United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
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777 NW Garden Valley Blvd.
Roseburg, Oregon 97471
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IN REPLY REFER TO:

FEB 14 2014

1792 (ORR050)
DOI-BLM-OR-050-2014-0004-EA
Rabbit Mountain Fire LSR Recovery EA

Dear Interested Party:

The South River Field Office, Roseburg District, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is preparing the Rabbit Mountain Fire Late-Successional Reserves Recovery Environmental Assessment (EA). The EA will document potential effects of the project as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. The project area is located within sections of Township 31 South, Ranges 7 & 8 West; and Township 32 South, Ranges 7 & 8 West, Willamette Meridian (see attached map). You have been contacted because you live within approximately one half mile of the project area or you have requested to receive updates from the South River Field Office.

Background

On July 26, 2013, lightning storms ignited the Dad's Creek, Farmer Gulch and Rabbit Mountain fires, forming the Douglas Fire Complex. The fires were fought on 48,679 acres and were contained on September 3, 2012. The fires burned in steep, rugged terrain near the communities of Leland, Wolf Creek and Glendale. Affected landscapes include mature mixed conifer stands, young conifer plantations, oak woodlands, hardwood stands, and other non-commercial forest land across a range of ownerships. Burn intensity ranged from low to high with mixed degrees of mortality.

The Rabbit Mountain Fire affected approximately 23,984 acres of BLM-administered and privately managed lands, including approximately 6,267 acres in the Late-Successional Reserves (LSR) land use allocation on the South River Resource Area. The Cow Creek Backcountry Byway passes through the burned area, as does a railroad right-of-way and several major collector roads that provide access for forest management and recreation on the affected lands. Also present within or adjacent to the burned area are the Dutchman Lookout and a smoke detection camera system, a developed water source for fire suppression, and two large quarries at Rabbit Mountain and Quartzite Creek that are the primary sources of aggregate for road construction and road resurfacing in the area.

Project Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to address resource conditions resulting from the Rabbit Mountain Fire through management that is consistent with Roseburg District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP 1995) objectives for LSR. Addressing three needs have been identified: 1) safety along roads, along a railroad right-of-way, and adjacent to forest improvements (i.e. Dutchman Lookout, fire water source, and quarries); 2) hazards caused by fuel loading; and 3) habitat restoration in northern spotted owl home ranges affected by the fire.

The fire created conditions that are hazardous to forest users and established infrastructure, created abnormally high levels of forest fuels, and inhibit attainment of late-successional habitat. These existing conditions create the need for the BLM to act expeditiously and responsibly to remove dead and dying trees in order to eliminate hazards, mitigate potential dangers, manage current and future fuel loading, and initiate habitat restoration in compliance with the Roseburg District ROD/RMP. We want to proactively reduce risks for potential road hazards, road damage, road maintenance, and road repair in the next three to five years.

The ROD/RMP management direction for activities in the Late Successional Reserve LUA includes:

> "Remove snags and logs to reduce hazards to humans along roads and trails and in or adjacent to recreation sites." (RMP p. 30)
>
> "Remove hazard trees along utility right-of-way and in other developed areas" (RMP p. 70).
>
> "Remove trees along rights-of way if they are a hazard to public safety. Consider leaving material on site if available course woody debris is inadequate. Consider topping of trees as an alternative to felling." (RMP p. 73).
>
> "In the Oregon Klamath Province, if essential to reduce future risk of fire or insect damage, conduct salvage…Focus on those areas where there is high risk of large scale disturbance" (RMP p. 30).
>
> "Plan and implement silvicultural treatments inside Late-Successional Reserves that are beneficial to the creation of late-successional habitat" (RMP p. 29).
>
> "Design projects to improve conditions for wildlife if they provide late-successional habitat benefits or if their effect on late-successional associated species is negligible" (RMP p. 38).

Public Involvement

As the Field Manager for the South River Field Office, I am seeking your input to help identify any issues or concerns specific to this project. To assure your written comments are fully considered during the project analysis, please submit your comments by February 22, 2014. Comments can be sent to Steve Lydick, South River Field Manager, Roseburg District, 777 NW Garden Valley Blvd, Roseburg, OR 97471 or email to: BLM_OR_RB_Mail@BLM.GOV. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., closed on holidays. Comments submitted after February 22, 2014 will be accepted, but our ability to respond effectively could be reduced. Those who provide comments or display an interest during this scoping period will be notified when the EA for this project is ready for public review.

Comments submitted will become part of the public record for this project. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your personal information from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

I appreciate your involvement in Forest Management projects. If you have any questions, or need additional information, please contact me, at (541) 464-3211.

Sincerely,

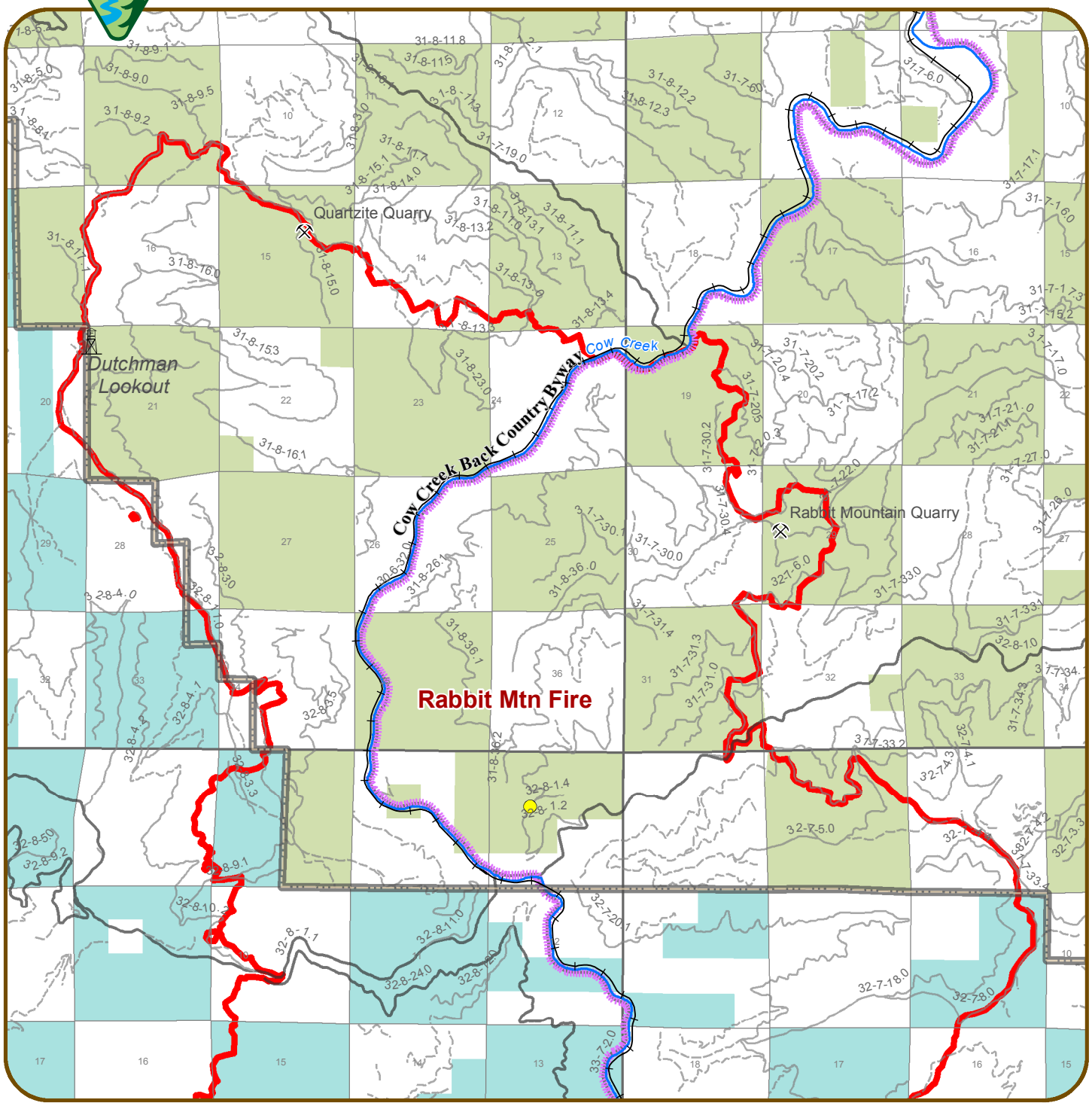
Steven D. Lydick
South River Field Manager

2/14/14
Date

Attachment:

Rabbit Mountain Fire
Late Successional Reserves Recovery

R08W R07W



Legend

- Fire Perimeters
- Matrix Land Use Allocation
- Late Successional Reserve Land Use Allocation
- District
- Rock Quarry
- Fire - Water Source
- Railroad
- National Back Country Byways
- Paved Road
- Rocked Road
- Native or Unknown Road

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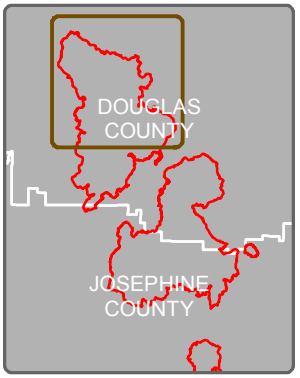
Miles

N W E S



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Roseburg District
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777 NW Garden Valley Blvd.
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Date: 1/16/2014