



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Medford District Office
3040 Biddle Road
Medford, Oregon 97504
email address: Medford_Mail@blm.gov

JUL 01 2010

IN REPLY REFER TO:

1792 (OR-M050)

Dear Neighbor:

The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Butte Falls Resource Area is resuming the environmental analysis process for the Evans Creek Forest Management project. The area being considered is located north of the towns of Rogue River and Gold Hill in Township 32 South, Ranges 2 West, 3 West and 4 West; Township 33 South, Ranges 2 West, 3 West and 4 West; Township 34 South, Ranges 2 West, 3 West, 4 West and 5 West; Township 35 South, Ranges 3 West, 4 West and 5 West; and Township 36 South, Ranges 4 West and 5 West (see enclosed map).

The BLM began the Evans Creek Forest Management Project in October 2007. This project was temporarily delayed in 2008 and 2009 due to a shift in BLM's priorities. At that time you were notified the Evans Creek Forest Management Project was placed on a temporary hold. Because you expressed an interest in the Evans Creek project in the past, we are letting you know of our plans to resume the analysis process.

The BLM is proposing timber harvest on approximately 4,000 acres, vegetation management on approximately 2,000 acres which includes hazardous fuels reduction and stand improvement, and riparian habitat and stream restoration. Silvicultural treatments could include commercial thin, regeneration harvest, select cut, and density management thin in riparian reserves.

I anticipate the number of acres and miles of stream being considered for this project will be reduced as the project is further developed. Harvested timber would be removed using: tractor/ground-based yarding, cable/skyline yarding, or helicopter yarding methods. The slash generated from timber harvest and vegetation management activities would be treated to further reduce hazardous fuels.

The proposed timber harvest uses a combination of silvicultural prescriptions in selected forest stands to meet the following objectives: provide forest products, improve conifer forest vigor and growth, reduce individual tree mortality, and improve hazardous fuels conditions adjacent to private residential lands. These prescriptions tailor management practices to the topography of and the long-term goals for each forest stand type found in the project area. Management of these forest stands would be accomplished through multiple commercial timber sales and Stewardship contracts.

The BLM is preparing extensive written documentation of the project proposals and the possible environmental effects. This will be distributed to the public through an Environmental

Assessment (EA) for the Evans Creek Forest Management Project. We previously received comments from some of you that we will use in developing and analyzing the Evans Creek Forest Management Project. We are asking again for any comments, issues, and concerns you have that would help shape or further develop this project.

We recognize that people place a wide range of values on resources and resource use on public lands. Opinions agreeing or disagreeing with current laws and policies are not helpful in refining the proposed action. Comments clearly expressing site-specific issues or concerns are the most helpful. Your comments will be most useful if they are received by August 15, 2010. However, comments will be accepted and reviewed up until the time a decision on the project is made.

Please submit your comments to Bureau of Land Management, Medford District, Butte Falls Resource Area, 3040 Biddle Road, Medford, Oregon 97504, or e-mail to Medford_Mail@blm.gov (Attention: Jean Williams). Questions and comments on the proposed action should be directed to Jean Williams at (541) 618-2385 or John Bergin at (541) 618-2265. If you no longer wish to receive information about this project, please complete and return the enclosed "Response Form" and you will be removed from the list.

Pursuant to 7 CFR Part 1, Subpart B, Section 1.27, all written submissions in response to this notice will be made available for public inspection, including the submitter's name and address, unless the submitter specifically requests confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses submitted on official letterheads and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

This is not the only opportunity you will have to comment on this project. When the Evans Creek Forest Management Project EA has been prepared and distributed, you will have an opportunity to make further comments.

Thank you for your interest in this project.

Sincerely,



Jon K. Raby
Field Manager
Butte Falls Resource Area

Enclosures

Enclosure 1

Response Form

Please remove me from the mailing list for the Evans Creek Forest Management Project (as described in the attached letter).

Complete this form and return to:

Bureau of Land Management
Attn: Butte Falls Resource Area Planning
3040 Biddle Road
Medford, OR 97504

Please Print Your Mailing Address Clearly:

Name: _____

Street: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

We are trying to save paper and conserve resources. Please respond if you wish to be removed from future mailings for this project.

Enclosure 2: Evans Creek Forest Management Silvicultural Prescriptions and Yarding Methods

Proposed Silvicultural Prescriptions

Commercial Thinning

Commercial thinning is used to control stand density, maintain stand vigor, and encourage the development of desired stand characteristics in the future. Commercial thinning would occur after stands reach an economical combination of tree diameters and surplus volume. This treatment targets the removal of individual trees to maintain or enhance forest growth and diversity. Removal of smaller trees and trees in direct competition with healthy dominant and codominant trees would redirect the site resources (water, sunlight, nutrients, and growing space) toward the development and maintenance of large healthy trees. Canopy closure of trees greater than 8" diameter breast height (DBH) would range from 40 to 60 percent following treatment. Depending on logging slash amounts, slash would be either lopped and scattered or piled and burned.

Regeneration Harvest

To maximize volume growth and yield and to reestablish favored tree species, regeneration harvests are applied in older forest stands. Regeneration harvesting would generally occur in stands 100 years of age or older.

Two regeneration silvicultural methods are proposed for implementation: Structural Retention (SGFMA) and Modified Even-aged (NGFMA). The target stand conditions for each of these methods are similar, except for the number of trees greater than 20" DBH left and the remaining canopy closure.

<i>Regeneration Method</i>	<i>Remaining Trees greater than 20" DBH</i>	<i>Percent Canopy Closure</i>
SGFMA	16-25	25-40
NGFMA	6-8	10-15

Retained trees would be the most vigorous and would be selected based on tree crown ratio and form. Spatial distribution of these trees would vary from individual trees to groups. Healthy understory ponderosa pine, sugar pine, incense cedar, and Douglas-fir trees less than 8" DBH and free of insects, disease, or damage would be left. Wildlife snags and coarse woody debris would not be removed. All other trees would be removed. Slash would be underburned or piled and burned. Conifer seedlings would be planted following harvest.

Selection Harvest

Selection harvest is used to reduce stand densities, remove low vigor trees, and leave a fully stocked healthy stand. Trees are harvested across all diameter classes with the harvest criteria based on density levels, target stocking levels, and risk factors of individual trees. Canopy closure of trees greater than 8" DBH would range from 40 to 60 percent following harvest. Depending on logging slash amounts, slash would be either lopped and scattered or piled and burned.

Riparian Reserve Density Management Thinning

To reduce stand densities and to enhance and accelerate the production of large diameter conifers in Riparian Reserves, smaller trees and trees in direct competition with healthy dominant and codominant trees would be removed. Reducing stand densities would redirect the site resources (water, sunlight, nutrients, and growing space) toward the development and maintenance of large healthy trees. Canopy

closure of trees greater than 8" diameter breast height (DBH) would range from 40 to 60 percent following treatment. Depending on logging slash amounts, slash would be either lopped and scattered or piled and burned.

Timber Harvest Yarding Methods

Trees harvested as a result of the forest stand prescriptions described above would be moved, or yarded, from the forest stands to a landing (a central area where logs are gathered for further transport). A combination of skyline cable, tractor, and helicopter yarding methods would be used in this project.

Skyline Cable Yarding: drags trees by cable with one end suspended and one end on the ground, up the slope to a landing area on or near a road. This results in narrow, parallel yarding corridors about every 150 feet throughout the harvest unit. Corridors are about 9 to 15 feet wide, depending on the size of trees removed and the terrain. The locations of the corridors are approved by the BLM sale administrator and are designated before harvest begins. Cut trees are dragged from the place they are cut to the yarding corridor.

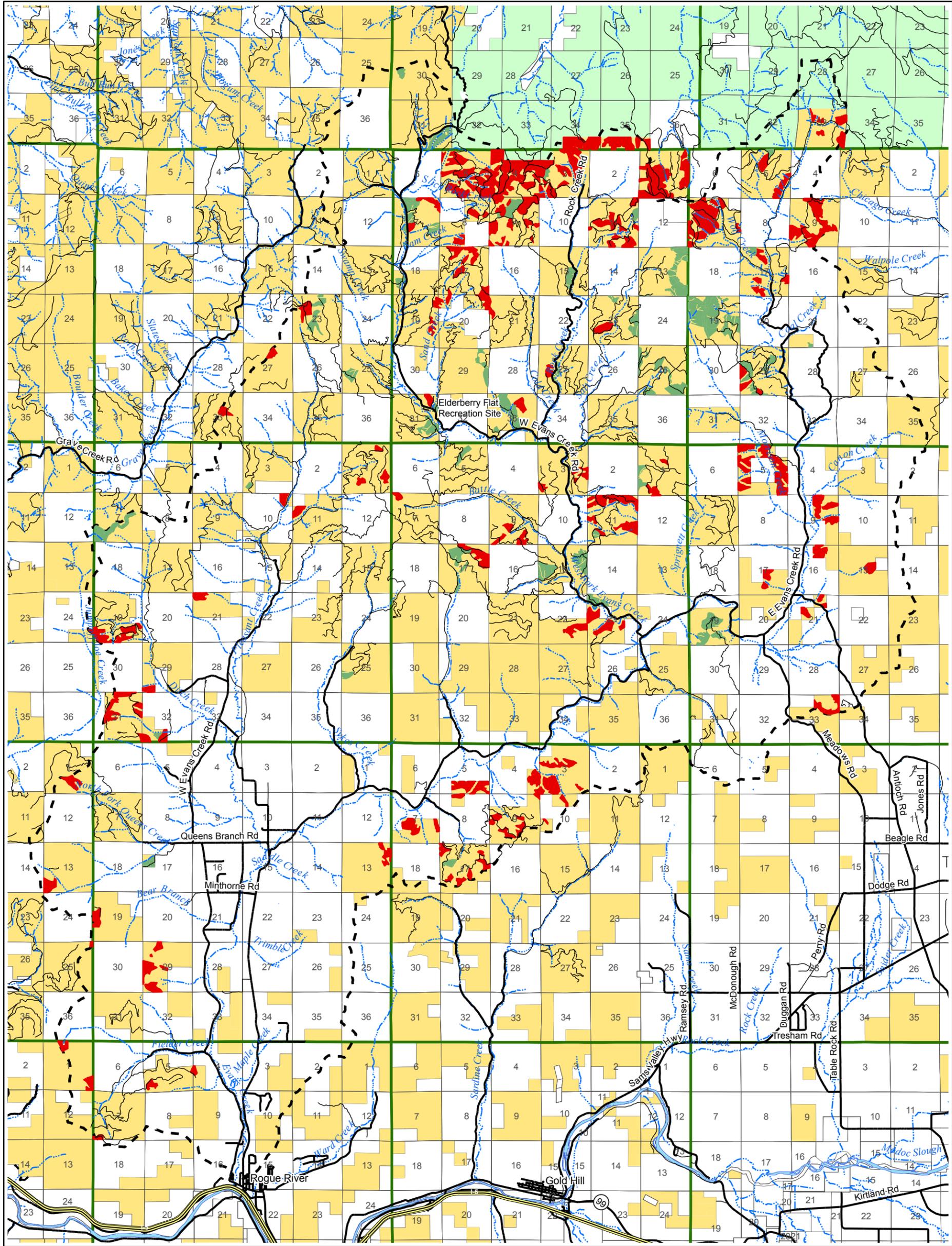
Tractor Yarding: uses tractors to drag trees to landing locations. Tractor yarding only occurs on lands with less than 35 percent slopes. This method requires narrow skid trails (about 9 to 12 feet wide). Skid trail locations are approximately 150 feet apart, but may vary depending on site-specific terrain. The skid trails are located before harvest begins and the locations are preapproved by the BLM sale administrator.

Helicopter Yarding: lifts trees bunched together by a cable, moving the trees from the harvest unit to a landing area near a road. Helicopter yarding allows for full suspension of the trees from the harvest unit to the landing area and does not create skid trails or corridors. Helicopter yarding eliminates the need to build roads within the harvest area. The objective is to minimize surface disturbance in high risk watersheds. Existing helicopter landings would be used whenever possible. Landings would not exceed one acre in size.

R4W

R3W

R2W



-  Evans Creek Proposed Timber Unit
-  Evans Creek Proposed Vegetation Management Unit
-  I-5
-  Paved Road
-  Other Road
-  Perennial Stream

-  Evans Creek Fifth Field Watershed
-  Private
-  Forest Service
-  BLM-administered

Evans Creek EA Project Proposal



MEDFORD DISTRICT
June 2010



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