

Categorical Exclusion Determination and Decision Record for Tree Planting and Radius Scalping in the Butte Falls Resource Area

DOI-BLM-OR-M050-2012-0002-CX

Description of Proposed Action

The Butte Falls Resource Area, Medford District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposes to reforest, with native conifers, up to 90 acres that were burned by wildfires or harvested in timber sale operations. Reforestation would also occur on skid trails that were used in the harvest of scattered dead trees within the 105-acre Doubleday Fire unit 23-6. Only skid trails used in the harvest would be planted.

Tree planting would be done using hand tools such as a shovel or hoedad. The soil around the planted tree would first be prepared by scalping away vegetation for a 12-inch radius around the planting hole. The hole in the soil would be dug approximately 10 inches deep, the seedling roots placed in the hole, and then covered with the soil. The trees to be planted are either bare-root or containerized seedlings, 1- to 3-years old, and range from 6 to 16 inches in height.

Radius hand scalping would be performed on up to 140 acres. Scalping would be done using hand tools such as a hazel hoe. This treatment would consist of removing all vegetation up to 1-inch diameter for a 2-foot radius around all planted seedling. Seedlings to be treated are generally less than 5 years old.

The proposed project is located in the Butte Falls Resource Area, Medford District BLM, Jackson County, OR. See maps for exact locations of project units.

The project is proposed on BLM-administered lands in the following locations:

- Township 33 South, Range 1 West, section 10
- Township 34 South, Range 2 East, section 35
- Township 34 South, Range 3 East, section 21
- Township 35 South, Range 2 East, sections 13, 17, 23, and 27
- Township 36 South, Range 2 East, section 13
- Township 36 South, Range 4 West, section 26

Plan Conformance Review

This proposal is in conformance with objectives, land use allocations, and management direction in the 1995 and 2008 *Medford District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* (ROD/RMP) and any plan amendments in effect at the time this document is published.

This project also conforms with the 1994 *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (Northwest Forest Plan)

The proposed action was designed to be consistent 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 1995 Medford District ROD/RMP that directs the BLM to:

- Apply silvicultural systems that are planned to produce over time, forests that have desired species composition, structural characteristics, and distribution of seral or age classes (1995 ROD/RMP, p. 72).
- Conifer planting would be done where appropriate to assure that reforestation objectives are promptly met When applicable, silvicultural systems would utilize existing regeneration, natural seeding, and prompt planting of desired species to assure that regeneration targets and timeframes are met (1995 ROD/RMP, Appendix E, p. 184).
- If necessary, artificial regeneration, usually planting, would be used to reach target stocking levels. Genetically-selected stock would be used when available (1995 ROD/RMP, Appendix E, p. 181).

This proposal is also consistent with management direction in the 2008 Medford District ROD/RMP that directs the BLM to:

- Prepare newly harvested and inadequately stocked areas for the regeneration of commercially desirable trees and enhance their growth. Site preparation methods include mechanical or manual procedures, and prescribed burns (2008 ROD/RMP, p. 41).
- Promote the establishment and survival of commercially desirable coniferous seedlings and saplings through stand maintenance and protective treatments (2008 ROD/RMP, p. 41).

Project Design Features

1. Conifer planting will be done on an 8' x 8', or 10' x 10' spacing.
2. Species planted will consist of Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, sugar pine, and incense cedar. Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine will make up the majority of the trees planted in similar composition to the original stand.
3. Trees will be hand planted with a shovel or hoedad.
4. Radius hand scalping will remove vegetation less than 1 inch in diameter at ground level, primarily grass, for a 2-foot radius around planted conifer seedlings with hand tools, such as a hazel hoe.
5. Units will be surveyed for BLM Special Status plants prior to treatment. If plants are found within treatment units, appropriate species-by-species protective measures will be implemented to accommodate those plants.
6. Activity will be restricted within 200 feet of northern spotted owl nest sites from March 1 through June 30 of a given year, unless instructed differently by the BLM wildlife biologist. This restriction may be extended up to September 30 if nesting is occurring
7. All trash and garbage will be picked up and disposed of properly

8. No overnight camping will be allowed at the site or in the surrounding area.
9. Vehicles will stay 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(3),

Seeding or reforestation of timber sales or burn areas where no chaining is done, no pesticides are used, and there is no conversion of timber type or conversion of nonforest to forest land. Specific reforestation activities covered include: seeding and seedling plantings, shading, tubing (browse protection), paper mulching, bud caps, ravel protection, application of non-toxic big game repellent, spot scalping, rodent trapping, fertilization of seed trees, fence construction around out-planting sites, and collection of pollen, scions and cones.

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:

Reforest areas burned by wildfire or harvested in timber sale operations with native conifers. It would also increase the survival of planted trees in areas designated as likely to benefit from mulching or scalping.

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 RW 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 RW 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 RW Remarks:

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

Yes No

Initial RW 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 RW Remarks:

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

Yes No

Initial SLS 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 MB Remarks:

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: all areas surveyed - no sites

Animals Yes No

Initial DR Remarks:

Fish Yes No

Initial Dj Remarks:

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

Yes No

Initial LW Remarks:

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

Yes No

Initial LW 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 LW 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

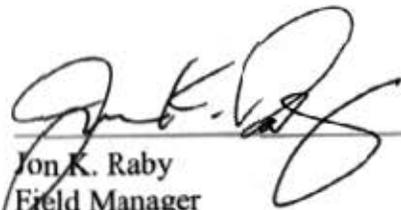
Initial mw Remarks:

Decision

It is my decision to implement the conifer tree planting and scalping in fiscal year 2012 as described in the Proposed Action and as shown on the attached project maps.

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.


Jon K. Raby
Field Manager
Butte Falls Resource Area

2/23/12
Date

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

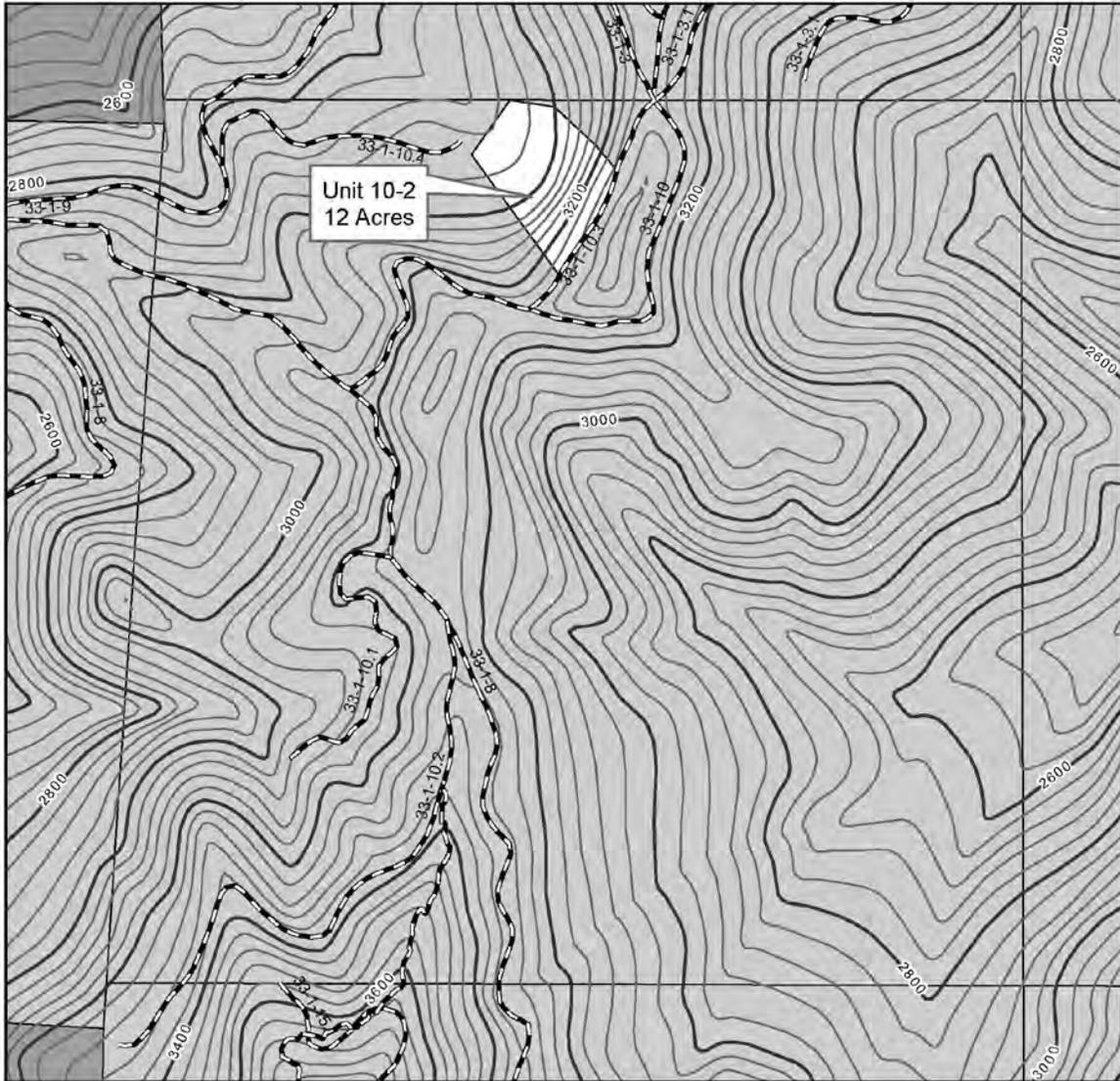
Notice of the forest management decision to be made on the action described in this categorical exclusion will be posted on the Medford District Web site. The action is subject to protest under 43 CFR 4.450-2. A decision in response to a protest is subject to appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals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

Categorical Exclusion Reviewers:

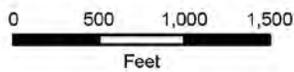
Name	Title	Date	Initials
Robyn Wicks	NEPA Coordinator	2/23/12	RW
Marcia Wineteer	Botanist	2/7/12	mw
Dave Roelofs	Wildlife Biologist	2/7/12	DR
Dale Johnson	Fish Biologist	2/13/12	DJ
Shawn Simpson	Hydrologist	2/16/12	SS
Amy Meredith	Soil Scientist	2/7/12	ALM
Al Mason	Fire/Fuels Specialist	2/7/12	AM
Lisa Brennan	Archaeologist	2/23/12	LB
Leo Kalvels	Engineer	2-23-12	LK
Trish Lindaman	Outdoor Recreation Planner	2/8/12	TL

North Trail

T33 R1W Sec. 10



-  silvi_units
-  Perennial Stream
-  Intermediate 40-ft contour
-  BLM Administered
-  Road
-  Intermittent Stream
-  Index 200-ft contour
-  PVT



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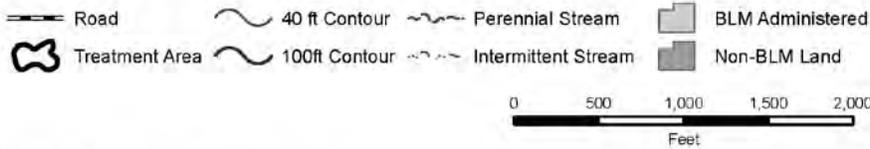
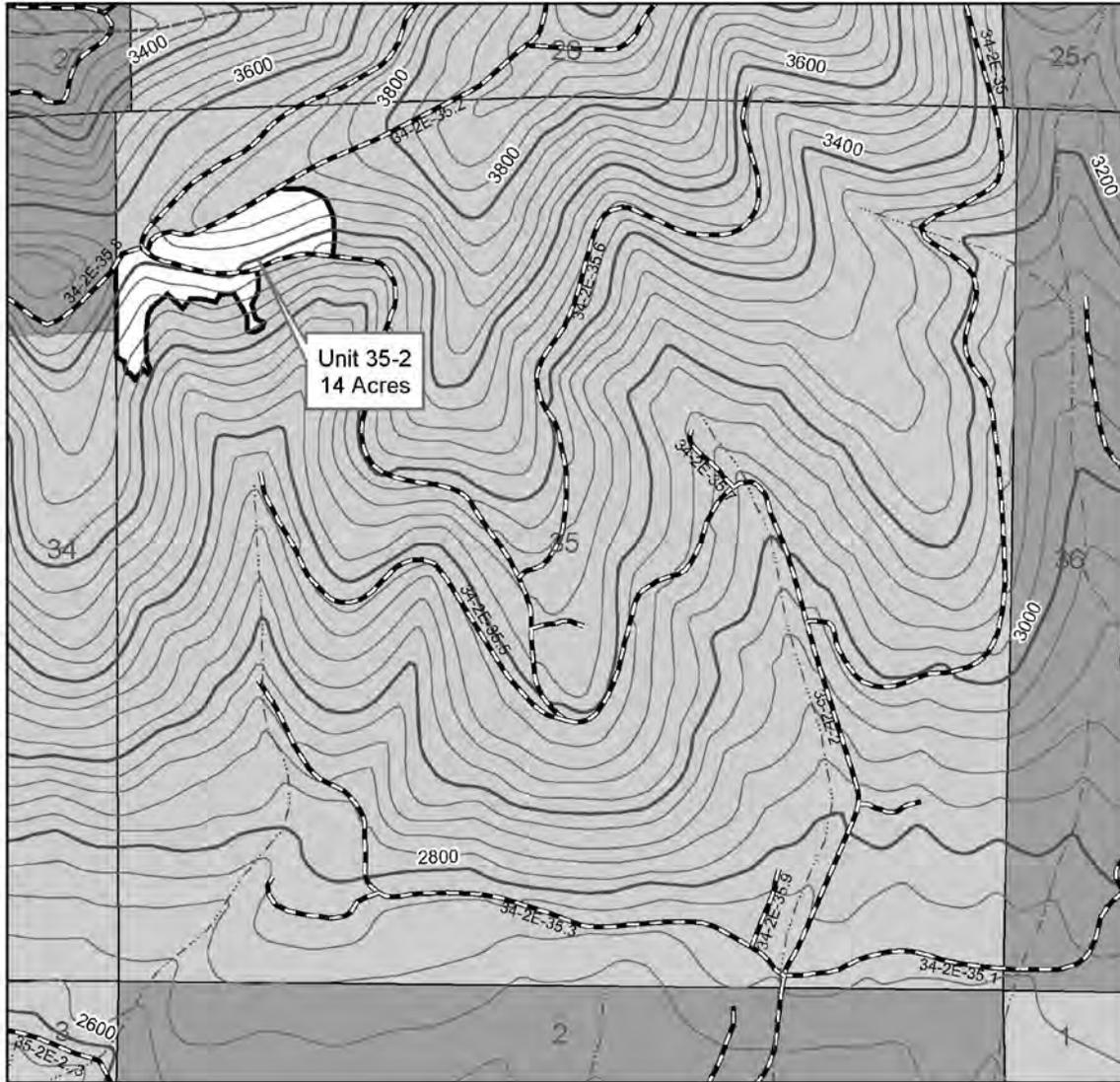
FOI Key #	OI #	Unit #	Acres	Treatment
165463	017	10-2	12	Re-Plant 8X
		Total	12	



Bureau of Land Management
MEDFORD DISTRICT
Butte Falls RA
January 2012

Look Out B Low

T34S R2E Sec 35



FOI Key	Unit #	Ol#	Acres	Treatment
163783	35-2	017	14	Re-Plant (10x) & 2' radius scalp
		Total	14	

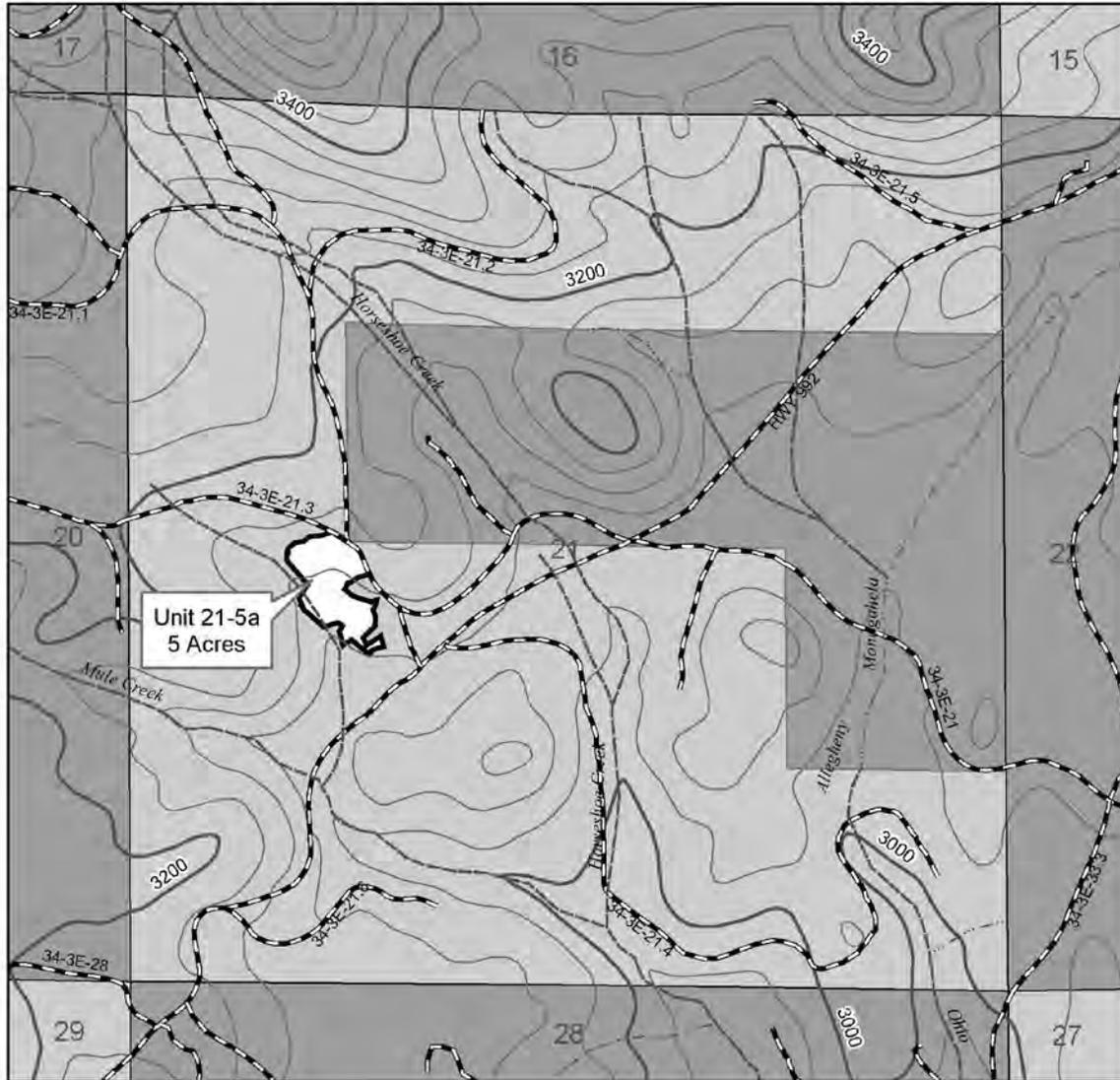
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MEDFORD DISTRICT
Butte Falls RA
January 2012

Camp Stew

T34S R3E Sec 21



- Road
- ~ 40 ft Contour
- ~ Perennial Stream
- BLM Administered
- ⊕ Treatment Area
- ~ 100ft Contour
- ~ Intermittent Stream
- Non-BLM Land



FOI Key	Unit #	Ol#	Acres	Treatment
161791	21-5a	005	5	2' Radius Scalp
			5	

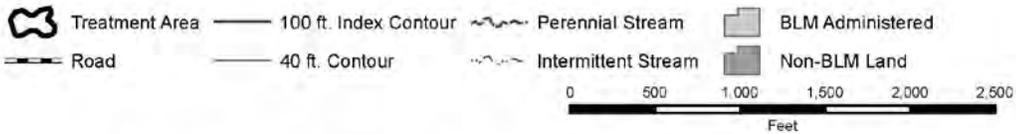
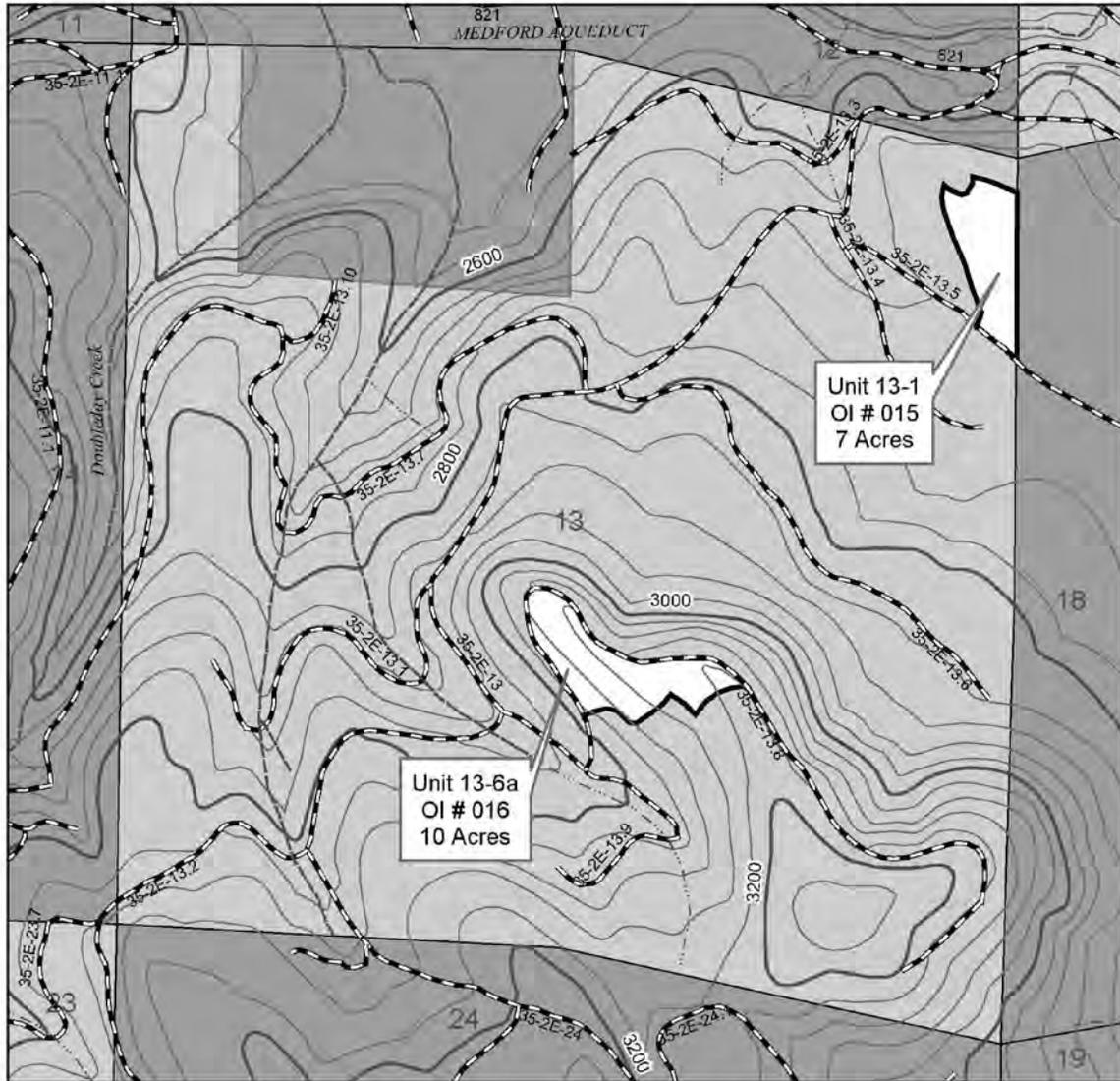
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MEDFORD DISTRICT
Butte Falls RA
January 2012

Bowen Over

T35S R2E Sec 13



FOI Key	Unit #	OI #	Acres	Treatment
165592	13-1	015	7	Re-Plant 10X & 2' Radius Scalp
165593	13-6A	016	10	Re-Plant 10X & 2' Radius Scalp
		Total	17	

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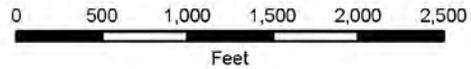
MEDFORD DISTRICT
Butte Falls RA
January 2012

Lower Down

T35S R2E Sec 17



-  Treatment Area
-  40 ft Contour
-  Perennial Stream
-  BLM Administered
-  Road
-  100ft Contour
-  Intermittent Stream
-  Non-BLM Land



FOI Key	Unit #	Ol#	Acres	Treatment
165664	17-2	011	18	2' Radius scalp
165665		012		
		Total	18	

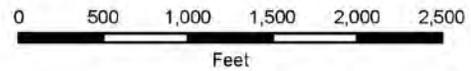
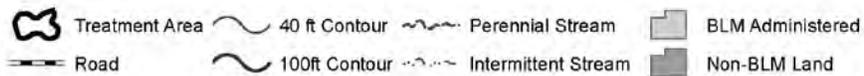
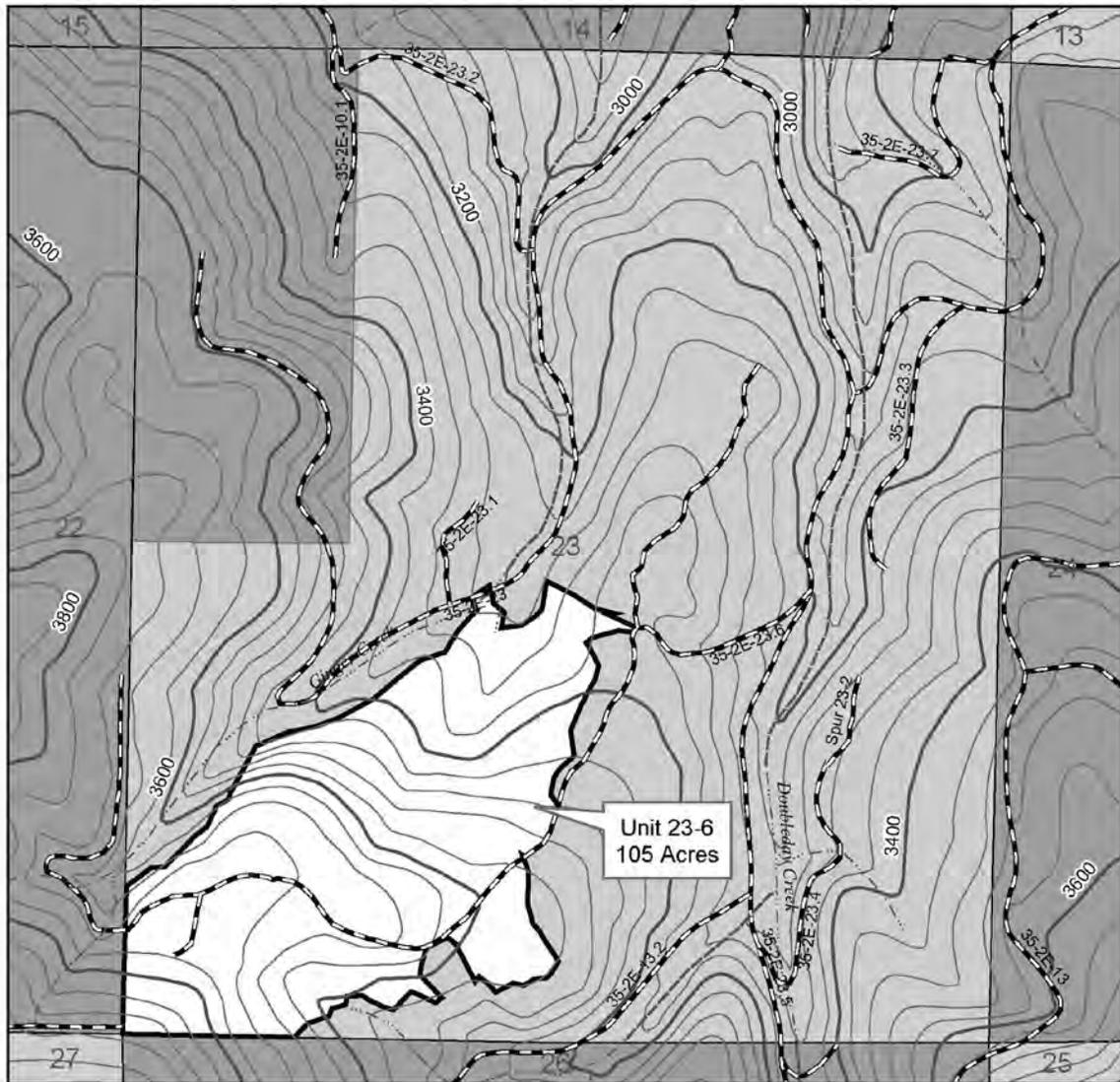
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MEDFORD DISTRICT
Butte Falls RA
January 2012

Doubleday Fire

T35S R2E Sec 23



FOI Key	Unit #	Ol#	Acres	Treatment
163751	23-6	005	105	Re-Plant 10X - Skid Trails
163749		002		
		Total	105	

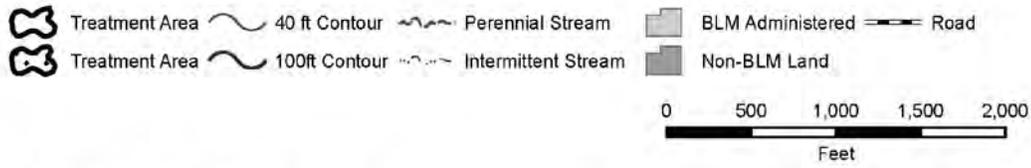
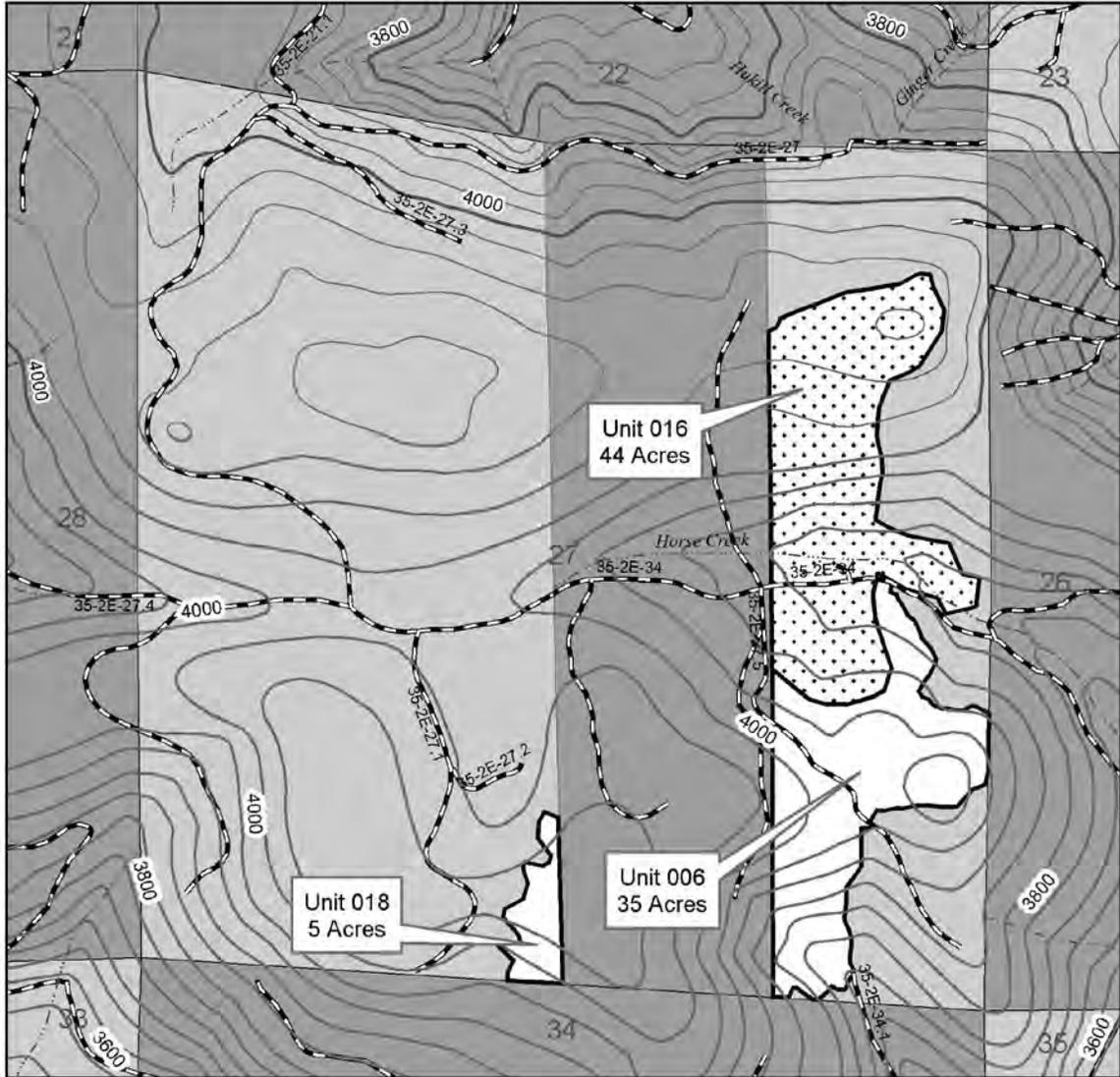
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MEDFORD DISTRICT
Butte Falls RA
January 2012

Doubleday Fire

T35S R2E Sec 27



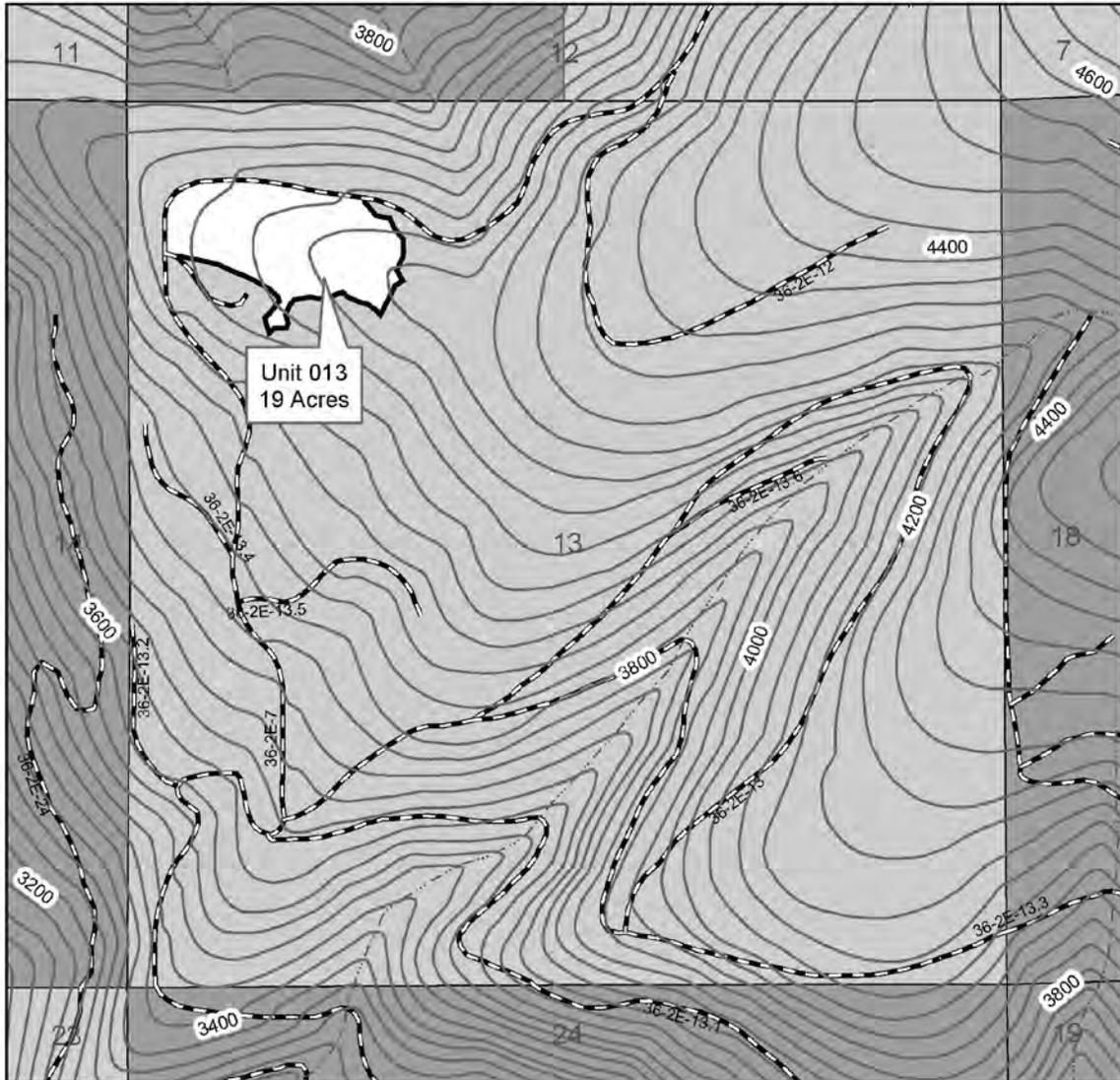
FOI Key	TS #	Unit #	Acres	Treatment
162734	27-5	006	35	2' Radius Scalp
164202	27-1	016	44	2' Radius Scalp
161350	27-8	018	5	2' Radius Scalp
Total			84	



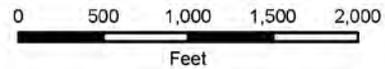
MEDFORD DISTRICT
Butte Falls RA
January 2011

Windy Salt

T36S R2E Sec 13



- Road
- 40 ft Contour
- Perennial Stream
- BLM Administered
- Treatment Area
- 100ft Contour
- Intermittent Stream
- Non-BLM Land



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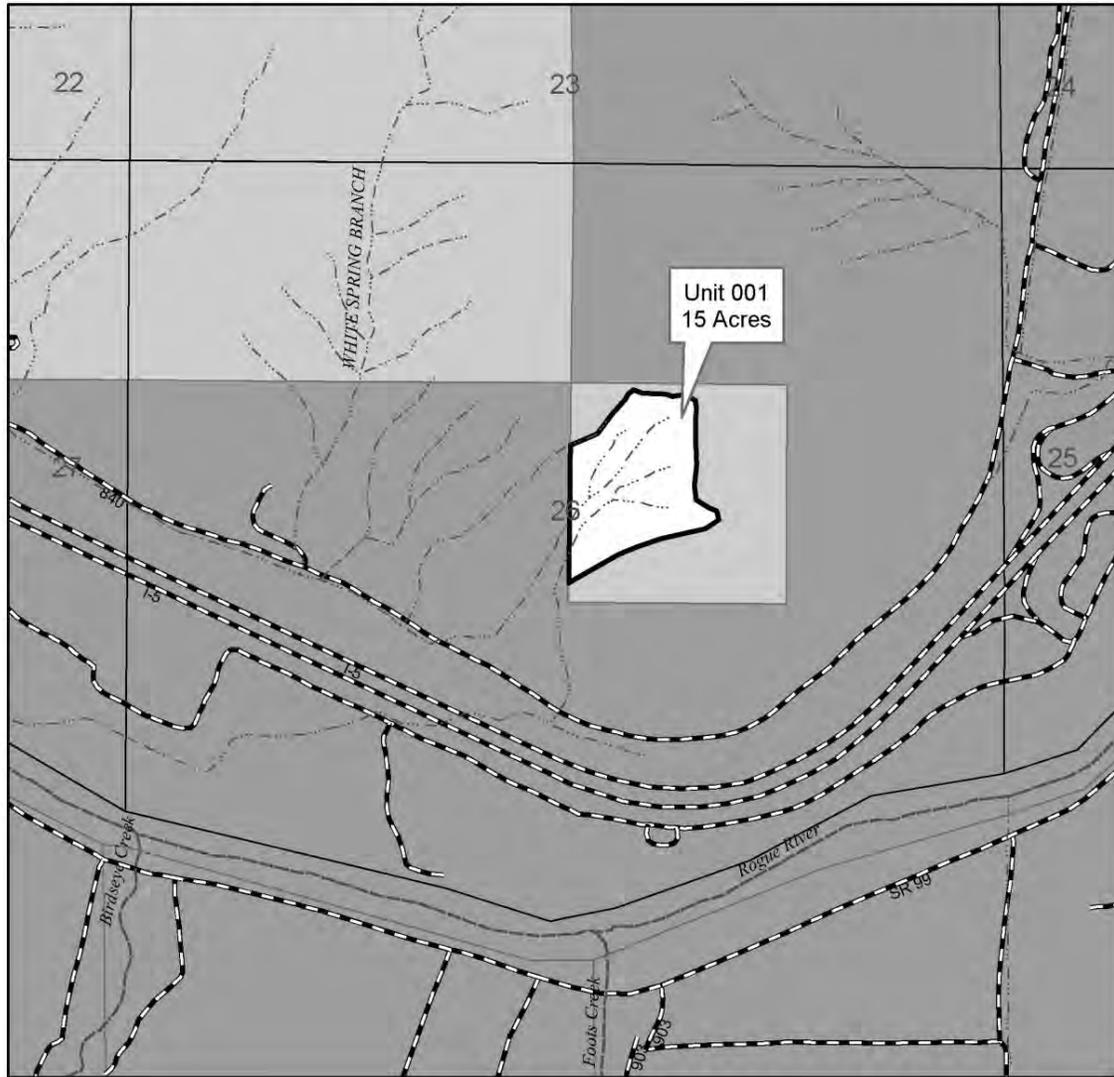
FOI Key	TS #	Unit #	Acres	Treatment
165627	13-6	013	19	Re-Plant (10x)
		Total	19	



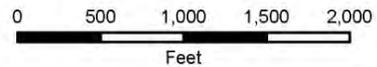
MEDFORD DISTRICT
Butte Falls RA
January 2012

North River Road Fire

T36S R4W Sec 26



- Road
- ~ 40 ft Contour
- ~ Perennial Stream
- BLM Administered
- ⊕ Treatment Area
- ~ 100ft Contour
- ~ Intermittent Stream
- Non-BLM Land



1:12,000



FOI Key	Unit #	Acres	Treatment
159747	001	15	Initial Plant (10x)
	Total	15	



MEDFORD DISTRICT
Butte Falls RA
January 2012