

## SCOPING NOTICE

**Carpenter Road Fire ESR**

Spokane District Bureau of Land Management

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Border Field Office is proposing treatments, under emergency stabilization and rehabilitation (ESR), in response to the Carpenter Road wildfire (J1P8). There are an estimated 7,649 acres affected by the Carpenter Road wildfire. The burn severity on BLM administered land was moderate to high. In high-severity burn areas the wildfire killed most of the vegetation. Approximately 1,500 acres within the high burn severity are not expected to recover because there is little to no vegetation that would serve as a seed source. Federal actions, such as ESR treatments, must be analyzed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant Federal and State laws and regulations.

The purpose of this notice is to inform interested and affected parties of the proposal and to solicit comments to assist with the NEPA review of the proposal. Analysis of the proposal is ongoing, and will be documented in an Environmental Assessment (EA) with an estimated completion date of November 10, 2015. Comments received in response to this solicitation will be used to identify environmental issues related to the proposed action and may identify alternatives to the proposed action. The BLM has identified three preliminary issues as described below. The BLM has not identified any alternatives to the proposed action at this time. Provide general background information to introduce the decision.

**Project Location**

The Carpenter Road ESR project area consists of approximately 1,500 acres within the burn area, located in Stevens County, 7 miles east of Fruitland, WA. The attached map shows the location of the project area and the perimeter of the Carpenter Road fire.

T. 29 N R. 37 E Sec. 1, 2, 11-15

T. 29 N R. 38 E Sec. 6, 18

T. 30 N R. 38 E Sec. 9



## **Purpose and Need for Action**

The BLM needs to take action now to mitigate the damage caused by the Carpenter Road fire. The wildfire damaged management infrastructure (fences and roads) and natural resources. The wildfire also poses a potential threat to public safety and natural resource recovery throughout the high-severity burn area. The purpose of implementing ESR actions for the Carpenter Road fire is to stabilize the structure and function of fire damaged ecosystems and management infrastructure.

## **Proposed Action**

BLM is proposing to implement ESR actions within portions of the Carpenter Road fire. The proposed actions will stabilize structure and function to fire damaged ecosystems and repair management infrastructure that was damaged. The ESR actions would be located within the Huckleberry Management unit. The actions include: (1) cultural site stabilization, (2) repair and rebuild 4 miles of BLM/Spokane Tribe border fence, (3) repair and maintain 20 miles of road, (4) remove 150 acres hazard trees, (5) control noxious weeds and invasive plants on 200 acres, (6) hand apply grass seed to 40 acres, and (7) plant 400 acres conifer seedlings. All of these amounts are approximate based on initial inventory following the fire. The attached document includes more details related to these proposed treatments.

## **Preliminary Issues**

BLM has identified three preliminary issues. These issues are:

1. The wildfire damaged trees and roads. Would additional survey and removal of hazard trees improve safety along roads in the project area? Would repairing/stabilizing roads damaged by the wildfire improve travel in the project area?
2. Because of the high-severity burn in the project area, would the proposed action stabilize soils and reduce the potential for soil erosion? Would the proposed action affect the rate of recovery of vegetation in fire-damaged ecosystems?
3. Would the proposed action reduce the potential for new infestations of noxious weeds and invasive plants? Would the proposed action reduce the potential spread of existing noxious weed and invasive plants?

## **Public Input Requested**

Comments are specifically requested on the proposed action and preliminary issues. Comments made on this proposal need to be received by **October 29, 2015** and are directly relevant to the proposal and project area. The BLM will not reject public feedback outside established public involvement timeframes; however, these comments may be considered secondary to comments received in a timely manner and may only be assessed to determine if they identify concerns that would substantially alter the assumptions, proposal, design, or analysis presented in the EA. Please send electronic/e-mail comments to: [blm\\_or\\_sp\\_mail@blm.gov](mailto:blm_or_sp_mail@blm.gov) with “**Carpenter Road**

**ESR”** in the subject line or send comments to BLM Border Field Office, 1103 N. Fancher Road, Spokane Valley, WA 99212. Please identify whether you are submitting comments as an individual or as the designated spokesperson on behalf of an organization.

*Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, 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 from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.*

The primary contact for questions and comments related to the Carpenter Road ESR project is:

Debbie Plummer  
1103 N. Fancher Rd.  
Spokane Valley, WA 99212  
509-536-1200

**Attachments:**

Project Area Map  
Description of Carpenter Road ESR Treatments

## Carpenter Road ESR Treatments

### Cultural Site Stabilization

The stabilization of cultural sites will be conducted in conjunction with other treatments throughout the burn area. Ground seeding, fence repair, hazard tree removal, contour felling, and other potential site specific stabilization measures will all assist in the protection of cultural resources. The sites will be disguised with brush and timber litter and will be fenced off as needed. Cultural sites will be periodically patrolled by Law Enforcement.

### BLM/Spokane Tribe Border Fence

The proposed treatment is to repair approximately 4 miles of border fence between the BLM and the Spokane Tribe. The work would be accomplished utilizing the BPA fence contract. Work would begin in spring of 2016.

### Road Maintenance and Repair

The treatment will be to clean ditches, blade existing roads, and install water dips along 20 miles of roads within and adjacent to the burned area. Monitoring of these areas ensures that runoff is able to continue flowing through the culverts and ditches. This ensures that no pooling sediment deposition or erosion occurs, which could result in roads being impassable or washed out. BLM maintained roads are heavily utilized by recreationalists.

### Hazard Tree Removal

Within the Carpenter Road fire burn area, we plan to complete 150 acres of hazard tree removal along all existing roads; 100 feet on both sides. The Huckleberry Mountains are a high use area, with public camping, recreating, and hunting throughout the year. The District has numerous projects occurring in the area. These hazard trees pose a threat to employees and the public. In conjunction with the hazard tree removal, we plan to complete contour felling to increase slope stabilization along roads and riparian areas.

### Noxious Weed and Invasive Control

The proposed treatment is to spot treat, along existing roads and landings, diffuse and spotted knapweed, dalmatian toadflax, St. Johnswort, Canada and bull thistle, and other noxious or invasive species as needed based on known locations and needs identified by surveys. Known infestation areas (estimated at approximately 200 acres total) and other areas detected by surveys will be treated as needed to prevent expansion beyond pre-fire conditions. Biological and mechanical methods will also be considered, including hand treatment, weed trimmers or mowing. Ground based spot application of



herbicides such as glyphosate, chlorsulfuron, and picloram would be used at rates depending on species and infestation level.

Picloram: Maximum rate = 1.0 lb. a.e./ac./year; Typical rate = 0.35 lb. a.e./ac./year

Glyphosate: Maximum rate = 7.0 lb. a.e./ac./year; Typical rate = 2.0 lb. a.e./ac./year

Chlorsulfuron: Maximum rate = 0.047 lb. a.e./ac./year; Typical rate = 0.141 lb. a.e./ac./year

### **Ground/Hand Seed Application**

Approximately 40 acres within the Carpenter Road fire will be hand seeded. This area will be seeded to help stabilize the soils, reduce the potential for wind/water erosion on the site, as well as decrease opportunities for noxious and invasive species to become established. Seeding will occur in the late fall to early winter, which is the time research suggests will be most successful for the selected seeding species. The selected species, and their seeding rates, have been set at a rate that best balances the cost of the seed with their ability to thrive on the site.

Mt. Brome (BRMA4)	4 lbs/acre
Idaho Fescue (FEID)	5 lbs/acre
Bluebunch wheatgrass (PSSP6)	2 lbs/acre
Tufted Hairgrass (DECE)	3 lbs/acre
Silky Lupine (LUSE4)	1 lbs/acre
<b>Total PLS</b>	<b>15 lbs/acre</b>

### **Conifer Seedling Planting**

The proposed treatment is to plant approximately 400 acres at 200 trees per acre within the high intensity burn areas of Cleveland and Togo mines. A mix of approximately 40% Ponderosa pine and 40% Western Larch and 20% Douglas-fir would be planted. Seedlings would be either Styro 15 containerized seedlings or bare root seedlings in the spring of 2016. Ponderosa would be the predominate species planted on south facing slopes, and western larch, with some Douglas-fir on the north facing slopes and protected draws.