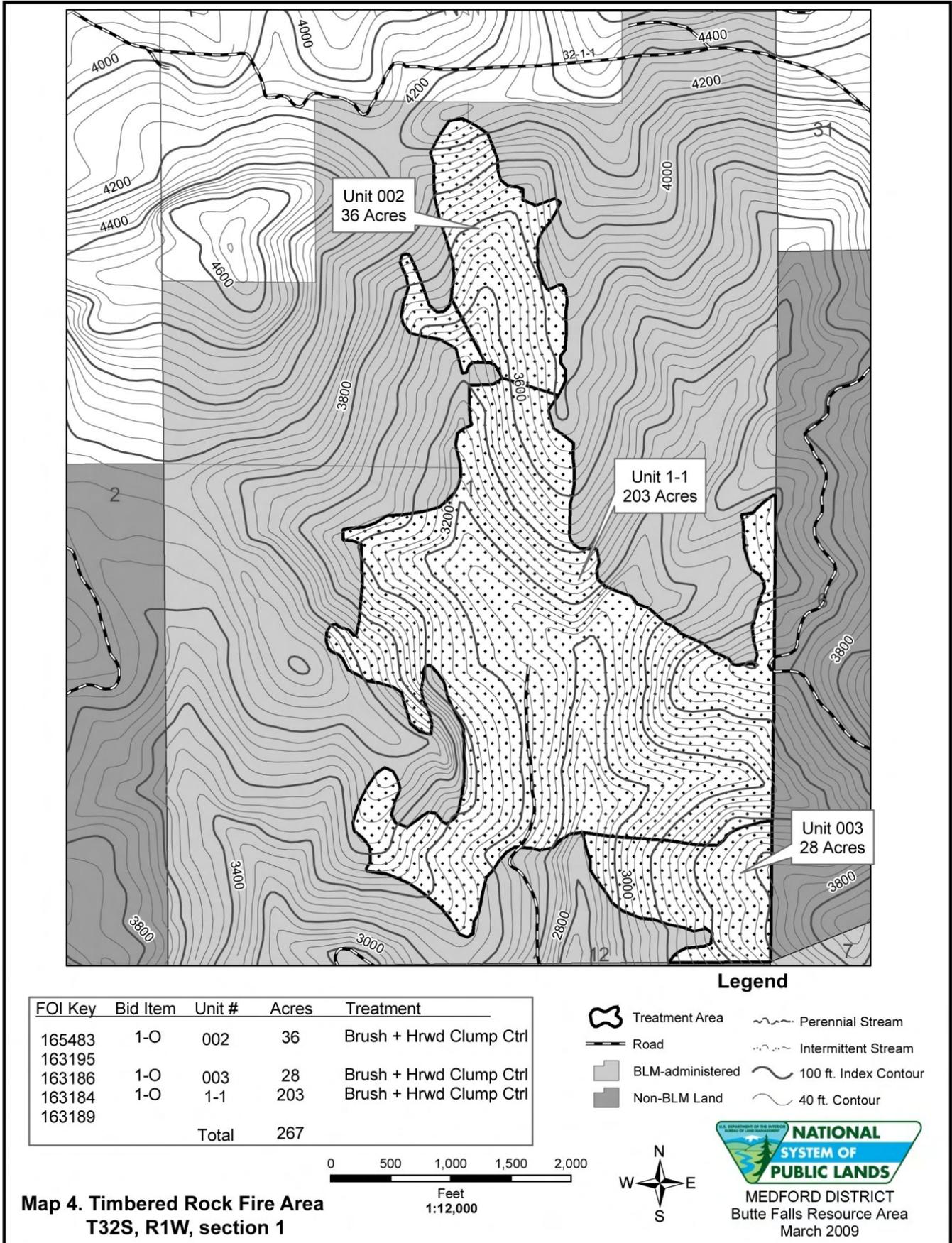
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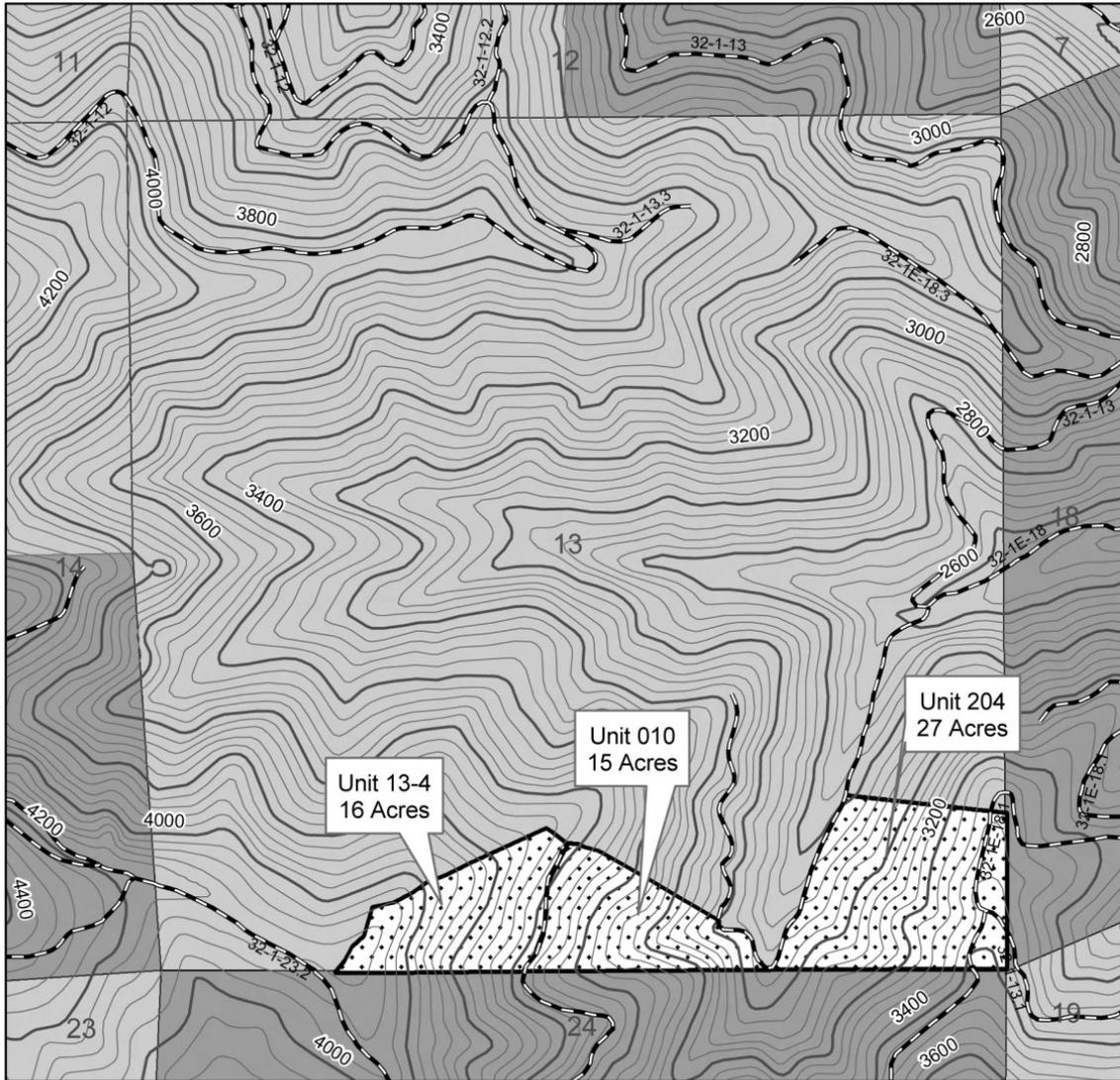
- Treatment Area
- Road
- BLM-administered
- Non-BLM Land
- Perennial Stream
- Intermittent Stream
- 100 ft. Index Contour
- 40 ft. Contour



**Map 3. Timbered Rock Fire Area
 T32S, R1E, section 33**



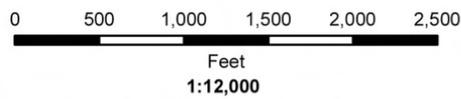




FOI Key	Bid Item	Unit #	Acres	Treatment
162566	1-O	010	15	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
162568	1-O	204	27	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
164955	1-O	13-4	16	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
Total			58	

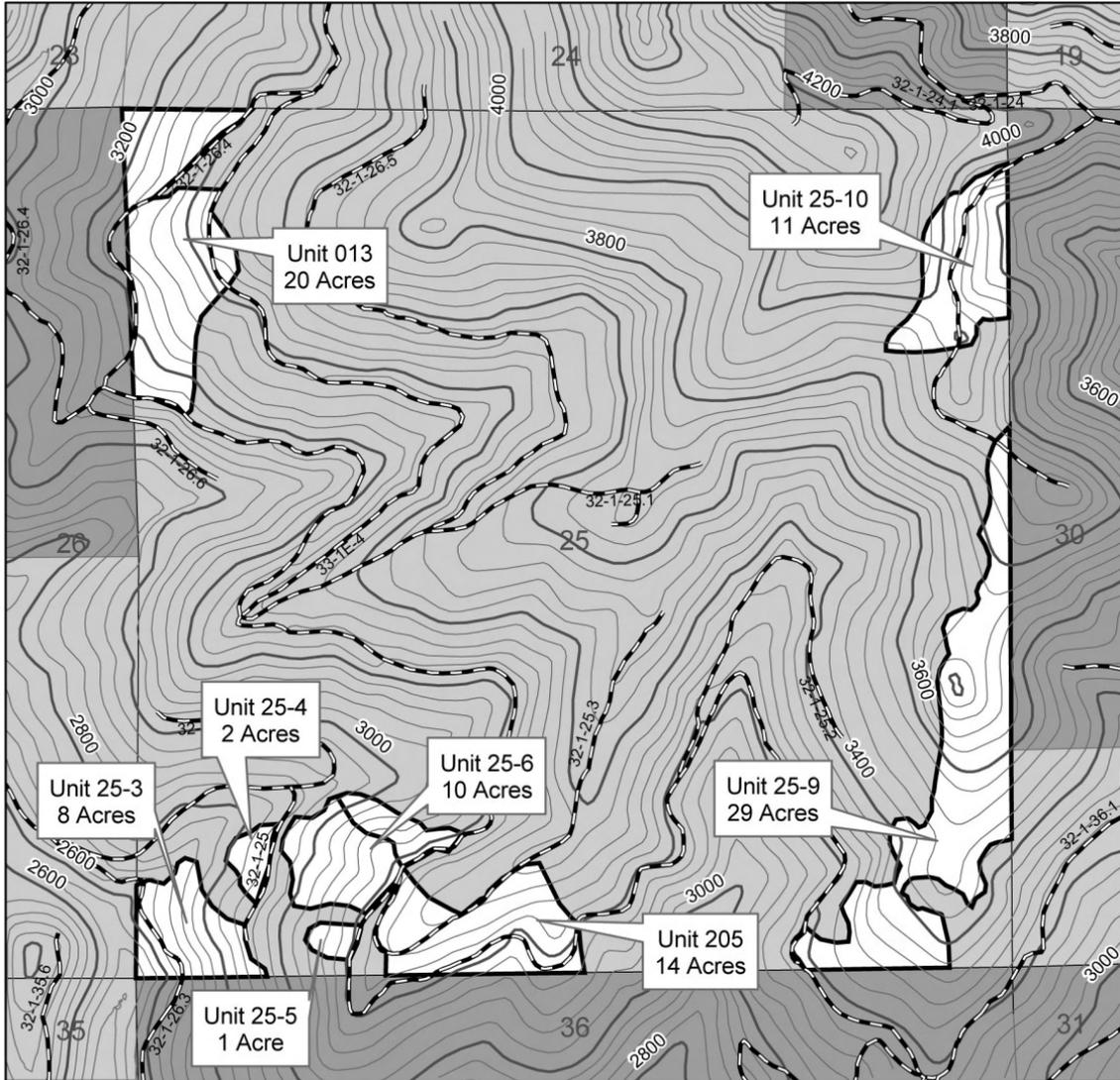
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-  Treatment Area
-  Road
-  BLM-administered
-  Non-BLM Land
-  Perennial Stream
-  Intermittent Stream
-  100 ft. Index Contour
-  40 ft. Contour



MEDFORD DISTRICT
Butte Falls Resource Area
March 2009

Map 5. Timbered Rock Fire Area
T32S, R1W, section 13



FOI Key	Bid Item	Unit #	Acres	Treatment
165064	1-O	013	20	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
161722	1-O	205	14	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
161720	1-O	25-3	8	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
161720	1-O	25-4	2	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
161720	1-O	25-5	1	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
161720	1-O	25-6	10	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
160099	1-O	25-9	29	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
163263				
165066	1-O	25-10	11	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
		Total	95	

Legend

- Treatment Area
- Road
- BLM-administered
- Non-BLM Land
- Perennial Stream
- Intermittent Stream
- 100 ft. Index Contour
- 40 ft. Contour

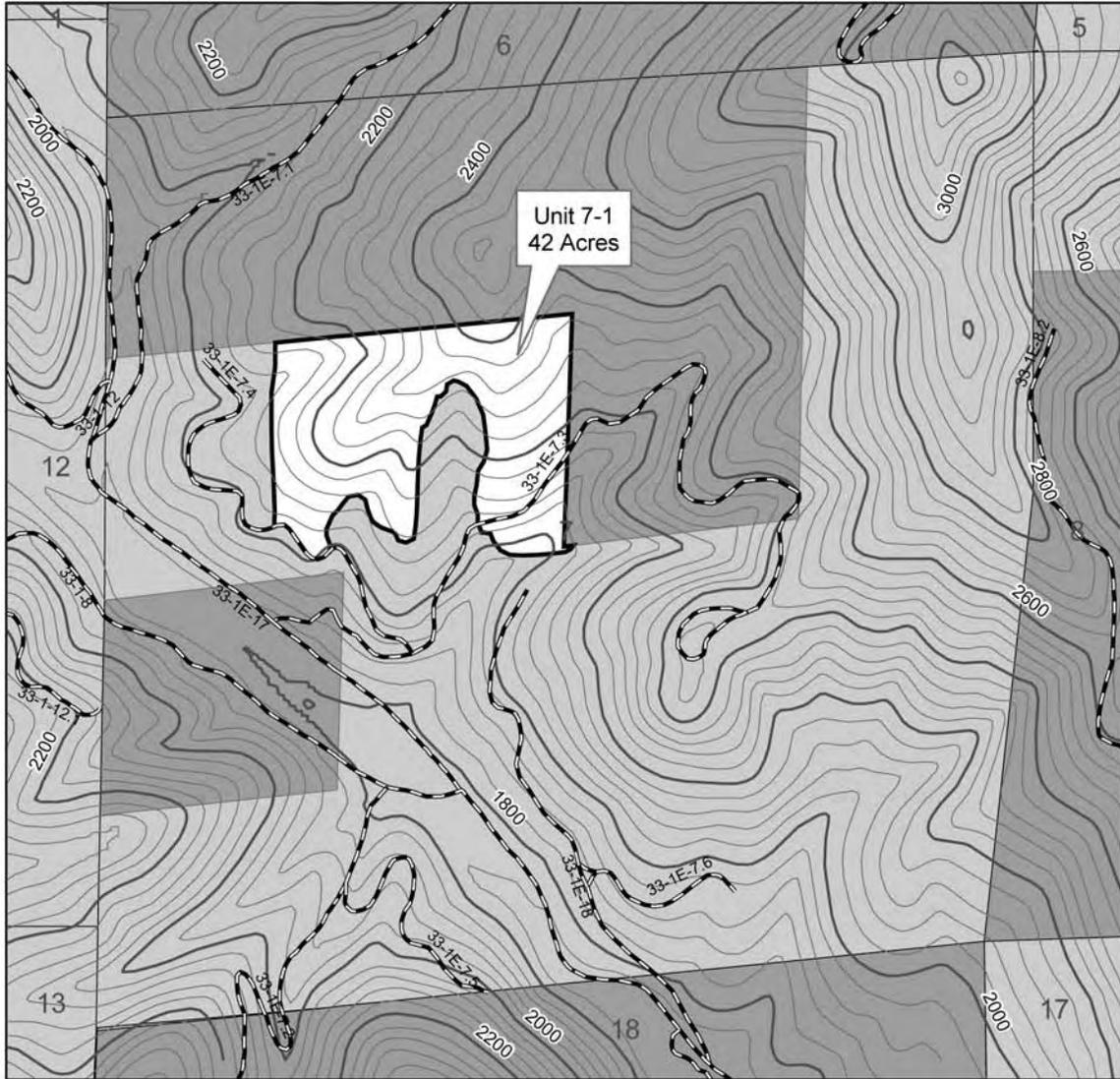


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**Map 6. Timbered Rock Fire Area
T32S, R1W, section 25**



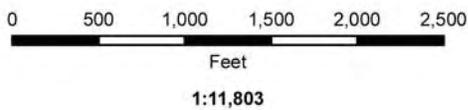
MEDFORD DISTRICT
Butte Falls Resource Area
March 2009



Legend

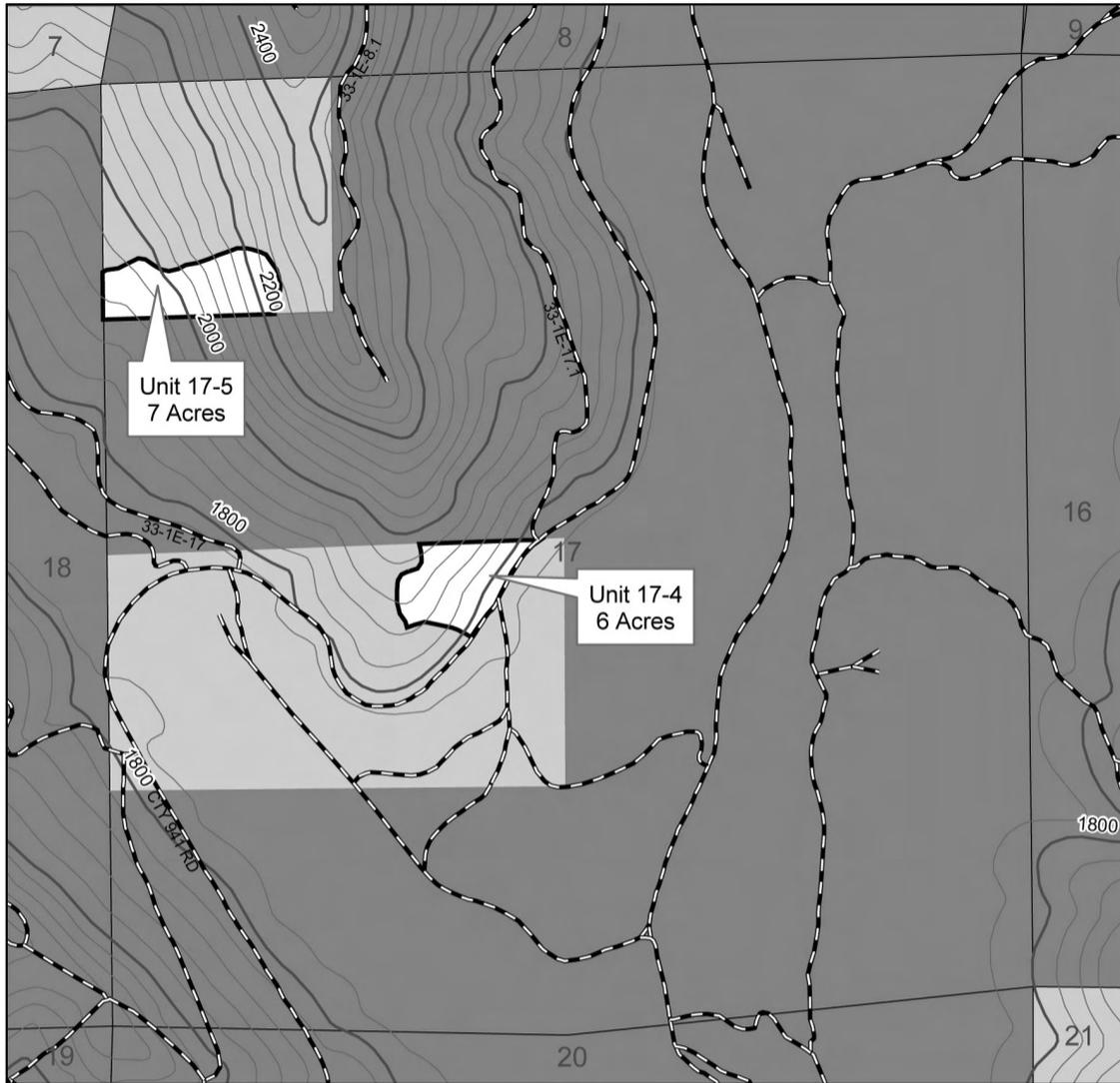
FOI Key	Bid Item	Unit #	Acres	Treatment
160700	1-O	7-1	42	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
		Total	42	

- Treatment Area
- Road
- BLM-administered
- Non-BLM Land
- Perennial Stream
- Intermittent Stream
- 100 ft. Index Contour
- 40 ft. Contour



**Map 7. Timbered Rock Fire Area
T33S, R1E, section 7**

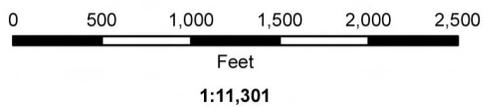




FOI Key	Bid Item	Unit #	Acres	Treatment
160756	1-O	17-4	6	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
160758	1-O	17-5	7	Brush + Hrwd Clump Ctrl
Total			13	

Legend

- Treatment Area
- Road
- BLM-administered
- Non-BLM Land
- Perennial Stream
- Intermittent Stream
- 100 ft. Index Contour
- 40 ft. Contour



Map 8. Timbered Rock Fire Area
 T33S, R1E, section 17

