

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT OR-05-16
For release: Immediate

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BLM Releases Proposed Plan to Increase Timber Harvest and Environmental Protections in Western Oregon Forests

Portland, Ore. – Today the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposed a path forward for local communities in Western Oregon with a plan that will increase job growth, tourism and recreation, and timber harvest, while offering strong protections for the northern spotted owl, listed fish species, and water resources.

Once the proposed Resource Management Plan (RMP) is fully implemented, the BLM estimates that it will be able to provide 278 million board feet (mmbf) per year in total timber harvest. Out of 2.5 million acres in the planning area, 75 percent will be protected in reserves for fish, water, wildlife, and other resource values.

Throughout the course of the planning process, the BLM held 41 public meetings, workshops, and forums in Western Oregon. The agency received more than 7,000 comments, 4,500 of which were sent in during the formal comment period in 2015. The BLM also worked closely with agencies, including the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop strategies to protect fish, water, and threatened and endangered species.

The BLM will create harvest timber opportunities using the principles of ecological forestry, which incorporates principles of natural forest development, including the role of natural disturbances, in the initiation, development, and maintenance of stands and landscape mosaics. In the reserves, the BLM would only allow timber harvest to help meet management objectives such as increasing fire resiliency, developing habitat for northern spotted owl, or protecting listed fish species and water resources.

In the reserves, the BLM would protect stands of older, structurally complex forests. These stands include nearly 100 percent of all older forests, which protect high quality habitat for spotted owl.

“We’ve achieved an extraordinary balance between protecting threatened and endangered species, and creating timber harvest opportunities to support local communities,” Acting State Director Jamie Connell said. “We’re so thankful to all the members of the public and our partners who have been collaborating with us for the last few years. This is a big step forward for BLM-managed lands in Western Oregon—one that would create predictability and sustainability in land management and conservation.”

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Under the proposed RMP, the estimated annual harvest value would increase from \$23 million in 2012 to \$51 million. The estimated value of recreation would increase from \$223 million to \$271 million in 2023. The estimated contributions to jobs would increase from 7,900 in 2012 to 8,500.

The public will have 30 days beginning April 15, 2016, to review the proposed RMP. Protests must meet the requirements described in the regulations and mailed to one of the following addresses:

Regular Mail:

BLM Director (210)
Attention: Protest Coordinator
P.O. Box 71383
Washington, D.C. 20024-1383

Overnight Delivery:

BLM Director (210)
Attention: Protest Coordinator
20 M Street SE, Room 2134LM
Washington, D.C. 20003

Copies of this document are available at the BLM's Coos Bay, Eugene, Medford, Roseburg, and Salem Districts and the Lakeview District's Klamath Falls Field Office. The document is also available online at:

www.blm.gov/or/plans/rmpswesternoregon/feis

Following the close of the Protest Period, a BLM strike team will provide a review of the protests. Protest decisions will be made by the director of BLM.

After all protests have been resolved, the BLM anticipates issuing two Records of Decision (ROD) for the Resource Management Plans in Western Oregon. The RODs will each contain a Rationale for the Decision, provide an Allowable Sale Quantity Declaration, describe how the BLM will transition to the new plan, and outline direction for mitigation, plan monitoring, and evaluation. The BLM expects to issue the RODs during the summer of 2016.

The RODs and RMPs (ROD/RMP) for the six Western Oregon BLM districts were last approved in 1995. In 2011, the BLM conducted plan evaluations of the 1995 RMPs, and concluded that a plan revision was needed to address necessary changes to timber and wildlife programs, and minor changes to most other programs as a result of new scientific information.

The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of

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