



United States Department of the Interior

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

APR 11 2013

IN REPLY REFER TO:

1792(M060)

Dear Interested Citizen:

The Ashland Resource Area of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Medford District Office is proposing to implement the Galls Creek Forest Management Project located in the Gold Hill-Rogue River Watershed.

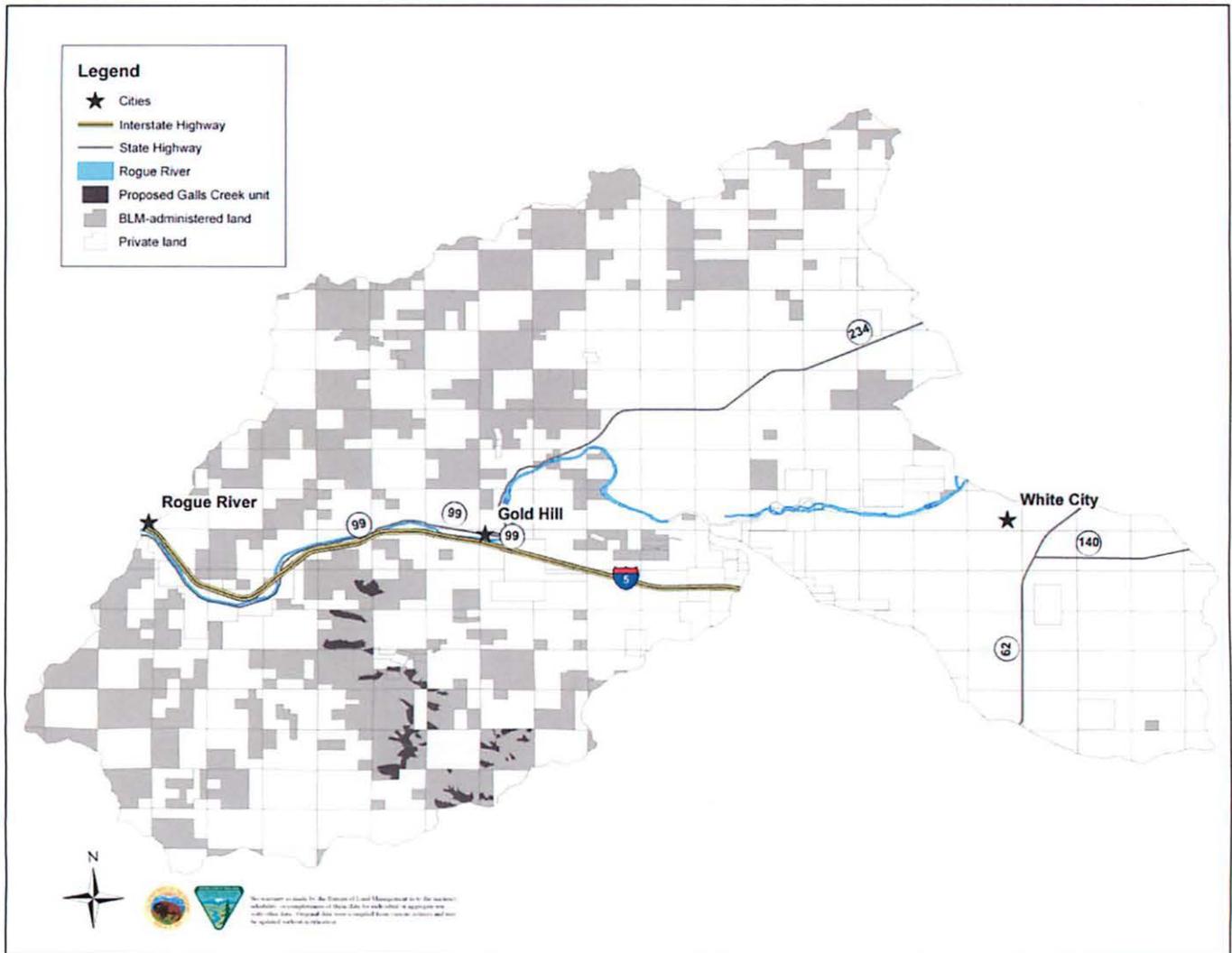
Why is BLM Proposing the Galls Creek Forest Management Project?

The 1995 Medford District Resource Management Plan (RMP) implements direction provided in the Oregon and California Railroad and Coos Bay Wagon Road Grant Lands Act of 1937 (O&C Act), for which sustainable timber production is the primary purpose. Along with being consistent with the RMP, the design and development of the Galls Creek Forest Management Project would be in accordance with the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl and the Standards and Guidelines for Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (Northwest Forest Plan) (USDA and USDI 1994). The Galls Creek Forest Management Project is located on land designated under Medford District's 1995 Resource Management Plan (RMP) as Matrix lands. Matrix lands are designated as the area in which most timber harvest and other silvicultural activities will be conducted. The Galls Creek Forest Management Project is designed to implement the management direction of the 1995 RMP, which includes:

- Ensure sustainable forest production, and the renewable resources they provide, by managing forests to improve conifer forest vigor and growth (USDI 1995, pp. 72-73);
- Provide timber products from Matrix land allocations in accordance with the direction in the Medford District's Resource Management Plan (USDI 1995, pp. 72-73); and
- Maintain a transportation system within the project area that serves the management of resource program areas including timber management (USDI 1995, pp. 84-88).

The Project Area is defined as the area where action is proposed. The Public Land Survey System description for the proposed Galls Creek Forest Management Project is: T. 36 S., R. 03 W., Sections 29, 30 and 31; and T. 37 S., R. 03 W. in Sections 05, 06, 08, 09, 15, 17, 21 and 22, Willamette Meridian, Jackson County, Oregon (Map 1).

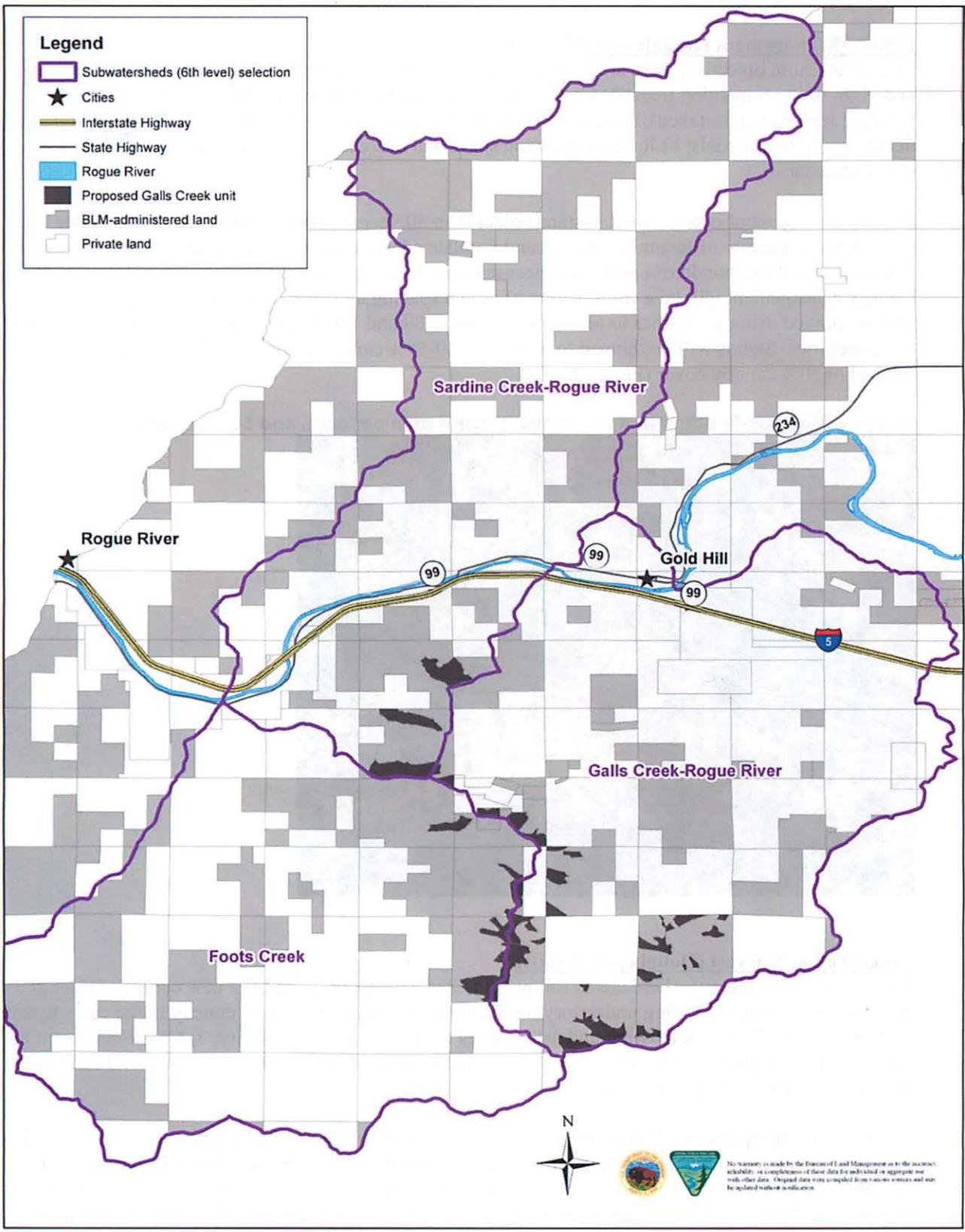
Map 1. Galls Creek Forest Management Project Proposed Project Area (Gold Hill-Rogue River Watershed)



What is the BLM Proposing?

The BLM is proposing to conduct commercial timber harvest on BLM-administered lands in the Sardine Creek-Rogue River, Galls Creek-Rogue River and Foothills Creek subwatersheds (Map 2), utilizing the silvicultural prescriptions summarized below. Timber would be harvested using tractor or cable yarding systems. The slash generated from timber harvest would be treated to reduce hazardous fuels. New permanent and temporary roads may be proposed for construction in order to access some of the stands proposed for forest management.

Map 2. Possible harvest units by subwatershed



Summary of Silvicultural Objectives and Prescriptions

Density Management (Douglas-fir thinning)

The silvicultural objectives here are as follows: 1) Reduce stand density to increase tree growth, quality, and vigor of the remaining trees; 2) Create diversified stand structure (height, age, and diameter classes); 3) Increase resilience/resistance of forest stands to wildfire, drought, insects, etc. by reducing Douglas-fir densities and ladder fuels; 4) Increase growing space and decrease competition for large and/or legacy pine, oak, and cedar.

Density management is prescribed in stands older than 80 years to control stand densities, reduce competition mortality of favorable species and regulate adequate growing space requirements for species. Suitable sugar pine, ponderosa pine, and incense cedar, would be favored for leave over Douglas-fir. Density Management will be a combination of crown spacing and basal area thinning. Douglas-fir stands will be thinned using guidelines to reduce basal area to 80 and 140 ft² per acre range depending upon the site conditions. Stands will be thinned to a range of 40-59% canopy cover, with the average stand being thinned to 50% canopy cover (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Douglas-fir stand thinned to 100 ft² basal area per acre, and 50% canopy cover.



Regeneration Harvest (Douglas-fir stands)

The silvicultural objectives here are as follows: 1) Create growing space for a new cohort of trees and/or increase the growth of existing understory trees.; 2) Reduce understory stem density in the current stand and control the growth rates of existing understory trees for long term survivability; 3) Create regeneration opportunities for species that are shade intolerant and provide long term success or survival of less prominent species (eg., sugar pine).

This prescription applies to stands primarily dominated by mature Douglas fir older than 120 years, have poor annual stand growth, and/or have limited conifer regeneration. Thinning these stands would not provide the desired growth and increase in productivity. As directed by the Medford District RMP, regeneration harvest as proposed under this project would leave at least 16 to 25 large green conifer trees

per acre that equals on average 40 to 50 feet spacing between large green conifer trees. Large green conifer trees are described as those greater than 20 inches diameter at breast height (DBH). Stands will be harvested to a range of 35-45% canopy cover, with the average stand being harvested to 40% canopy cover (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Douglas fir stand with a regeneration harvest to 20 trees per acre >20" DBH and 40% canopy cover retention.



What is the BLM Asking the Public?

The BLM will be preparing an Environmental Assessment that will document the estimated environmental effects of the proposed Galls Creek Forest Management Project. In order to appropriately address issues relevant to the proposal in the forthcoming environmental assessment, the BLM is seeking your input. Comments should be as specific as possible and provide information on potential issues or concerns that the environmental analysis should address. Your comments will be most useful if they are received by May 17, 2013. However, comments will be accepted and reviewed up until the time a decision on the project is made.

Please submit your comments to Chamise Kramer, Galls Creek Forest Management Project, Bureau of Land Management, Medford District, Ashland Resource Area, 3040 Biddle Road, Medford, Oregon 97504, or e-mail to blm_or_md_mail@blm.gov (Attention: Chamise Kramer). Questions and comments on the proposed action should be directed to Ted Hass 541-618-2253 or Kristi Mastrofina at 541-618-2384. If you do not have comments at this time but wish to be kept informed about the Galls Creek Forest Management Project as planning progresses, please complete and return the enclosed "Response Form," and you will be included on the mailing list.

Before including your address, telephone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, please be advised that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. 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.

Thank you for your interest in this project.

Sincerely,



John Gerritsma
Field Manager
Ashland Resource Area

Enclosure

Enclosure 1

INTEREST RESPONSE FORM

ATTN: Medford District BLM
Ashland Resource Area Planning
Galls Creek Forest Management Project
3040 Biddle Road
Medford, Oregon 97504

Please include me on the Galls Creek Forest Management Project mailing list:

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY:

Name: _____

Street: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

We are trying to save paper and conserve resources. Please respond if you wish to be kept informed.