Upper Cow Late Successional Reserve Project:

Scoping Guide

January 2015

BLM
Medford District - Grants Pass Field Office

Dear Reader,

Thank you for your interest in public lands and welcome to the Upper Cow Late Successional Reserve Project. This Scoping Guide is meant to help you understand the project and describes your opportunities to participate in the planning process. This guide describes the what, where and why of the work we are proposing to do.

This project is early in the planning stages. We are currently in the external or public scoping phase. Scoping is the process by which the BLM solicits input on the issues, impacts and potential alternatives that will be addressed in the Environmental Assessment.

Inside this Scoping Guide you will find a discussion of the Purpose and Need for the project, a description of the types of treatments being proposed and a map of the Planning Area with possible treatment units. Near the back of the document you can read about the public involvement process and how you can participate. The last page of the Scoping Guide contains a Forest Management Tour in the Upper Cow/Galesville area and is designed to show past management treatments from similar late successional reserve projects. The tour is provided so you may personally experience areas that were previously treated!

We hope this document helps you understand the proposed project and how your input fits within the overall project development. Please contact our office if you have questions. Your input is an important part of the management of your public lands.

Allen Bollschweiler
Field Manager, Grants Pass Field Office

Upper Cow Late Successional Reserve Project

Location

The Upper Cow Late Successional Reserve Project is located in the South Umpqua River/Galesville late successional reserve. For a map of the Planning Area see the center pages of this Scoping Guide.

BLM timbered lands interspersed with private clearcuts. Galesville Reservoir can be seen at the center of the photo.

Purpose and Need for this Project

This project's *purpose* is to enhance and/or maintain late successional forest conditions on BLM administered land using silvicultural practices, prescribed fire and/or commercial and non-commercial treatments.

There is a *need* for the project at this time because the stands identified for treatment lack late-successional forest legacies such as coarse woody debris, snags and late-successional forest patches. Any considered treatments would speed the attainment of late-successional forest conditions which have been identified as being beneficial for terrestrial wildlife habitat and watershed function to maintain aquatic habitat.

Any proposed treatments and proposed road work will follow the guidance in the South Umpqua/Galesville Late Successional Reserve Assessment and the Northwest Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines (pages C-9 through C-20).

A wolfy tree surrounded by a stand of second growth Douglas-fir

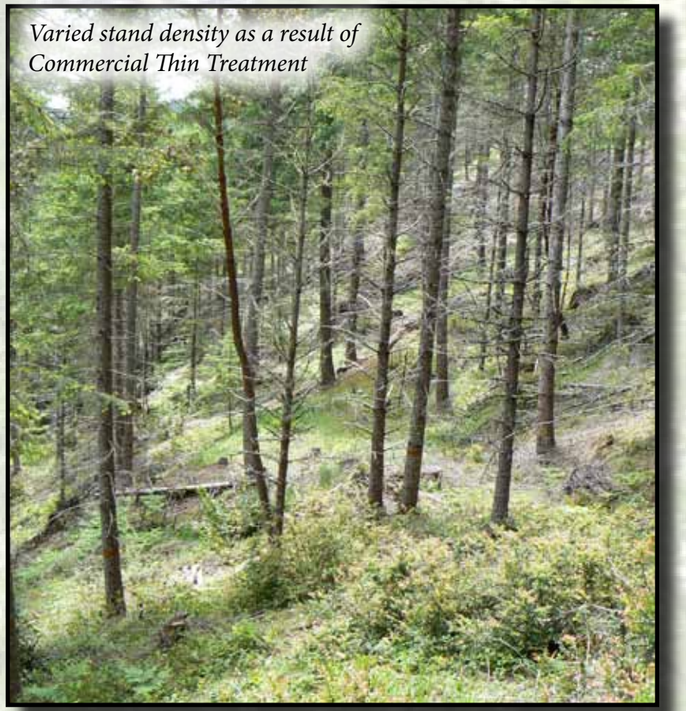
Types of Treatments Being Considered

At this early stage in the planning process the Upper Cow interdisciplinary team of specialists has identified four types of treatments that may be utilized to benefit late successional habitat characteristics at the stand level. Pages 2 and 5 will give a brief explanation of the treatment types: commercial thinning, density management, restoration thinning, and understory reduction. At this stage these treatments have not been assigned to specific units.

Commercial Thinning (CT)

Commercial thinning is a treatment applied to overstocked forest stands where some trees are removed but not all (generally less than 60% of the trees in the stand). Forest stands proposed for CT treatments generally occur where stands of single tree species are mostly the same size and age. This treatment emphasizes retention of the healthiest most dominant trees. Commercial thinning objectives include:

- Improving the health of the remaining trees which improves the overall health of the stand.
- Improving wildlife habitat by increasing the size and health of individual tree crowns.
- Decreasing mortality of the remaining trees.
- Improving individual tree resiliency to wildfire.



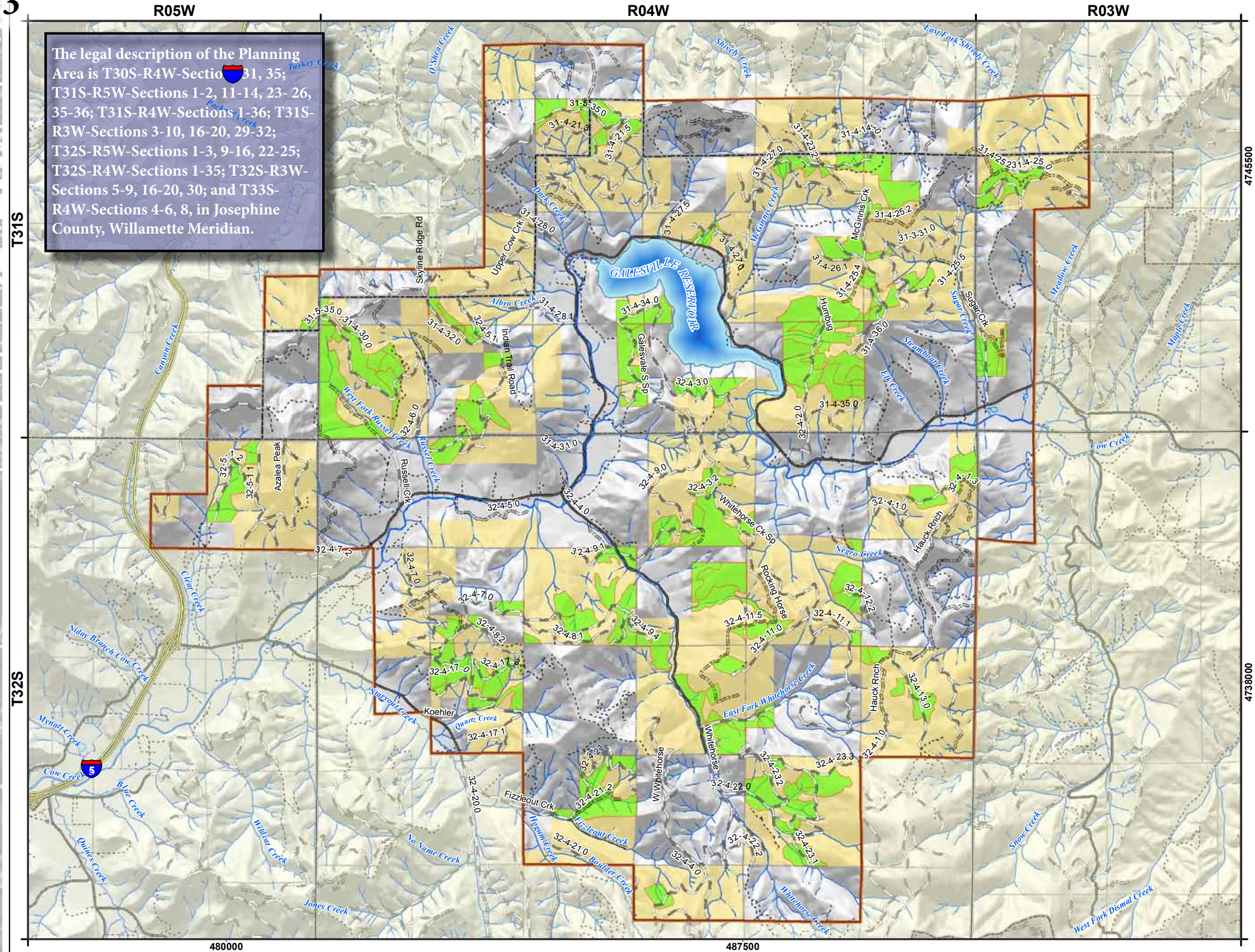
Varied stand density as a result of Commercial Thin Treatment

Density Management (DM)

Density management is a treatment applied to stands that have a mixture of small trees and larger trees. The intent of this treatment is to remove a portion of the small trees and leave the larger trees. This treatment creates a stand with a greater overall tree diameter. DM objectives include:

Overstocked Stand in need of Density Management Treatment

- Reducing the density of the forest stand which will increase the available water, growing space, nutrients and sunlight for the remaining trees.
- Stimulating growth, improving tree crown densities and creating a more fire tolerant forest stand.
- Enhancing and promoting the longevity of the future forests by retaining drought tolerant species such as pine, cedars, oak and other large hardwoods.



The legal description of the Planning Area is T30S-R4W-Sections 31, 35; T31S-R5W-Sections 1-2, 11-14, 23- 26, 35-36; T31S-R4W-Sections 1-36; T31S-R3W-Sections 3-10, 16-20, 29-32; T32S-R5W-Sections 1-3, 9-16, 22-25; T32S-R4W-Sections 1-35; T32S-R3W-Sections 5-9, 16-20, 30; and T33S-R4W-Sections 4-6, 8, in Josephine County, Willamette Meridian.

Upper Cow Scoping Map

01/14/2015

- Upper Cow Potential Treatment Area
- Planning Area
- Resource Area Boundary
- Perennial
- Intermittent
- Major Highway
- Paved Road
- Rocked Road
- Natural Surface Road
- Not Known
- Bureau of Land Management

0 0.5 1
Miles

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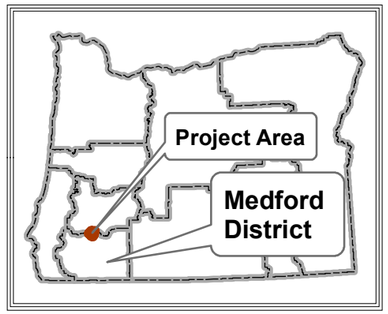
No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources and may be updated without notification.



Treatment Types (Continued)

Restoration Thinning (RT)

Restoration thinning is a treatment proposed in areas where fire suppression has created unfavorable stand conditions. The objective is to change conditions to favor the retention of fire tolerant species such as: Jeffery pine, ponderosa pine, sugar pine, incense cedar, oaks and large Douglas-fir. Restoration thinning objectives include:

Forest Stand Following Restoration Thinning Treatment

- Reducing stand density to promote individual tree vigor and help reduce competition induced mortality from Douglas-fir encroachment.
- Restoring stands losing their natural component of pine, incense cedar and oak to Douglas-fir encroachment.
- Utilization of gaps to enhance or promote individual tree development and skips for retaining unique stand characteristics.
- Reducing mortality and susceptibility of insect and disease attack and spread.

Understory Reduction (UR)

Understory reduction is a vegetation treatment that would use manual and mechanical techniques to thin around desired trees and reach a less dense stocking level. The slash create from this treatment may be hand piled and burned, lop and scattered and/or utilized as biomass. Understory reduction objectives include:

- Decreasing stand densities.
- Increasing resistance and resiliency to disturbances.
- Limiting rates of wildfire spread and establishing holding areas for use during prescribed burning and fire suppression activities.

Public Involvement

To the right is a diagram which briefly explains the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Environmental Assessment process. Scoping is a form of public involvement in the NEPA process and generally occurs early and extends through the development of alternative ways to meet the purpose and need listed on page 1 of this Scoping Guide.

Scoping Comment Period and Public Meeting

The scoping period for this project begins on January 21, 2015 and ends on February 20, 2015. Scoping comments can be sent in hardcopy form or electronically to the addresses listed below*.

The BLM is hosting a public meeting on January 29, 2015, beginning at 6 p.m. The meeting will be located at the Azalea Grange, 142 Pisqually Lane, Glendale, Oregon 97442. A team of BLM resource specialists will be present to answer questions about the planning process and our initial project analysis. We hope to see you there.

Primary Contact
Ferris Fisher, Planning and Environmental Coordinator
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Grants Pass, Oregon 97526
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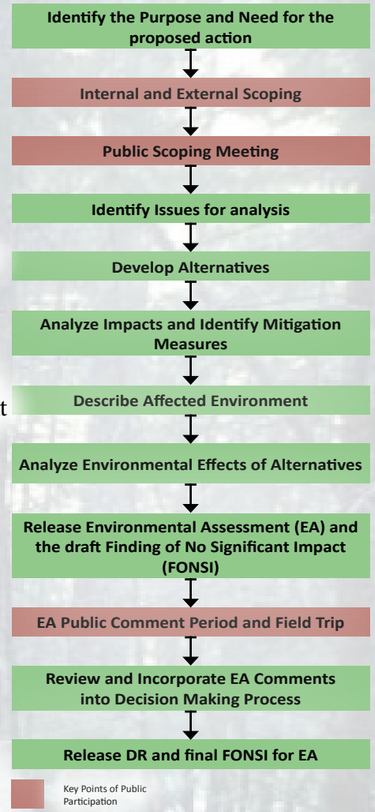
ffisher@blm.gov

*Comments submitted will become part of the public record for this project. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your personal information from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

Understanding the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

The Environmental Assessment Process

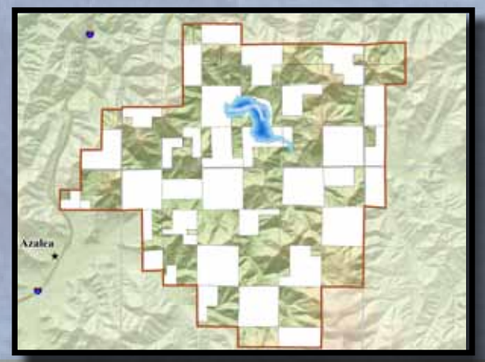


Upper Cow Late Successional Reserve Project Unit Selection Process

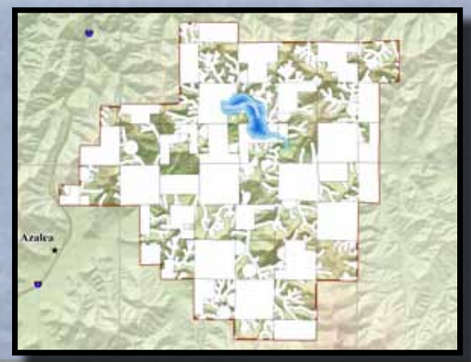
An interdisciplinary team (IDT) of resource specialist is brought together during the planning stages of a project. There are many steps that the IDT must go through before the final proposed treatment units are selected. Below is a brief description of the unit screening and selection process.

Step 1 - Delineate Project Area

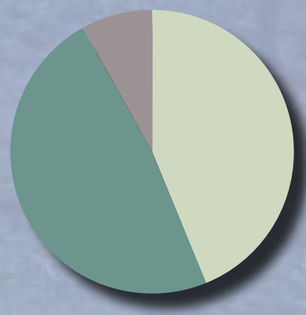
Step 2 - Identify BLM-Managed Lands



Step 3 - Screening Process: Remove sensitive areas, Northern Spotted Owl nest patches, sensitive soils, flora and fauna protection areas



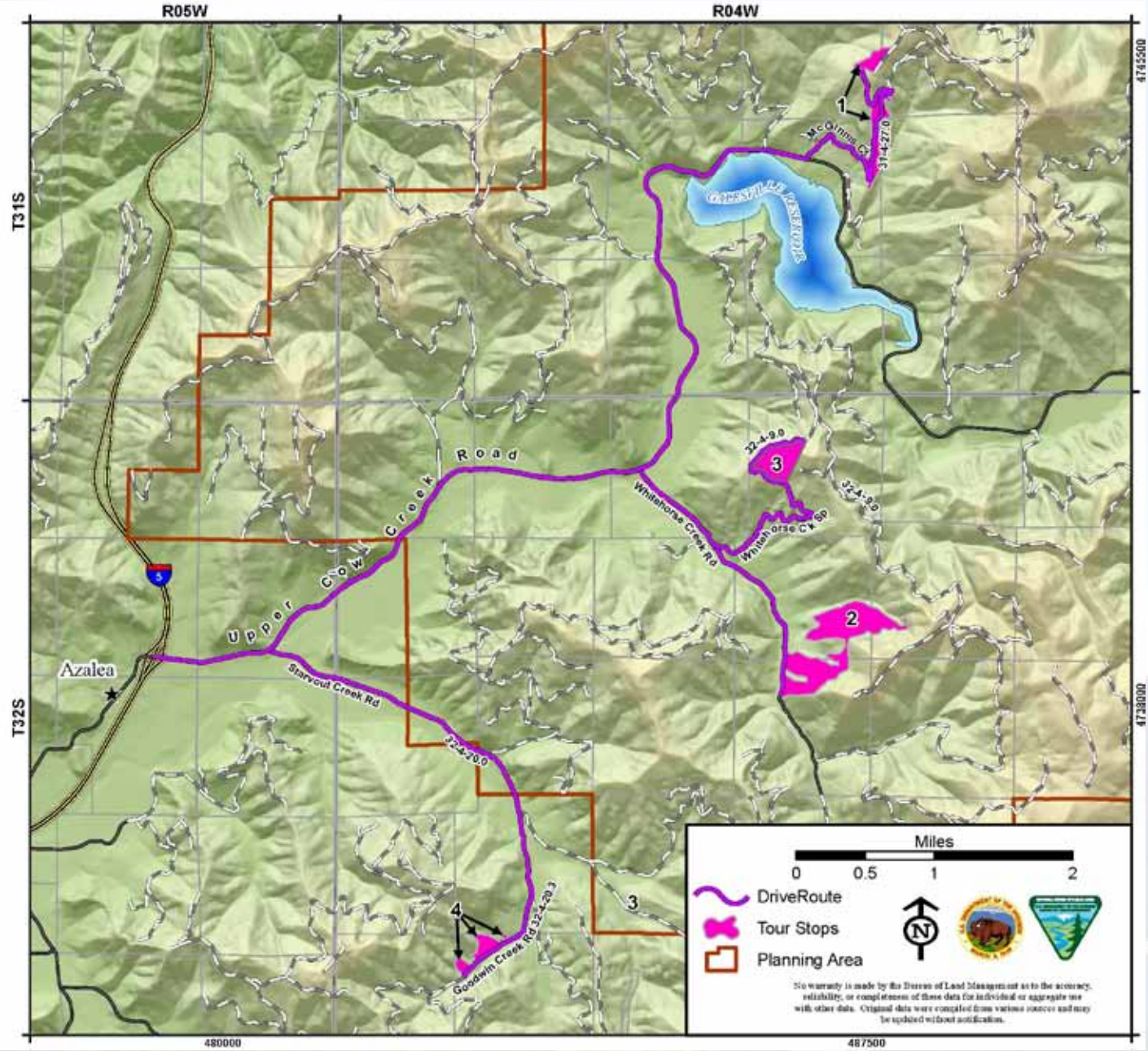
Proposed Upper Cow Units as Compared with Total Project Area



- BLM Managed Lands under consideration for treatment within the Planning Area: 44%
- BLM Managed Lands Screened Out: 8%
- Non-BLM Land within the Planning Area: 48%

Forest Management Tour in the Upper Cow Area

The Grants Pass Field Office invites you to personally view previous BLM forest management treatments, similar to the types of treatments proposed in this project. If you choose to make this trip, please plan accordingly: Check the weather forecast, bring appropriate clothing and equipment, and tell someone where you are going. This tour may take approximately 3 hours.



Stop #1: (McGindy Units 1 and 2)
2007 Commercial Thin; 40% canopy target on non-riparian areas, 50% canopy target on riparian areas

Stop #2: (Starving Cow Unit 10-1b)
2010 Lop and Scatter; 50% Canopy Target

Stop #3 (Starving Cow)
2010 Cable Yarding,; 40% Canopy Target

Stop #4
2006 Selective Slashing, Handpile and Cover, Handpile Burn

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