

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management
Oregon State Office
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December 27, 2002

EMS TRANSMISSION 12/27/2002
Information Bulletin No. OR-2003-048

To: District Managers: Burns, Lakeview, Prineville, Spokane, and Vale

From: Deputy State Director for Resource Planning, Use and Protection

Subject: Eastside Forest and Woodland Management Action Plan

We recently transmitted the "Eastside Forest and Woodland Management Action Plan for Oregon and Washington" to the Washington Office as required in Instruction Memorandum No. 2003-035.

The action plan describes the following: the status of eastside forests and woodland resources; current conditions of the forest and woodland resources; the current level of forest and woodland management activity; opportunities and rationale for increasing management activity; resources necessary to increase management activity; and potential impediments to successfully increasing management activity. The plan explains that approximately 79 percent of the commercial forest acres are in moderate-to-high risk of losing key ecosystem components to insects, diseases, or stand-replacing wildfire; and at the present level of restoration treatment, it could take 100 years to make initial treatments on the "at risk" acreages. An eight-year action plan is described that calls for a four-fold increase in subactivity 1030 funding over the present FY 2003 base. Additional forestry and other resource staff FTE needs are identified. This funding and staffing level would need to be sustained in order to treat the great majority of the "at risk" acres within 20 years. This is not an "all or nothing" action plan. Any increase in funding and staffing above our FY 2003 base will allow us to increase forest health conditions over the present.

The development of this plan was initiated at our Eastside Forestry Action Meeting held in Prineville in September 2002, which was well-attended by eastside foresters and District and Field Office managers. Your foresters played a critical role in developing the plan and reviewing earlier drafts. The plan is consistent with the President's Healthy Forests Initiative. It describes what resources will be needed to take an aggressive course of active management designed to restore "at risk" eastside forests and woodlands. It lays the foundation for the future management of the eastside forests and woodlands.

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Any questions should be addressed to Dave Harmon, OR-933, at (503) 808-6062.

Districts with Unions are reminded to notify their unions of this Information Bulletin and satisfy any bargaining obligations before implementation. Your servicing Human Resources Office or Labor Relations Specialist can provide you assistance in this matter.

Signed by
Nancy M. Diaz
(Acting)

Authenticated by
Mary O'Leary
Management Assistant

2 Attachments

1 – [Eastside Forest](#) & Woodland Management Action Plan (14pp)

2 – Tables [1](#), [2](#) & [3](#) (3pp)

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**EASTSIDE FOREST AND WOODLAND MANAGEMENT
ACTION PLAN FOR OREGON AND WASHINGTON**

Attachment 1-1

Eastside Forest and Woodland Management Action Plan for Oregon and Washington

The following Eastside Forest and Woodland Management Action Plan for Oregon and Washington responds to

the President's initiative of August, 2002, titled "HEALTHY FORESTS: An Initiative for Wildfire Prevention and Stronger Communities". This Action Plan is specific to the Bureau of Land Management administered lands located east of the crest of the Cascade Mountains in Oregon and Washington. It recognizes that of the 223,000 acres of commercial forest land in this region, 79% is classified as being at moderate to high risk of losing key ecosystem components to insect, disease or wild fire. At the present rate of restoration activity aimed at improving forest conditions, it would take approximately one hundred years to make initial treatments on these "at risk" lands.

This Action Plan identifies a strategy for increasing the funding and staffing needed to more aggressively restore these important public lands to more stable ecological conditions. The threat of catastrophic loss of public resources to insect, disease and stand-replacing wildfire will be reduced significantly if this plan is implemented. This is not an "all or nothing" Action Plan. Increases in funding and staffing above the present level, but below the recommended levels, will derive improved forest and woodland conditions proportionate to the degree that such support is provided.

Prepared by: /s/ David W. Harmon
Dave Harmon, Forester, Oregon State Office

Date: 12-24-02

Reviewed by: /s/ Harold J. Belisle
Harold Belisle, Chief, Branch of Social Sciences
and Resource Data Management,
Oregon State Office

Date: 12-24-02

State Director Approval

I approve the Eastside Forest and Woodland Management Action Plan for Oregon and Washington. This Action Plan describes the recommended approach for increasing the level of active forest and woodland management needed during the next eight years. This Action Plan will be updated periodically as necessary.

Signed: /s/ Elaine M. Brong
Elaine Marquis-Brong
State Director, Oregon/Washington
Bureau of Land Management

Date: 12-24-02

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OR/WA Eastside Forest and Woodland Management Action Plan

Oregon and Washington's public domain forests are concentrated east of the crest of the Cascade Mountains, and are referred to as the Eastside forests. 223,000 acres are classified as commercial forests, and 815,000 are classified as woodlands. Forest tree species are primarily ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine, Douglas-fir, western larch, grand fir, white fir and aspen. Woodlands are predominantly western juniper, with cottonwood and aspen in the riparian areas. The status of Eastside forest and woodland inventory information is incomplete, as there has been little funding available for inventory and monitoring of stand conditions in the past. In many cases, the extent of forest and woodland resources and their condition is estimated and is a product of professional judgment by field foresters based on personal familiarity with the local conditions, rather than by formal inventory.

The Eastside forests and woodlands have diverged from historical conditions encountered by the pioneers. A combination of factors including a policy of fire exclusion, timber harvesting practices, and livestock grazing have all contributed to altering forests and woodlands from conditions that existed at the time of settlement. Presently, Eastside offices report moderate to high levels of “at risk” forests over 79% of their forested acreage (20% high, 59% moderate). These are forests that are considered at moderate to high risk of losing key ecosystem components, such as old forest structures, soil productivity, or sensitive species habitat from disturbances such as fire, insect, or disease. Only 21% are considered at low risk where forests contain native vegetation communities and plant composition and structure resemble the historic range of conditions.

The threat of wildfire in overly-dense forests, often following increased tree mortality caused by disease or insect infestations, has been a subject of recent scientific study and has been well-publicized in recent years. The potential for stand-replacing wildfire at levels far greater than occurred historically is great. The threat to human life and property, particularly in the wildland-urban interface, is great. Active forest management will be necessary to reduce the stem density and general fuel build-up that has gradually increased during the past century.

At our present level of forest restoration activity, it will take approximately one hundred years to treat all of our “at risk” acreage. In the event that the funding needed as identified in this plan is provided, the great majority of these acres could be treated in twenty years. The funding need is identified at ramping up over an eight year period from the present to an approximate four-fold increase over the 2003 base in the 1030 forest management subactivity. This level of funding and management support would need to be sustained over the long run in order to maintain more stable ecological conditions and to achieve healthier forest conditions that have a closer resemblance to historical conditions than at present.

Restoration actions primarily focus on reducing stand density through thinning, favoring species composition that more closely resemble historical conditions, and to reintroduce ground fire where practical.

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Forester and forestry technician staffing has decreased dramatically in the past twenty years on the Eastside. Thirteen positions have been lost on four of the Districts, which now have a total of eight such positions. Five individuals presently occupying these positions are likely to retire within five years. The Action Plan identifies a need to hire eight new foresters/forestry technicians during the next eight years, in addition to rapidly filling presently occupied positions as they become vacant. As many of the Eastside foresters have been in place for many years, it would be most desirable to establish a transition period where replacement foresters could “job shadow” or otherwise learn from the retiring forester prior to his retirement date. Without an increased emphasis on rebuilding Eastside forester staffing, it will be difficult to effectively implement the needed restoration actions, even if the funding is made available.

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OR/WA EASTSIDE FOREST AND WOODLAND MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

President's Healthy Forest Initiative-

In August of 2002, the President issued "HEALTHY FORESTS: An Initiative for Wildfire Prevention and Stronger Communities". This "OR/WA Eastside Forest and Woodland Management Action Plan" is a response to the President's plan for those forest and woodlands in Oregon and Washington located East of the crest of the Cascade Mountains.

Status of Forest and Woodland Management Resources -

Kind and Amount of Commercial Forests and Woodlands

Office	Commercial Forest Acres	Woodland Acres
Lakeview	30,000	147,000
Burns	13,000	375,000
Vale	35,000	60,000
Prineville	90,000	230,000
Spokane	55,000	3,000
TOTAL	223,000	815,000

The majority of the commercial forest land is dry forest ponderosa pine with Douglas-fir as a significant secondary species. Pure stands of lodgepole pine are also present, particularly in central Oregon's southern half of the Prineville District. Western larch is found in higher cooler elevations, with the shade-tolerant true fir (including grand fir and white fir) species that are present as elevation and moisture increases. Quaking aspen stands are scattered throughout the state, particularly in moister sites and upper elevations. Black cottonwood is a major species along riparian systems.

Woodlands are dominated by western juniper. Aspen is found in moist areas and upland areas with cottonwood, alder and other hardwoods in the riparian systems.

Inventory Status

Stand-Specific Operations Inventories:

Our Eastside District inventory information is in most cases sparse and outdated. This is a major problem because it is difficult to plan for future activities with only anecdotal information concerning stand conditions.

Lakeview, Burns, Prineville and Spokane Districts' most recent forest inventories were conducted in 1984-85. Lakeview has included their PD inventory information into the "Microstorms" data base and has updated it annually for fire, salvage, timber sales and other actions. The other three Districts have not been able to maintain an updated inventory.

Vale is only using inventory data generated from 1962 photos that have not been updated. They have implemented small areas of reinventory using GIS and FORVIS (Forest Vegetative Inventory System).

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District woodland inventories are very sketchy, and most offices only have very unreliable data. Lakeview, Burns, and Prineville have Ecological Site Index (ESI) District-wide range inventory information that also documents "presence of trees", which provides a rudimentary bit of information that relates to presence of woodlands. Vale is scheduled for this inventory next year.

Landscape Scale Inventories :

Eastern Oregon-

Inventory is conducted by the Forest Inventory & Analysis (FIA) Unit of the Forest Service Pacific Northwest Experiment Station. In 1998-1999, an inventory for all timberland for eastern Oregon was conducted. This resulted in approximately 20 to 25 plots on BLM lands. A publication covering all timberlands titled " Timber Resource Statistics

for Eastern Oregon 1999" is scheduled for publication this year. This publication does not specifically address fire risk but the data is available and can be converted to assess fire risk at these plots. The low number of plots will not produce meaningful statistics by themselves but could be combined with the inventory below to produce viable results that focuses only on BLM lands. Also, an assessment of the potential for a biomass/co-generation plant would include FS and private lands. There is sufficient number of plots from these other sources in combination with the small number of BLM timberland plots to produce meaningful estimates.

In 1999 Woodlands/Juniper inventory was conducted that included several hundred plots on BLM lands. This data will be available at the end of FY03 and holds the potential to provide good estimates on the acres at risk and with utilization standards, the amount of fiber that could potentially be available.

Eastern Washington-

The last complete inventory occurred in 1991. BLM timberlands represent relatively few acres, consequently only about 10 plots installed on BLM land. Ten plots are too few to have meaningful results, but these could be coupled with plots on FS and private lands for a regional picture of the amount of fiber available for supporting a biomass/co-generating facility.

Current Conditions of the Forest and Woodland Resources –

Commercial Forest Condition

All Eastside offices report moderate to high levels of "at risk" forests (moderate to high risk of losing key ecosystem components, such as old forest structures, soil productivity, or sensitive species habitat from disturbances such as fire, insect, or disease). The following estimates of commercial forest lands "at risk" in Condition Class 2 (moderate risk) and 3 (high risk) are: **Lakeview** - 89%; **Burns** – 92%; **Vale** – 96%; **Prineville** – 85%; **Spokane** - 46%. Table 1 illustrates this in more detail. On the Eastside in Oregon and Washington, 20% of commercial forest acres are considered high risk for losing key ecosystem components to insect, disease and/or fire, and 59% are considered at moderate risk.

It is widely recognized that society's attempts to exclude fire from the landscape of western forests during most of the past century have resulted significant forest health deterioration from the naturally occurring stands that greeted the settlers in the early 19th century. The suppression of naturally occurring fires have promoted a build-up of ladder fuels, stand densities

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populated with smaller diameter trees, and more shade tolerant tree species in the dry forest types. These conditions have simultaneously encouraged the increase in forest insect and disease activity. The dense stands with increased levels of dead and dieing trees, are particularly vulnerable to stand replacing crown fires. These are forests that historically were the site of periodic and frequent fires that burned low to the ground. These ground fires had the effect of naturally thinning out the smaller trees, leaving larger diameter trees with thicker bark.

Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Scientific Assessment-

Most Eastern Oregon-Washington BLM forests were classified by the Scientific Assessment of the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (1996) as being in the dry forest type with low ecological integrity. The moist forest regime is also present, but in a smaller quantity. These lands often are characterized by the negative influences to forest structure and species composition from fire exclusion explained above. As pointed out in the Assessment, in many areas of both dry and moist forests, the suppression of surface and mixed fire regimes have allowed many single-layer late-seral forests (such as ponderosa pine), to succeed into multiple-layer forests (such as, Douglas-fir and grand fir). These late-seral forests usually have increased risks for high-intensity crown fires in part because of the fuel ladders that have developed. To address these risks these multiple-layer communities can be converted to single-layer communities through mechanically thinning understory trees and using prescribed fires.

The Assessment also documented that Late-seral (old) forests in both the dry and moist forest regimes contain large diameter trees that provide important habitat for wildlife species, even through they often are only a small component on many forested landscapes. They can be found in both low-intensity ground fire regimes, mixed fire regimes, or on regimes with long intervals (200 years or greater) between fires. "Past harvest practices have typically reduced, fragmented, and/or changed structures of much of the late-seral forest".

The Assessment pointed out that historically, a dominant forest structure found throughout the interior Columbia River Basin was scattered, large, residual trees in a mid-seral forest. This was a typical structure in a mixed fire regime where surface fires and crown fires historically occurred. The residual trees were often large, shade-intolerant, and insect-and-disease-resistant trees that provided a good seed source for the post-fire forest. Selective logging practices often targeted these trees, which encouraged the conversion to shade-tolerant and fire-, insect-, and disease-susceptible species, with a resulting loss of diverse stand structure. The Assessment states that “Management practices can promote the maintenance of these large residual trees where they exist and where they have been harvested or otherwise lost, management can focus on rapid growth of selected young trees with similar characteristics”.

Riparian and upland areas have been heavily grazed by livestock in the past, but many areas are rapidly improving as a result of improved grazing systems. Hardwoods such as black cottonwood had been removed from many drainages by individuals who were trying to increase water flows, and there is a current effort to reestablish cottonwood and other hardwoods into these systems.

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Quaking aspen is gradually dying out of many ancient clones scattered throughout Eastside forests as a combined result of fire exclusion and livestock and elk/deer grazing. Efforts are underway to revitalize these stands by removing invasive conifers and to reintroduce prescribed fire and reduce or eliminate grazing pressure.

Wildland –Urban Interface

During recent decades, many new housing developments and construction of isolated dwellings have occurred in forests and woodlands surrounding communities on the Eastside. Many of these structures are located in a zone known as the Wildland-Urban interface (WUI), which are now at risk of damage or loss to the increasing propensity for wildfire. These dwellings are often located within fire-prone areas that historically have burned frequently. Active forest and woodland management is needed in these areas to minimize future loss to fire.

Insect and Disease

The three forest diseases of concern in the region affect ponderosa pine and are Dwarf mistletoe, and the root diseases Armillaria and Annosus.

Mistletoe affects multi-layered, slow growing stands, and has the effect of slowing growth and vigor, and lowering branches closer to the ground. This has the effect of killing smaller trees more rapidly, slowing overall stand growth, and encourages crown fires by establishing a fuel ladder from the ground to the crown.

Annosus affects ponderosa pine and is established by spores on wounds and stumps of trees on the forest fringe. The disease increases with the cutting of large diameter trees and can be controlled by painting borax on fresh stumps. Armillaria is spread by spores through root contact. It affects both Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine. It has the effect of creating disease centers in the forest and kills large trees, thereby opening crowns and increasing fuel loading.

Armillaria and Annosus can be minimized by avoiding the creation of many large stumps, avoid wounding in thinning, avoid soil compaction, and overly hot fires that can stress the root zone of trees. Borax treatments on ponderosa pine stumps greater than twelve inches in diameter are very effective in reducing annosus conditions.

Bark beetles are the biggest forest insect problem at present. Mountain pine beetle in lodgepole pine is a significant threat, as is mountain pine beetle in second growth ponderosa pine. Western pine beetle is most commonly associated with old trees of poor vigor, and often builds up where stand densities are high, where ponderosa pine is a major component, and where fire has damaged stands. Ips beetles are also problems with pine slash and fire damaged trees.

The most effective management action that can address the increase of insect and disease activity that is presently characteristic of many of our eastside forests, is to thin the overly-dense stands of timber that have become established. This will provide “the most bang for the buck” by promoting growth and vigor while removing understory competition. When mistletoe is present, infected overstory trees should be removed along with heavily infected multiple layers below the overstory. These actions will increase the forest’s resistance to beetles as well as reduce the spread and presence of dwarf mistletoe.

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Woodland Condition

Juniper woodlands have rapidly expanded over recent decades as a combined result of fire exclusion and livestock grazing. Exotic weeds often replace native plants, and have become widely established on woodlands and to some extent, on forest lands. The effort to control the spread of weeds is a major effort that involves many different BLM program areas. In many areas, woodlands have been determined to be expanding wider than their historic range to the detriment of grasslands and brush species that provide important wildlife habitat. In these situations, efforts are being made to remove the juniper and improve conditions for the herbaceous and brush species. Woodland acres listed in the table do not include lands that are intended to be converted back to their pre-woodland condition.

Of major concern is the expansion of juniper woodlands into quaking aspen stands. These aspen clones can be thousands of years old, and they depend on periodic fire to remove juniper competition and to invigorate their root stock and sprouting of new trees. Efforts are underway to encourage the restoration of this important tree species and the important wildlife habitat that they provide.

Forest-Woodland-Range Interrelationship

Although this Action Plan concentrates on forest and woodland components, they are interrelated and often physically intermingled with the rangelands of Eastern Oregon and Washington. Many rangeland health issues are closely related to issues of importance to this Action Plan, such as invasive exotic species, habitat opportunities for wildlife and aquatic and riparian health.

Current Level of Forest and Woodland Management Activity -

Present funding levels provide for forest inventory of 13,000 acres, forest and woodland management on 305 acres, restoration activities totaling 2,520 acres, forest development actions on 230 acres, and evaluation activities on 1,550 acres. 6.2 MMBF are projected to be harvested while accomplishing the above. The harvest projection is not a target, but rather a projected outcome of the principal objective of conducting forest restoration activities. Timber sale targets are not a factor in management of Eastside forests, and any volume produced is a secondary result of forest restoration activities.

A significant problem is that at this level of activity, the present “at risk” acreage would not be treated for approximately 100 years, and funding would be inadequate to maintain required activities to maintain more stable ecological conditions. The present conditions on forests and rangelands have been gradually developing during the past two centuries, and it will take many years to reverse the trends established and treat most of the “at risk” acres. With a major infusion of fiscal and staffing support, it appears possible to treat the great majority of the “at risk” acreage within the next 20 years, however, long-term funding at the increased levels and staffing displayed in the tables will be necessary to maintain healthy forest and woodland conditions.

Significant fuels treatment activities on forest and woodlands are being accomplished with subactivities 2823 and 2824. Areas of emphasis are within the Wildland-Urban Interface, however activities also are occurring on forest and woodlands in remote locations. While the accompanying tables display restoration activities to be primarily funded by 1030

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and 5900, it is probable that many future projects with a fuels treatment component will be multi-funded with contributions from 2823 or 2824 for the fuels treatment portions only. Additional acres to be treated in forests and rangelands are planned under the existing National Fire Plan, and those efforts will compliment those proposed in this Eastside Forest Action Plan. Foresters and fuels management specialists at the field level will be closely coordinating their planning and projects to maximize accomplishments with available funding and staffing.

Opportunities and Rational for Increasing Management Activity –

The preceding discussions have explained that fire exclusion as a management theme (resulting from society's expectations for forest management), combined with past livestock grazing practices and other effects of the settlement of the West have resulted in a host of vegetative changes in the Eastern Oregon and Washington forest and rangelands. Primary among these changes are: increased forest density; increase in shade tolerant species; increase in disease and insect activity; decrease in stand vigor; increased propensity for catastrophic wildfire both in the WUI and in more remote locations; decrease in the large tree component of forest lands and the habitat they provide; decrease in aquatic and riparian health; increase in presence of exotic species; undesirable expansion of woodlands at the expense of rangelands.

Preliminary work is now being done at Oregon State University to prepare a comprehensive study on post-fire restoration activities. Their preliminary information indicates that it is clear to most scientists and forest managers that the most important steps in restoring forest and rangeland ecosystem health start well before a fire or other disturbance event occurs. Pre-fire treatments not only contribute to reduced fire risk, but when the fires do occur they are less intense, less dangerous to life and property, and less expensive to manage. They also make post-fire restoration work less likely to cause unacceptable environmental damage. Therefore, pre-fire activities must be considered in developing an appropriate context for post-fire restoration.

The preliminary work also indicates that there is significant literature that documents and supports the need to deal actively with forest health management in Eastern Washington and Oregon to address restoration issues including: the Eastside Forest Ecosystem Health Assessment compiled in 1994 by Dr. Richard Everett of the Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station, a report done by Dr. Norm Johnson and colleagues for Governor John Kitzhaber in 1995, the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Assessment in 1996, the 1996 Blue Mountains ecosystem health synthesis report edited by Drs. Ray Jaindl and Tom Quigley, the book Mapping Wildfire Hazards and Risks edited by Neil Sampson, Dwight Atkinson and Joe Lewis in 2000, and a 25 chapter special issue of Northwest Science edited by Dr. Jane Hayes in 2001 that synthesized forest health and productivity issues in eastern Oregon and Washington.

Table 1 indicates the amount of forest and woodland acres by Condition Class on the Eastside. "Available forest and woodland acres" are those where management actions can occur. The remaining acres cannot be subjected to management actions because of an administrative or legislative withdrawal, a land use plan decision, or other reason.

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Table 2 indicates the amount of different types of restoration and related activities needed to complete actions designed to reach the "full implementation" phase of the Action Plan by FY 2010.

Priority forest and woodland health restoration projects are included in the Table 2 acreage and meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Rapid Implementation for Projects With Likelihood of Success
- Public Interest & Support
- Protect Land Use Plan High Priorities
- Insect/Disease/Fire Protection
- Areas With High Ecological Integrity and High Risk to Insect/Disease/Fire
- Identified in Sub-Basin Review/Analysis

- Partnerships are involved
- Increasing/Expanding/Protecting Old Forest Structure
- Bring Stands to Within Historic Range of Variability
- Endangered Species Act/Critical Wildlife Habitat
- Within Municipal Watershed
- Specific Scientific Support
- Public health and safety
- Within Wildland-Urban Interface

The types of forest management activities to be used to achieve proposed acre accomplishments in Table 2 include but are not limited to:

- Hand precommercial thinning, hand piling, burning, follow-up prescribe burn
- Mechanical precommercial thinning (slashbuster), follow-up prescribed burn
- Prescribe burn only

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- Mechanical commercial thinning, slashbuster, follow-up prescribe burn
- Mechanical commercial thinning, follow-up prescribe burn
- Timber salvage (includes all source of mortality, including insects, diseases, windthrow and fire)
- Pruning

Resources Necessary to Increase Management Activity –

Staffing

Forester and Forestry Technician staffing has decreased dramatically in the past twenty years. The most critical aspect necessary to support an increased level of forest and woodland management activity is to build the forestry staffing level back to what it had been in the early/mid-1980's as shown below. Most of the foresters presently on-

board will be retiring within the next 5 years, taking their institutional knowledge of field conditions and other aspects of the District program with them. Nearly all of them have been in place for many years. It is critical that qualified foresters and forestry technicians be hired as soon as possible to help make the transition. Job shadows and other opportunities to pave the way to preparing the new work force need to be implemented in this effort.

Workforce Trends

Office	Forester Staffing early/mid-1980's	Present Forester Staffing	Comments
Lakeview	1 Forester; 1 Forest Tech. (no O&C)	7 Foresters + 3 Forest Tech./Terms	District expanded to include Medford O&C with associated positions; personnel work both PD + O&C; 2 may retire within 5 years
Burns	4 Foresters; 1 Forest Tech.	1 Forester (classified as NRS but works ¾ time on forestry)	North ½ of District shifted to Prineville, lost 4 positions
Vale (Baker)	6 Foresters	3 Foresters	2 will retire within 5 years
Prineville	5 Foresters and Forest Techs.	2 Foresters (one works 20% on forestry)	1 may retire within 5 years
Spokane	4 Foresters; 1 Forest Tech.	1 Forester; 1 Forest Tech.	2 will retire within 6 years
Total	23 (21 excluding Lakeview)	18 (8 excluding Lakeview)	Loss of 13 Forester/Forester Tech. positions excluding Lakeview, (Loss of 5 including Lakeview) about 7 may retire within 5 years

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The State Office presently has 11 forestry zoned positions that provide support to PD and O&C District forestry programs. This is a reduction of two positions from what was employed in the mid-90's.

Table 3 displays that to reach the full implementation phase of the Forest and Woodland Management Action Plan, an increase over present staffing levels in FY 2003 will be needed for the following position groups as follows: 8 Forester/Forestry Technician Personnel; 3 Resource Support Positions for a total increase of 11 positions, which are all full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. In addition, some evidence suggest that a zone position to coordinate access acquisition for forestry projects for the Eastside may be warranted.

Funding

Present funding levels for FY 2003 and displayed in Table 3 are not adequate to accomplish the higher levels of active forest and woodland management that will be necessary to treat the acres described in the increasing levels displayed in Table 2. A steady incremental increase in annual funding will be required in order to reach full implementation of the proposed restoration/management schedule in FY 2010. An annual increase of \$1,907,000 beginning in FY 2010 over the present FY 2003 base of \$727,000 in subactivity 1030 will be necessary to reach full implementation. That funding level would need to be sustained into the future in order to assure that restoration actions will be accomplished at a rate that will treat the "at-risk" acres. Incremental increases over the present base during the ramping up period between FY 2004 and FY 2010 are displayed in Table 3. At full implementation, the following additional annual funding of \$1,908,000 will be required above the 2003 base funding composed of the following components: \$520,000 for 8 Forester/Forestry Technician Positions, \$232,000 for 3 Resource Support Positions, \$752,000 for Operations Costs, \$185,000 for Program Management Costs, and \$219,000 Program Support Costs.

Potential Impediments to Successfully Increasing Management Activity –

Size of Task - The scope of the work needed to correct forest health conditions is very large and our present ability to treat stands with funding and staffing is small. The conditions created by fire exclusion developed over many years, and it will take many years (several decades) of a sustained and increased effort to thin forests and safely reintroduce fire.

Lack of Funding - The expense required to accomplish needed activities over present levels of funding is significant, and if not increased as indicated in Table 3, the needed work will not get done.

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Lack of Sufficient Forestry Staff – Forester staffing levels have been significantly reduced, and the present forestry staff cannot spend the time required to carry out the necessary tasks even if funding were provided. A Significant number of foresters and forest technicians will retire within five years, creating a major loss in institutional memory. Funding and staffing must both be increased to reach the full implementation phase of the Forest and Woodland Action Plan.

Low Values – The smaller diameter timber that is the major product of thinning produces less volume and value than a timber sale in large diameter timber that used to characterize BLM timber sales. This makes it harder to sell timber, and to generate profitable projects that can be funded by 5900 or 1030. Likewise, there is presently no market for biomass fuel. Table 2 assumes that some market will be developed. There is capability for a much larger contribution for biomass fuel if markets develop.

Planning and Environmental Analysis – The amount of interdisciplinary staff work necessary to prepare a project that will survive the potential administrative and legal challenges is much greater now than in the past. This slows down project preparation and increases costs. Scarce skills of “ologists” are required and not always available on a timely basis. Requirements placed on projects by specialists implementing various program protocols, e.g. wildlife management, ESA compliance, etc. often reduce size, scope and viability of projects. The added time and difficulty of preparation can make it impossible to offer fire-killed timber for sale, as it rapidly loses value and can become impossible to sell within two years.

Administrative Appeals and Litigation – These processes can be instigated by one individual or organization, despite the quality of effort and expense that has gone into preparing a project for implementation, and regardless of the amount of public involvement that has accompanied the project preparation. Conformance with the existing Resource Management Plan does not stop appeal or litigation. Projects are often delayed and increasingly stopped by these methods.

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Forest and Woodland Management Action Plan

Table 2. Proposed Restoration/Management Schedule

State OR/WA _____								
Proposed Accomplishment Target	Program Development Phase				Full Funding Phase		Full Implementation Phase	
	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010
BT - Inventory Forest/Woodland Vegetation (Acres)	13,300	114,600	29,800	91,400	105,700	1,122,800	10,300	10,300
EG - Prepare Vegetative Permits/Contracts (Number of Permits/Contracts Issued)	860	860	830	840	750	760	780	780
HD - Manage Forest and Woodland Commercial Sales (Acres)	50	0	0	0	400	400	400	400
HL - Apply Commercial Forest and Woodland Management (Acres)	305	330	350	350	400	400	450	500
JE - Restore Forest and Woodlands Through Sales (Acres)	2,520	2,925	2,650	2,900	3,700	4,700	5,100	5,660
JN - Restore Forest and Woodlands through Development (Acres)	230	450	1,300	1,850	2,550	2,550	3,850	3,850
MB - Evaluate Forest/Woodland Treatments (Acres)	1,550	3,050	3,175	2,900	3,650	4,600	5,500	5,800
Timber and Forest Product Volume Offered (MBF)	6,277	6,320	6,550	7,700	11,600	12,900	14,675	14,945
Biomass Offered (Green Tons)	0	0	500	1,000	1,350	1,550	6,800	6,800