Issue Paper: Fire and Fuels
Resource Management Plans (RMP) for Western Oregon

Background: Fire has played a major role across western Oregon landscapes throughout history. Fire management activities, including fire suppression, prescribed burning, and manual fuels reduction, are vital to protecting and maintaining the health and viability of the lands the BLM administers. While the general approach to fire and fuels is common to all alternatives and the Proposed RMP, differences in the land use allocations between alternatives and the Proposed RMP affect vegetation structure, fuel dynamics, potential fire behavior, fire severity, and fire resilience.

Key Points:

- All alternatives and the Proposed RMP would increase stand-level fire resistance within the dry forest and reduce fire hazard on BLM-administered lands within the Wildland Urban Interface compared to current conditions. Within the Harvest Land Base, there would be greater variation in these variables among the alternatives and the Proposed RMP over time.

- In the absence of natural fire as a disturbance agent, management activities, including prescribed fire and mechanical management of vegetation, can serve as a partial surrogate for natural disturbance, and promote and maintain desired forest stand structure, composition, and resistance to fire. These conditions may also provide opportunities for effective fire management, including the ability to utilize wildfire to meet land use and resource objectives consistent with management direction. However, due to the configuration of BLM-administered lands within the larger landscape, particularly their proximity to where people live, the ability to use wildfire may have limited application, and prescribed fire would likely account for the majority of managed fire under any alternative and the Proposed RMP.

- The BLM-administered lands constitute only a small portion of the entire interior/south dry forest landscape. Consequently, the modest shifts in forest structure and composition under any alternative or the Proposed RMP would not result in any substantial change in the overall landscape fire resilience.

- The treatment of activity fuels associated with forest management is necessary to reduce potential fire intensity, particularly in areas with higher fire risk. Alternative C for the entire decision area and Alternative B and the Proposed RMP in southern portion would result in the highest levels of potential activity fuel risk.

The Resource Management Plans for Western Oregon will determine how the BLM-administered lands in western Oregon will be managed, to produce a sustained yield of timber products, to further the recovery of threatened and endangered coordinate management of lands surrounding the Coquille Forest with the Coquille Tribe.

For more information, please visit the BLM’s Resource Management Plans of western Oregon website at [http://www.blm.gov/or/plans/rmpswesternoregon/index.php](http://www.blm.gov/or/plans/rmpswesternoregon/index.php).