



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
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NOV 10 2015

IN REPLY REFER TO:

1792 (M050)

Dear Interested Public:

The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) Butte Falls Resource Area is beginning the process for planning and evaluating possible projects on BLM-administered lands near Lost Creek Lake in the Lost Creek/Rogue River and South Fork Rogue River Watersheds. Proposed projects could include forest management actions as well as watershed restoration activities.

This letter provides an introduction to the BLM's proposed Lost Creek Forest Management Project. I hope you find it helpful in understanding the project and your part in shaping it. Attached to this letter is a map of proposed locations for timber harvest, small diameter thinning, and water source restoration (Enclosure 1). Project identification is ongoing; it is likely we will be adding road work and more restoration projects. This letter contains very preliminary acreage estimates. As project planning progresses and this project is further refined, I anticipate the acres proposed for these projects will change.

At this time, I am inviting you to submit any comments, issues, and concerns you have that will help shape or further develop this project. Comments clearly expressing site-specific issues or concerns are the most helpful. Please submit your comments by December 10, 2015.

Thank you for your interest in the management of your public lands. Your input plays an important role in our land management decisions.

## **What is BLM Proposing?**

After an initial review of landscape conditions such as forest health, stand age, stand density, land-use allocations, and desired future conditions, BLM resource specialists determined the preliminary scope and scale of this project. The specialists identified acres in the Project Area as likely locations for vegetation management actions. Possible actions could include:

- Timber harvest (2,200 acres),
- Small diameter thinning (1,300 acres), and
- Water source restoration (6 sites).

BLM resource specialists are continuing to assess watershed conditions to determine possible projects and locations. Other projects could include riparian thinning, road work (decommissioning, renovating, and closing), temporary route construction, reconstruction, and decommissioning.

**Timber Harvest:**

BLM foresters identified timber stands in the Project Area that currently have too many trees competing for limited site resources such as nutrients, water, and sunlight. Timber harvest, using a variety of silviculture prescriptions, would reduce stand densities and free up resources for the remaining trees. Harvest would also produce timber volume that would sustain local jobs and contribute to the local economy.

BLM wildlife biologists identified Northern Spotted Owl 70-acre nest patches and highly suitable, structurally complex habitat in all the stands under consideration for harvest. These areas were removed from harvest consideration. In addition, areas will be buffered from harvest activities as botany, cultural, and wildlife surveys are completed.

**Small Diameter Thinning:**

Commercial and pre-commercial thinning would be used in stands less than 80 years old to reduce stand densities, promote stand health, and increase resiliency to environmental disturbances. Thinning would reduce the number of trees per acre to levels the site has resources to sustain. In some stands, thinning would be used to restore watershed conditions and NSO habitat.

**Water Source Restoration:**

Water sources, strategically located throughout the Project Area, provide water for Federal, state, and private fire engines, water tenders, and helicopters for use during wildfire suppression. The BLM identified 6 water source sites that are currently difficult to access with firefighting equipment or not usable for firefighting. Existing water sources would be maintained or restored to a functioning condition by clearing brush and trees; removing accumulated sediment; installing, repairing, or replacing spring boxes and culverts; repairing or replacing pipelines; installing, repairing, or replacing devices that impede water seepage; installing safety devices such as fences and exit ramps; or minor road work. The restored water sources would provide the additional benefits of drinking water, habitat, and foraging opportunities for wildlife.

**Why is BLM Proposing the Lost Creek Forest Management Project?**

The Lost Creek Forest Management Project is designed to implement specific Management Objectives consistent with the BLM's 1995 Medford District Resource Management Plan (RMP) in the Lost Creek Project Area. Specifically, this forest management proposal is designed to meet the following objectives:

- Design and implement forest management activities to produce a sustained yield of products to support local and regional economic activity (RMP, p. 81).
- Design and implement silviculture treatments in stands that are in a condition, or that will soon be in a condition, that prevents management objectives from being achieved (RMP, p. 62).
- Protect and conserve Federal listed and proposed species, and manage their habitats to achieve their recovery in compliance with the Endangered Species Act, approved recovery plans, and Bureau special status species policies (RMP, pp. 50-51).

- Locate and manage water drafting sites (sites where water is pumped to suppress fires) to minimize adverse effects on riparian habitat and water quality consistent with Aquatic Conservation Strategy and riparian reserve objectives (RMP, pp. 30, 90).
- Maintain a transportation system within the planning area that serves the management of resource program areas including timber management in an environmentally sound manner (RMP, pp. 84-88).

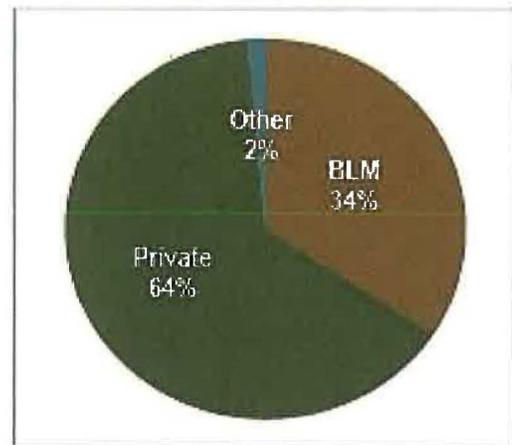
## Project Area Overview

The Lost Creek Forest Management Project is located southwest of the town of Prospect and near Lost Creek Lake in the Lost Creek-Rogue River 5<sup>th</sup> field watershed and portions of the South Fork Rogue River 5<sup>th</sup> field watershed. The 41,885-acre Project Area includes BLM, private, Corps of Engineer, and state lands.

The Lost Creek project proposals only apply to public lands within the Project Area managed by the Butte Falls Resource Area, Medford District Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

### Land Ownership in the Project Area

Private .....	26,860 acres
BLM.....	14,370 acres
Corps of Engineers.....	570 acres
State.....	50 acres
Forest Service.....	35 acres



### Land Use Allocations (BLM Lands)

Matrix.....	13,020 acres
Matrix (Connectivity/Diversity Block).....	1,350 acres

Matrix is one of seven land use allocations designated in the Northwest Forest Plan and the Medford District Resource Management Plan (RMP). It is the Federal land in which most timber harvest and silviculture activities are anticipated to occur. Matrix is divided into the northern and southern general forest management areas and connectivity/diversity blocks.

## Other Considerations

### Lost-Floras Creek Drainages

The 5,849-acre Lost-Floras Creek seventh field drainages, located in the south central portion of the Project Area, was deferred from management activities on BLM lands in 1993. The BLM reevaluated the drainage in 2012 and removed it from deferral status. As a condition of removing the drainage from deferral status, management activities on BLM lands may occur with the implementation of special management practices such as maintaining at least 40% canopy cover; constructing temporary routes,

instead of permanent roads, on stable locations such as ridge tops, stable benches or flats, and gentle to moderate side slopes; and using existing skid trails where possible.

### Northern Spotted Owl Activity Centers

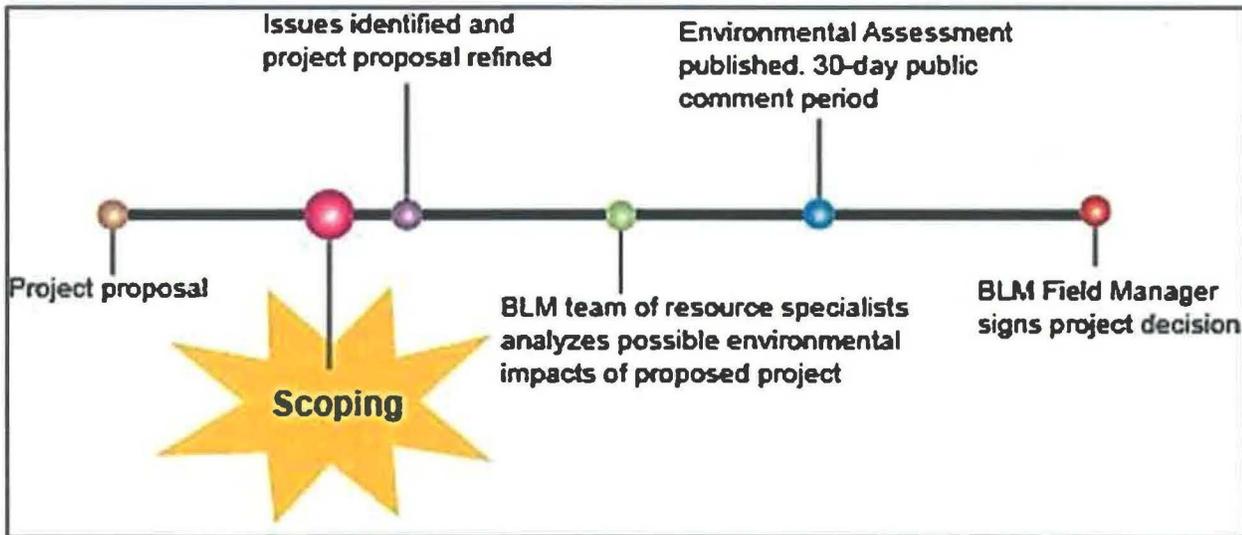
The Northwest Forest Plan designated 100 acres of the best habitat on Federal lands to be retained as close as possible to a northern spotted owl (NSO) nest site, or owl activity center, for all sites known as of January 1, 1994. This was intended to preserve an intensively used portion of the breeding season home range close to a nest site or center of activity. These known activity centers are managed as late-successional reserves (RMP, p. 39).

### How Can You Be Involved?

Scoping is just the beginning!

We want to hear any issues, concerns, or questions you may have specific to the Lost Creek Forest Management Project.

We are just beginning to develop this project, so now is the best time for you to provide input. Another opportunity for comments will occur at the completion of the environmental assessment; however, we welcome your comments at any time during the project. Comments should be as specific as possible.



*Please note that all written submissions from private individuals in response to this notice, including your name, address, telephone number, email address, or other personal identifying information may be made available for public inspection and disclosure, unless you specifically request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your personal identifying information from public review or disclosure, you must state this at the beginning of your written comment and provide justification for doing so. We will honor such requests to the extent allowed by law, but you should be aware that release of that information may be required under certain circumstances. All submissions from organizations or businesses and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organization or business will be made available for public inspection and disclosure in their entirety.*

**Contact Us!****Telephone:** 541-618-2205**Mail or in Person:**

Bureau of Land Management  
Attention: Stephanie Kelleher  
3040 Biddle Road, Medford, OR 97504

**Email:**

BLM\_OR\_MD\_Mail@blm.gov  
(Include "Attention: Stephanie Kelleher in the  
subject line)

If you do not have comments at this time but would like to be kept informed as planning progresses on this project, please complete and return the enclosed "Interest Response Form" (Enclosure 2) and your name will be maintained on the mailing list for this project. Your input will be most useful if it is received by **December 10, 2015**. However, comments will be accepted and reviewed up until the time a decision on the project is made. Those responding to this or other public notices concerning the Lost Creek Forest Management Project will be notified when the *Lost Creek Forest Management Project Environmental Assessment* becomes available for public review.

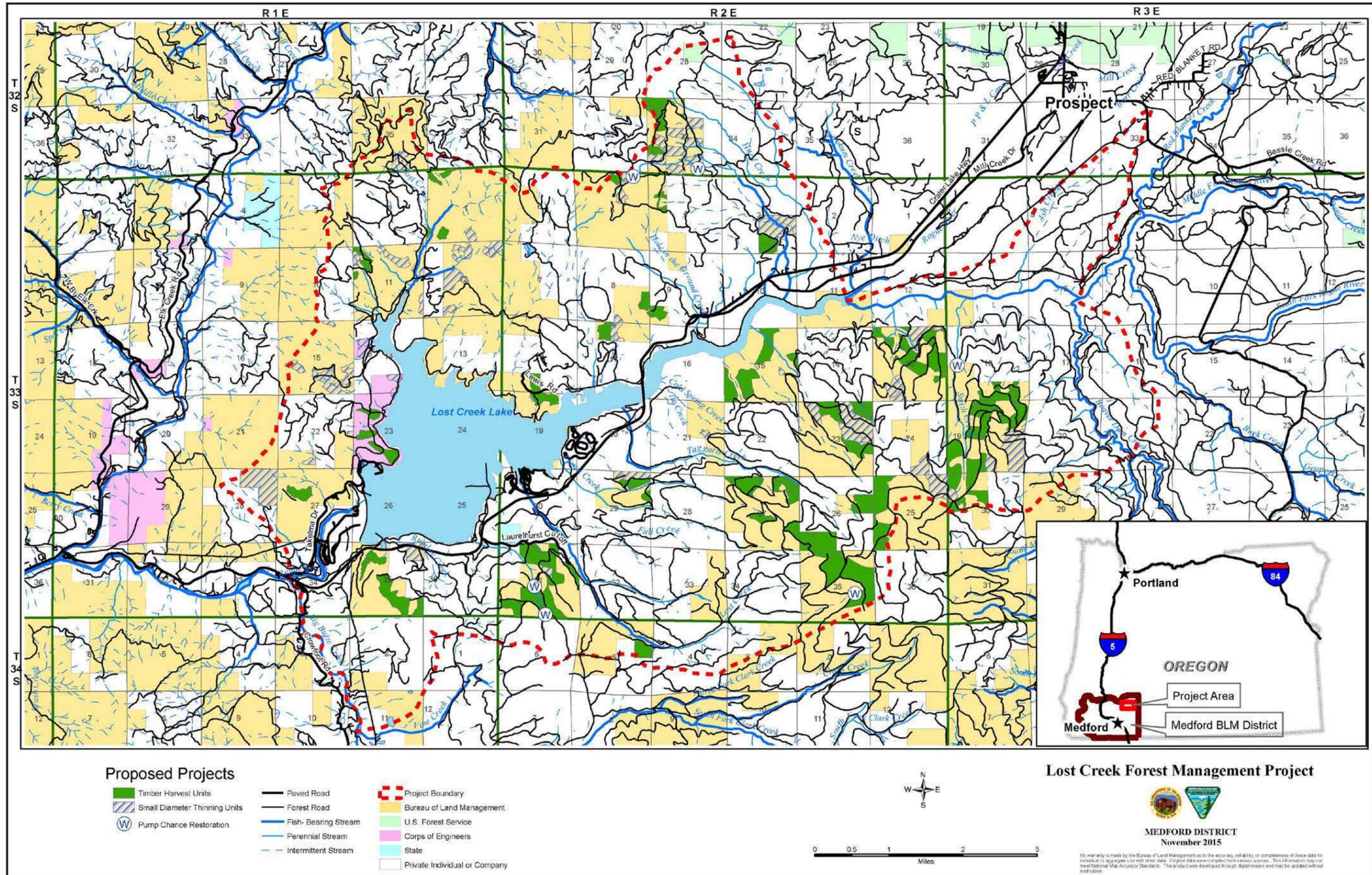
Sincerely,



Teresa J. Trulock  
Field Manager  
Butte Falls Resource Area

Enclosures

Enclosure 1. Scoping Map for the Lost Creek Forest Management Project



**Enclosure 2**

**INTEREST RESPONSE FORM**

Butte Falls Resource Area  
ATTN: Stephanie Kelleher  
BLM's Lost Creek Forest Management Project  
3040 Biddle Road  
Medford, Oregon 97504

Please include me on the *Lost Creek Forest Management Project* mailing list:

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer to be kept informed via       Email       Standard mail

We are trying to save paper and conserve resources. Please respond if you wish to be kept informed, otherwise you will be taken off the mailing list.