

Summary and Key Findings

for the

Bureau of Land Management

Recreation Outreach and Public Participation of the

Resource Management Plans for Western Oregon

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Executive Summary

During the winter of 2013, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) initiated a multi-phase outreach strategy to engage the public specifically on recreation management issues. The BLM was interested in gaining a better understanding of the social values associated with recreational users across western Oregon. This strategy included an interactive web based survey and a series of regional workshops across four western Oregon locations. The goal of this outreach strategy, in support of the Resource Management Plans (RMP) for Western Oregon planning project was two-fold:

- Collect targeted information to assist the BLM and its partners more effectively plan and manage recreation resources within the region.
- Take a community driven approach to outreach; to better understand the recreation related activities, experiences and benefits that should be emphasized, where on the landscape they occur, and how they can be managed over time to provide beneficial outcomes.

The BLM engaged the public in a process that promoted a participatory forum to give voice to community partners and key stakeholders so they have a genuine opportunity to understand and inform decisions in the Resource Management Plans (RMP) for Western Oregon.

The BLM's outreach process:

- Fostered an active dialogue between the BLM and its stakeholders to work on solutions together about recreation and Wild and Scenic River designations
- Used interactive workshops that include small group discussions and are facilitated to allow participants a chance to share their perspective, hear from others, and develop a collective understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing a planning effort
- Promoted collaboration between the Agency and community partners who help co-host events by providing space and getting the word out to their networks

This Summary and Key Findings Report describes the BLM's Recreation Outreach and Public Engagement process and includes theme-based inputs received across the region about recreation values, and the facilitator's key findings and observations from the process.

Introduction

New recreation planning guidance requires that BLM-administered lands consider **eligibility factors** (demand for recreation opportunities, unique values, importance of recreation setting characteristics), **manageability factors** (capability to manage resources and uses, address use and user conflicts and mitigate natural resource impacts caused by recreation use) and **outcome focused objectives** (activities, experiences, benefits), when evaluating potential or existing recreation areas during a resource management planning process.

The BLM convened a series of recreation-related outreach workshops in late January and early February 2013 to gather public input for planning purposes; to update recreation management area frameworks and perform Wild and Scenic River suitability determinations as components of the Resource Management Plan revisions for western Oregon.

1.1 Process overview:

The drivers for these workshops were:

- 1) Scoping comments gathered by the BLM in the Spring of 2012 showed that several of the top issues were recreation-related which signaled high public interest in the BLM's recreation management.
- 2) The BLM wanted an opportunity to inform the public about its current Resource Management Plans (RMP) for Western Oregon planning process, and gather important social information from its communities about recreation based outcomes including experiences, benefits, opportunities and locations, and how they might relate to the BLM's management actions.
- 3) The BLM will be updating its recreation area management delineations, during the RMP process, and also evaluating the 51 river segments currently eligible for Wild and Scenic designation to determine 'suitability' for those which will become permanently protected under the National Wild and Scenic River system.

1.2 Meeting Format and Participation:

Meetings were held at four regional locations throughout western Oregon. The meetings took place on January 29 in Medford, January 30 in Roseburg, January 31 in Springfield and February 5 in Portland. Each event except the Medford meeting was held at non-BLM locations. In total, nearly 300 members of the public participated throughout the four workshops. Workshops were open to the public and were announced through a series of public media releases, website postings and highlighted through partner outreach efforts.

BLM District staff participation was critical to the execution of the meetings. They provided technical data, maps and expertise up front and during the meetings; aided in logistical arrangements; and worked with community members to get the word out and enlist participation. The agency's **PAOs** (Public Affairs Officer) contacted the public through multiple media outlets with press releases, radio and newspaper, and social media to communicate times and locations of the meetings.

BLM partners also played a vital role in communicating the importance of these workshops and the opportunity that was being provided to the public to assist in the future management of BLM-administered lands in western Oregon. Multiple national recreation organizations (American Whitewater, International Mountain Bike Association, Outdoor Alliance, etc.) initiated a social media campaign to outreach to interested stakeholders and members of the recreation community. In the spirit of cooperation additional communities partners identified through the BLM's Cooperating Agencies Advisory Group (CAAG) were asked to address the public and talk about why the community's participation was critical to the BLM's success, and why these issues were relevant to the community. The CAAG is made up of inter-governmental partners who are serving an important advisory and coordinating role for the BLM through its NEPA planning processes.

1.3 Participatory Mapping Exercise:

A participatory mapping exercise was designed and facilitated with the assistance of independent contractors Sector Environmental Design and mediation/facilitation firm DS Consulting. The consultant team designed the information gathering process to reflect the BLM's public engagement strategy described in this report's Executive Summary.

The effort focused on the following:

- Engage all participants in a cooperative dialogue focused on recreation and rivers specific questions
- Encourage and focus discussion to support the planning process
- Gather meaningful information from the group as they relate to specific recreation activities and the places they perform their activity
- Develop, organize, and record ideas of how participant values relate to the recreation activity, character setting, experience, and potential benefits
- Use the map to show spatial considerations discussed by the participants.(e.g. they helped identify multiple recreation activities occurring on one specific area)

The process followed an organized framework to guide the participants through the work period. To lead the discussion, independent Landscape architects served as table facilitators.

The BLM staff supported each of the facilitators as local resource experts that were able to answer specific questions about policy, existing uses, potential opportunities and environmental and planning process issues.

At each workshop, maps of the BLM regional district(s) were created to guide the discussion at the tables. Information on the maps included recreation areas, primary rivers, eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers, cities, towns, roads, water bodies and major physiographic features. The maps were then divided into four to five geographic sub regions that were placed at different mapping 'stations'.

After a brief introduction from the BLM and its community partners, participants worked in small groups and were guided through the mapping exercise, which asked them to identify specific locations of interest and then make specific comments tied to the questions the BLM framed for them to consider. Color coded dots were used to link the location on the map, the comment, and topic area:

1) Evaluating Existing Recreation Opportunities: *Are there ways to enhance management of existing BLM recreation areas?* (Green dots)

2) Evaluating Potential Recreation Opportunities: *Is there demand for an activity that is not currently provided? What specific recreation experiences are desired? Where? To meet what value/benefit?* (Red dots)

3) Evaluating Wild and Scenic River Designation: *What input do you have for the BLM to inform its Wild and Scenic Rivers designation process?* (Blue dots)

4) General Comments (Yellow dots)

Because the groups were small and traveled from station to station together, participants were able to ask questions of the BLM local experts, dialogue with each other about what they were seeing, and gain a better understanding about the interests of others in their group/community.

Content Highlights

The following bullets highlight what we heard across all locations:

- Recreation Benefits: The top three recreation related benefits that participants communicated at the workshops include: Exercise/physical fitness, connecting with the natural environment, and having opportunities for solitude.
- Recreation Amenities: The top three recreation related amenities that participants communicated at the workshops: trails, campsites and accessibility.

- Access and connectivity are important aspects of recreation interests on BLM-administered lands.
 - The BLM should work to expand, loop, and connect its trail systems to enhance the recreation experience for many different types of users. Recreationists tend to want more of the existing benefits which fall primarily in the categories of close to home recreation access.
 - Access to trails, camping, and river areas are important characteristics for communities across western Oregon.
- The public needs better information about the BLM’s recreation opportunities and management through visual communication tools.
 - Use signage, website and pamphlets to share information about designated trail use, amenities, closures, etc.
- The BLM has and should continue to work with community partners to keep recreation areas maintained and improved for specified uses.
 - Across all regions, there are opportunities to establish partnerships to assist with the development and management of recreation opportunities.
 - The BLM needs to work to actively engage interested partners to help offset recreation management costs.
- The BLM needs to recognize that it is a community partner, not only a regulatory authority
 - Many informal and formally organized groups attended the meetings to share with the BLM how they are and would like to partner with the BLM to maintain and ‘regulate’ the trails for their specified recreation interest.
 - Participants talked about the need for trails systems to be designed as loops, and connected to make some of them more user-friendly to multiple users (they also pointed out areas they felt should be reserved for a specific, limited use).
- The general public is uncertain about implications of a Wild and Scenic suitability determination. They need to be more educated about what this determination would mean in order to give informed input about which segments they feel should or should not be designated.

Content by Region

The following pages contain a high level content summary of feedback from each of the four locations. The agenda that was followed at each workshop is included in Appendix A. Regional maps associated with the BLM-administered lands that were discussed at the workshops are included in Appendix B of this report.

Medford Workshop Summary

BLM Medford District Office-January 29, 2013

Evaluating Existing Recreation Opportunities

Recreation Access Concerns: Common across all activities- gates limiting opportunities to access BLM lands especially where the BLM land is behind industrial forest land and there is no access through gated private properties.

Equestrian Use: Need improved trailhead parking and turnaround areas at existing trailheads.

Target Shooting: Visitor conflicts identified between non-motorized trail users and target shooters.

Evaluating Potential Recreation Opportunities

Non-Motorized Trail Development: Participants want increased opportunities for non-motorized recreation than is currently available. Groups in Medford are taking it upon themselves to develop trails on BLM lands without formal approval. They have gone so far as to name the trails, create web and print materials and to raise money in support of building trails and trail facilities. Applegate Ridge Trail, Sterling Mine Ditch Trail (extension), Jack Ash trails were all highlighted as having excellent potential.

Hang gliding: Launches and access to launch sites needs to be improved, setting and facilities are needed to support this activity (launch pads, parking areas, improved trails and restrooms).

Mountain Biking: Need increased opportunities for purpose built mountain bike trail systems within the region.

Equestrian Use: Need for larger trailhead parking and turnaround areas for trails. Increase opportunities for horse camp at trailheads; improve facilities (restrooms, corrals and hitching posts) where new opportunities are provided.

Target Shooting: Need to designate specific areas for shooting and sign/manage appropriately. Areas need to be designated to reduce visitor conflicts with other users.

Off Highway Vehicle Use: Designate specific areas for OHV recreation class 1-4 use. High interest from the public to partner in future management of these areas.

General Recreation and Wild and Scenic River Comments

*Need better overall permitting processes for commercial river use, competitive events and group use.

*General concerns about what Wild and Scenic river designation means for private property

*Visitor Conflict exists between non-motorized and motorized users. Conflicts also exist near trail systems between shooters and other users.

*Better visitor information is needed to help identify existing recreation areas.

*The BLM needs to do a better job of marketing the recreation areas that already exist.

*The BLM needs to create better web-based information and provide maps online.

Roseburg Workshop Summary

Umpqua Business Center-January 30, 2013

Evaluating Existing Recreation Opportunities

Recreation Access Concerns: Common across all activities- gates limiting opportunities to access BLM lands especially where the BLM land is behind industrial forest land and there is no access through gated private properties.

North Bank Habitat Area: Participants highlighted this area as being managed appropriately for both equestrian use and non-motorized trail use in general.

North Umpqua River: Participants highlighted the developed recreation opportunities adjacent to the river as being managed appropriately and providing a high quality experience.

Evaluating Potential Recreation Opportunities

Non-Motorized Trail Development: Shared access supported by majority of workshop participants. Multiple use trail systems had broad support across most available lands within the region. Separation of users in the Northeast quadrant of the region was highlighted. Willingness by participants to share trail systems was expressed with limited visitor conflicts between users identified.

Rock Climbing: Opportunities for increase access to rock climbing was expressed by numerous participants. The 'Callahan's' were identified as having high value for the BLM to acquire via land exchange etc.

Off Highway Vehicle Use: White Rock area was highlighted as having potential for OHV area development. OHV users highlighted the Roseburg district as the only BLM region in western Oregon for not having a designated OHV area.

General Visitor Services and Wild and Scenic River Comments

*Checkerboard ownership creates challenges for access, and length of trails for all motorized and non-motorized users.

*Many volunteer groups provided broad support for volunteer and partnership development to help develop and manage new recreation opportunities.

*Opportunities for land exchanges to block up ownership and provide increased recreation access were highlighted.

*Recreation values highlighted; enhancing and improving existing scenic areas.

Eugene Workshop Summary Springfield Public Library-January 31, 2013

Evaluating Existing Recreation Opportunities

Multiple Use-Non Motorized Trails: Current use on existing trail systems and areas is yielding low levels of visitor conflicts. Better management through visitor information and signage was highlighted as a long term management tool to continue to deal with increasing trail users. Carpenters Bypass and Alsea Falls trail system was highly valued amongst all non-motorized trail users.

Shotgun Off Highway Vehicle Area: Current opportunities for OHV users within this area are providing numerous benefits including; Enjoying the ability to frequently participate in desired activities in preferred settings. In general the BLM is filling a niche with this system.

Access Concerns: Participants highlighted river access as the primary concern and the private property and shoreline access was a common theme identified.

Evaluating Potential Recreation Opportunities

Non-Motorized Trail Development: Several areas within the region were highlighted for opportunities to provide additional mountain bike specific trail opportunities and equestrian access.

Quartzville Recreation Area: Participants highlighted this recreation area for the lack of trail based opportunities for all users.

General Recreation and Wild and Scenic River Comments

- * Important to be aware of mining restrictions that could result from recreation development
- *Participants concerned about ability to recreate in natural areas that are unmodified by timber management.
- *The BLM needs to do a better job with providing visitor information to the public and making the public aware of what recreation experiences are being provided.
- *Many questions were raised regarding the consequences that would result from Wild and Scenic river designation.
- *Longer distance trail experiences closer to communities were desired by participants. Opportunities need to be worth the drive from local communities.
- *General support for Wild and Scenic River designation for both the South Willamette and the North Santiam Rivers.
- *Participants identified 'Developing Skills and abilities' as the dominate recreation experience within the region.
- *Participants identified 'Enjoying access to close to home outdoor amenities and Enjoying ability to frequently participate in desired activities in preferred settings', as the most sought after experiences within the region.

Portland Workshop Summary

Mazama Mountaineering Center-February 5, 2013

Evaluating Existing Recreation Opportunities

Developed Recreation Areas: Several high use recreation areas were highlighted and in general, developed areas are valued for providing exceptional amenities and opportunities within the region.

Non-Motorized Trails: Several areas (Sandy Ridge trails, Molalla trails) were highlighted by participants. Changes to these trail systems to provide a broader range of opportunities were identified.

Evaluating Potential Recreation Opportunities

Establishing Connections: Participants identified several areas where connections with other land management agencies could be developed to offer additional recreation opportunities within the region.

Rock Climbing: Popular area identified for potential rock climbing access. Participants encouraged the BLM to be proactive in providing for a recreation activity that is increasing in demand, especially near metro areas.

Non-Motorized Trails: Continue to expand opportunities for all users to engage in close to home trail opportunities throughout the region.

General Recreation and Wild and Scenic River Comments

*BLM has done a good job proactively addressing recreation demand in Sandy River Basin and Molalla River area.

*BLM has the opportunity to be a major provider of recreation for Portland and Salem residents.

*Overuse concerns were expressed at several river corridors throughout the region.

*Similar recreation experiences (enjoying needed physical fitness, enjoying close to home outdoor amenities) were identified across varying activities.

*Economic benefit highlighted most often by participants was 'Increase travel and tourism related spending'.

*General support was voiced for several eligible Wild and Scenic River segments throughout the region, although a number of participants did not understand what potential designation meant for the public.

Facilitators' Observations of the Process (DS Consulting)

What did the participants think? Participant written evaluations reflected broad positive feedback to the BLM about the meeting design and format in terms of their ability to ask questions, express views, learn from others, engage in useful dialogue and have input acknowledged. The facilitators found anecdotally that, despite some minor grumblings stemming from confusion about meeting start times, participants generally expressed that they were pleased with the approach and format the BLM used to engage them. The facilitators heard that participants liked the interactive exercise, and that the small group format allowed them to dialogue with the BLM staff and other community members in a relaxed, informal setting. During the wrap up, some participants wanted to know about next steps in the process and how their inputs will be used. Another success measure for the BLM will be determined by how they are able to respond to this inquiry.

Did the BLM respond to scoping comments suggesting that recreation was of high public interest? Yes. The BLM engaged nearly 300 participants throughout the four recreation workshops, received over 1,000 written comments via an online survey; and gathered 75 additional written comments at the Portland Sportsmen Show and others around western Oregon.

Did the BLM adequately engage its public on its current planning process to revise RMPs for Western Oregon? Yes, to the extent that the BLM was able to describe the overall planning process through a visual timeline presented at the beginning of the meetings, and revisit at the end to show where the recreation outreach workshops were nested in the planning process and when there would be additional opportunities for public input at various junctures along the Agency's path to finalizing the RMPs for Western Oregon. It is not clear yet if or how the BLM will include interactive style workshops in to future public input opportunities.

How will the BLM use the information gathered to update recreation management areas, and to make Wild and Scenic River determinations? Following the outreach workshops, the BLM synthesized and organized inputs received at the workshops to help them better understand the social layer associated with public recreation values; specific locations, activities, benefits, setting characteristics and recreation experiences that were expressed as values in the workshops. This synthesized information has been distributed to western Oregon recreation planners to look at the inputs as a means to inform their internal re-delineation process.

With regards to Wild and Scenic Rivers, the BLM learned that the general public does not understand the process, implications and impacts of Wild and Scenic River (WSR) suitability. At the workshops, participants were given the opportunity to learn about which segments are on the 'eligibility' list, as these were clearly highlighted on all the maps at every location, and were

also able to comment on the social value these segments have to individuals and communities. Also, the BLM provided a one page handout in the workshop materials that described its process for conducting a WSR suitability study and how it fits in to the RMP process. That said, several comments raised more questions than input and reflected that people were not educated enough about the impacts such a suitability determination would mean to be able to address the question the BLM posed to them.

Next Steps

The BLM will be using the information that was generated at regional workshops to better manage recreation and river related resources, to assist with the evaluation of existing and potential recreation management areas, and to perform suitability determinations on eligible river segments. The BLM will continue to engage the public throughout the duration of the Resource Management Planning process in a collaborative manner. This Summary and Key Findings Report will serve as the initial next step in reflecting back to the public what the BLM learned from the first phase of recreation specific outreach.

The BLM would like to provide a special thank you to the following partners that provided assistance with the regional recreation workshops:

- *National Park Service-Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program*
- *Association of O & C Counties*
- *Outdoor Alliance*
- *Travel Oregon*
- *Umpqua Business Center*
- *Mazamas*

This report is respectfully submitted by DS Consulting on behalf of the BLM.

Appendix A: Workshop Agenda

SEGMENT ONE Workshop Kickoff Presentations (4:30 pm to 5:00 pm)

- **Opening Remarks** Project background, planning process, timeline, BLMs guiding principles.
- **Community Partner** Why is this valuable, why is this unique opportunity, why is this different etc.
- **Nuts and Bolts of the Charette** Quick overview of Agenda. How the group will participate, what are the expectations for participants

SEGMENT TWO Mapping Stations (5:00 pm to 8:00 pm)

- **Facilitator Overview:** Presents information about planning zone. Talk about setting and key recreation activities/opportunities within zone. Identify key recreation and river resources. Reintroduce how the group will participate.
- **Design charette exercise: Facilitator, BLM recreation staff and table scribes walk participants through structured questions related to the following themes:**
 - 1) Evaluating Existing Recreation Opportunities: Are there ways to enhance management of existing BLM recreation areas?
 - 2) Evaluating Potential Recreation Opportunities: Is there demand for an activity that is not currently provided? What specific recreation experiences are desired? Where? To meet what value/benefit?
 - 3) Evaluating Wild and Scenic River Designation: What input do you have for the BLM to inform its Wild and Scenic Rivers designation process?
 - 4) General Recreation and River Input/Comments

SEGMENT THREE: REPORT OUT (8:00 pm to 8:15 pm)

- Summary of key findings from each planning zone (3 key questions to answer for each report out group).

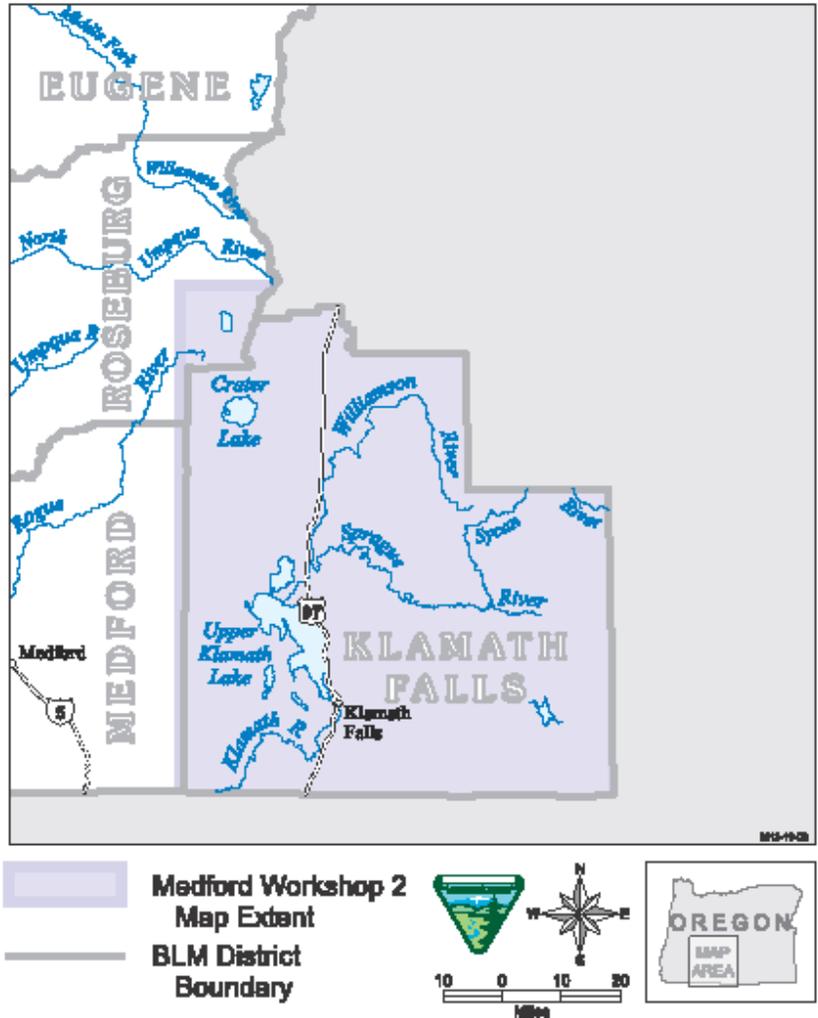
SEGMENT FOUR: MEETING WRAP UP and Question/Answer (8:15 pm to 8:30 pm)

- BLM thank you for participating in the design charette.
- Question and answer period related to planning process in general and recreation workshops specifically.

Appendix B: Regional Workshop Maps

A) Medford Workshop Maps

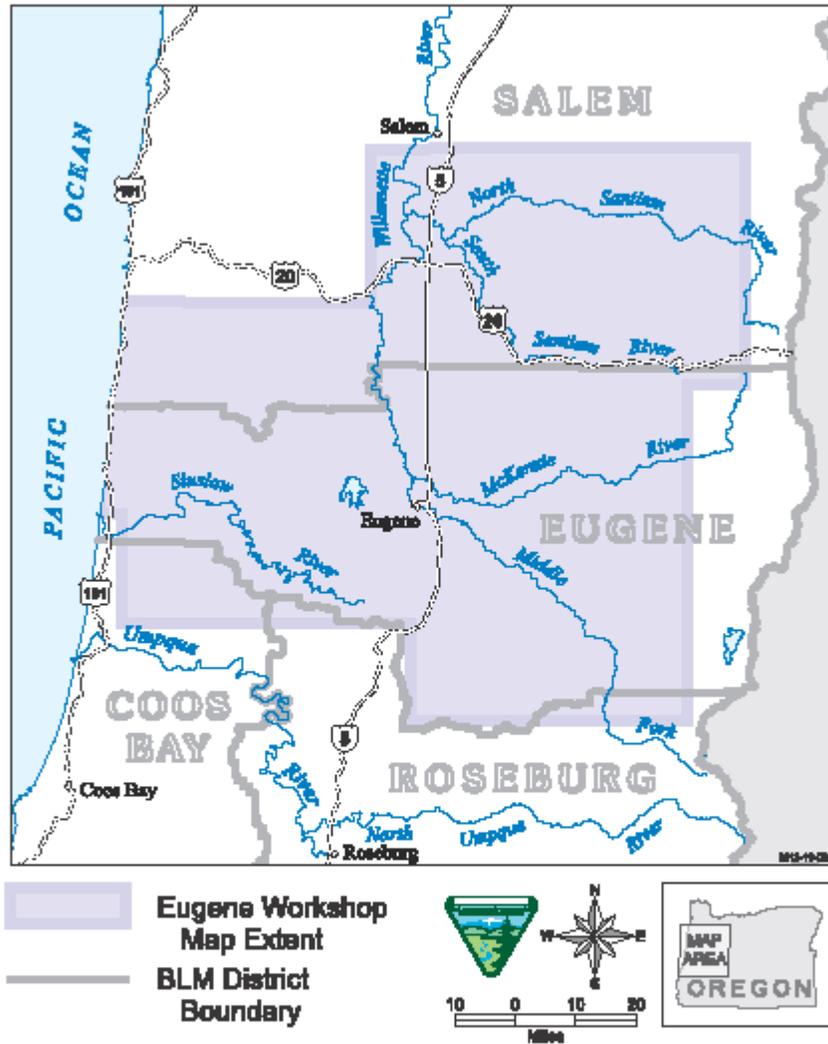




B) Roseburg Workshop Map



C) Eugene Workshop Map



D) Portland Workshop Map

