BLM

ASHLAND RESOURCE AREA

Reader's Brief

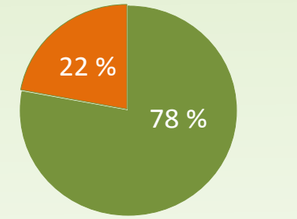
HEPPSIE
Forest Management Project

Why here ?

The 1994 Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) clearly designates timber-producing land, called "Matrix" lands. (78% of the Medford District is managed for non-timber objectives. See graph.) Medford District's 1995 Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP) follows the direction of the NWFP. The Heppsie Project is located on Matrix land, most of which has not experienced a timber entry since 1991, with the exception of a 170-acre scattered salvage harvest of trees blown down in a 2008 windstorm.

Why now ?

The stands in the project area are currently quite dense. High stand density leads to a very high rate of mortality and disease potential, which in turn leads to stand degradation and loss of habitat for the northern spotted owl and other species.



Medford District Acres - 866,000
Medford District Matrix Lands - 191,000 acres

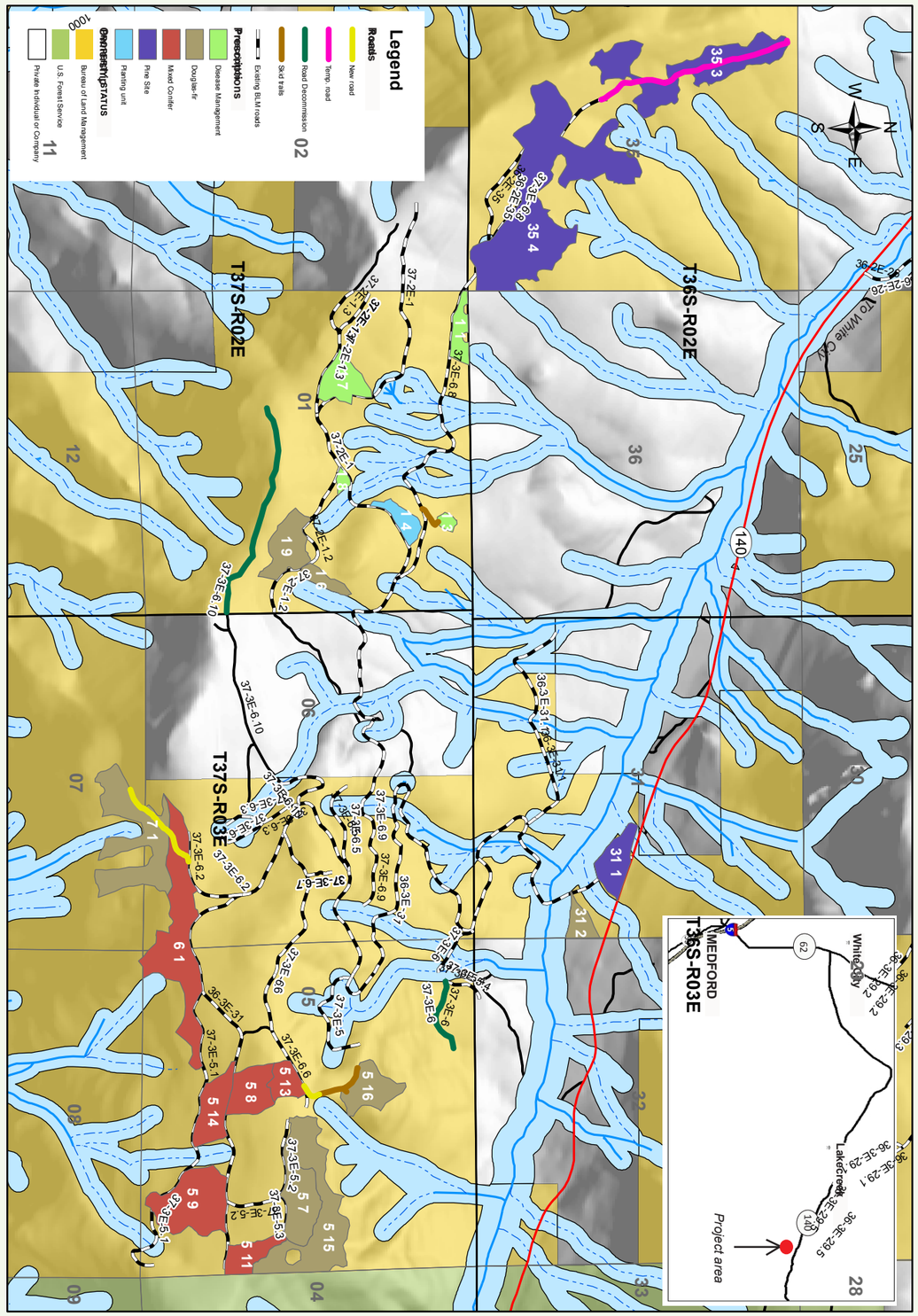
Per 1995 Medford Resource Management Plan

Heppsie Unit, pre-thinning

What are the Project Objectives ?

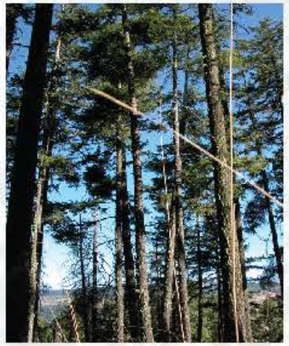
- **Promote conifer vigor and growth.**
- **Improve habitat for owls and other species.**
- **Provide timber products from matrix lands for local economies.**
- **Repair and maintain roads to prevent erosion and sedimentation to watercourses.**

Heppsie Forest Management Project Map



Thank you for taking an interest in your public lands.

Summary of Alternatives Considered



Heppsie Analysis Area

In addition to a No Action Alternative, the Environmental Assessment (EA) considers three action alternatives, all designed to meet the project objectives – to promote conifer stand vigor, improve habitat, provide timber for local economies, and maintain roads.
The No Action Alternative is not included in the table below.

Alternatives Compared:	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4
Commercial Harvest	387 acres	258 acres	342 acres
Non-commercial Thin Only	5 acres	5 acres	5 acres
Existing Haul Routes	13.2 miles	12.9 miles	12.8 miles
New Roads Built	1.2 miles	0 miles	1.0 miles
Roads Decommissioned	0 miles	0 miles	0.9 miles

Selected Alternative

Alternative 4 - Key Features:

- 324 acres commercially thinned
- 18 acres commercial insect and disease management
- 5 Acres Pre-commercial thinning and planting (No commercial harvest)
- 43 acres of nesting, roosting and foraging owl habitat treated and maintained
- 223 acres of dispersal-only owl habitat treated and maintained
- 49 acres of dispersal-only owl habitat removed
- 0.9 miles of road decommissioned
- 12.8 miles of existing road used
- 0.4 miles of new permanent road constructed
- 0.6 miles of new temporary route constructed

Thinning Unit - Heppsie Project

Definitions

Density Management is the primary method of commercially harvesting trees in the Heppsie Forest Management Project. Units are treated differently depending on whether they are predominantly composed of Douglas-fir, Ponderosa Pine, or mixed conifer species, and the quality of northern spotted owl habitat they provide. One result of density management is merchantable timber.

Nesting, roosting, and foraging (NRF) owl habitat is defined by the Northwest Forest Plan. These forest stands are generally older than 80 years, have canopy closure over 60%, a complex and multilayered structure, and large overstory trees.

Dispersal owl habitat is forest that is not NRF-quality, but has sufficient patchy cover for owls to travel between suitable stands. These stands generally have at least 40% canopy cover, and an average tree diameter greater than 11" with room for owls to fly in the understory.

Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ) is a forestry term which defines the maximum amount of timber that can be sold every year from a federal forest.

Insect and Disease Management is a secondary method of commercially harvesting trees in the Heppsie Project. The goal of this method is to increase a stand's resistance to Douglas-fir dwarf mistletoe and to bark beetle attacks. One result of insect and disease management is merchantable timber.

Pre-Commercial Thinning is a treatment which removes most trees smaller than 8" dbh (diameter at breast height), with the goal of increasing stand vigor, growth rate, and disease resistance. Pre-commercial thinning produces no merchantable timber and usually happens concurrently with density and insect/disease management.

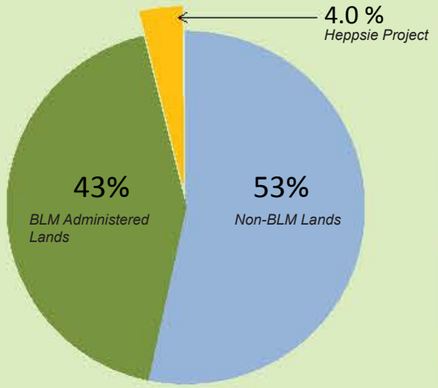
A **watershed** is all land and water within the confines of a drainage divide. All water in a particular watershed flows into one drainage eventually; the Heppsie Forest Management Project is located in the Little Butte Creek watershed and straddles the North and South Forks of Little Butte Creek.

Riparian Reserves are federally designated buffers around streams, springs, ponds, lakes, reservoirs, fens, wetlands, and areas prone to slumping, on federal lands only. The Northwest Forest Plan's Aquatic Conservation Strategy defines riparian reserve widths for these water bodies.

Heppsie Project Treatment

Heppsie Analysis Area
Heppsie project treatment by acres

Non-BLM Lands	4821 acres
BLM Administered Lands (outside of project)	3871 acres
Heppsie Forest Management Project (commercial)	342 acres

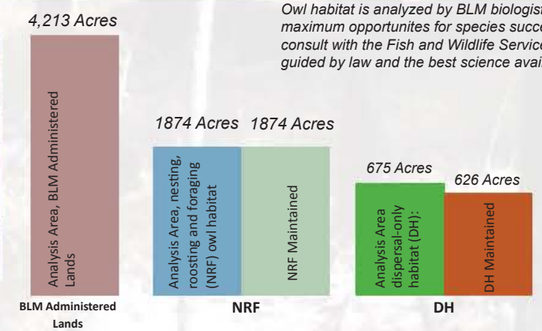


Data based on Silviculture analysis ares of 9034 acres. (2nd Revised EA, Chapter 3, p.4.).

***Example** of post commercial thinning*

Managing for Northern Spotted Owls

Northern Spotted Owl



Owl habitat is analyzed by BLM biologists to ensure maximum opportunites for species success. Biologists consult with the Fish and Wildlife Service and are guided by law and the best science available.

BLM wildlife biologist with Great Gray Owl

Medford District Statistics

Medford District:	866,000 acres
Medford District matrix lands, 1995 RMP :	191,000 acres
Medford District ASQ target, 1995 RMP :	57 million board feet/year
Ashland Resource Area:	243,778 acres
Ashland Resource Area matrix lands, 1995 RMP:	58,470 acres
Ashland Resource Area- ASQ target, 1995 RMP:	18.7 million board feet/year
Heppsie - Estimated Volume	3.7 million board feet
Heppsie - BLM Administered lands analyzed:	4213 acres
Heppsie - BLM Administered lands commercially treated:	342 acres

Small seep - Heppsie Project