



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Medford District Office
3040 Biddle Road
Medford, Oregon 97504
email address: BLM_OR_MD_Mail@blm.gov

IN REPLY REFER TO:
1792 (ORM060)

OCT 27 2015

Dear Neighbor:

The Medford District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is seeking your input on a proposal to salvage trees blown down in early February 2015 from multiple warm storm systems with strong winds and significant flooding in southern and western portions of Jackson County. These winds coupled with already saturated soils resulted in numerous down trees in and around Howard Prairie in the Ashland Resource Area.

The storm blew down numerous trees in the area, including along BLM roads frequented by the general public and used by the BLM for administrative purposes. Leaning or fallen trees are creating a safety hazard, blocking several roads, or are lying within ditches compromising the safety and stability of the road system. Some trees were partially uprooted, hung up in other trees and/or in danger of falling into the roads.

The BLM is considering salvage on these lands within the blowdown area in accordance with direction provided in the 1995 *Medford District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* (RMP). The BLM intends to inventory and perform the required *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA) compliance measures in order to offer timber for sale in the late spring/early summer of 2016.

What is the BLM Proposing?

The Lake Blowdown Project proposes salvaging trees across approximately 202 acres blown down by the windstorm that are in excess of those needed to meet the requirements for coarse woody debris and snags as established in the Northwest Forest Plan (pp. C-40-43 and D-10) and Medford District RMP (pp. 39 and 40). Additionally, broken trees with no or very little green (less than 25 percent live crown) would be salvaged. Standing portions or portions of trees on the ground would be left on-site to meet snag or coarse woody debris requirements along with trees too scattered across the landscape to make salvage economically feasible. Merchantable coarse woody debris in excess of the amounts identified as minimum levels could be removed as part of the salvage activities. Salvaged trees would be removed by using ground-based logging systems.

The Public Land Survey System description for the proposed project is: Township (T) 38 South (S), Range (R) 3 East (E), Sections 13, 19, 25, and 26 Willamette Meridian, Jackson County, Oregon (Enclosure 1).

Why is the BLM Proposing Salvage of Wind thrown Trees?

Timely salvage of blowdown trees and standing trees severely damaged from the storm event is critical to capture remaining merchantable timber values before further deterioration occurs. Salvaging dead or dying trees would allow the BLM to retrieve some economic value from these trees located within the Matrix land use allocation. Blowdown and dead/dying trees above the level needed to meet snag retention and other habitat goals and provide desired levels of coarse woody debris would be harvested in order to meet RMP standards and guidelines.

The majority of the trees blown down during the storms were green trees. As these down trees begin to dry, the fuel loadings will increase until the fine fuels decay. The majority of the proposed salvage units were recommended for hazardous fuels reduction treatments under a previous forest management project. Therefore, salvaging a portion of the fuel loading would reduce the fuel hazard near Howard Prairie Lake campgrounds and individual residences. Down trees would make suppression activity more difficult in the event of a fire.

These actions would also provide private land owners with access to their land; allow for access to federal lands for resource management and fire protection; and provide the public with safe passage along roads.

What Happens Next?

The BLM will prepare the NEPA analysis (Environmental Assessment) that will document the estimated environmental effects of the proposed Lake Blowdown Project and this will be distributed to the public for a 30-day comment period. In order to appropriately address issues relevant to the proposals in forthcoming analysis, we are seeking your input. Comments should be as specific as possible and provide information on potential issues or concerns that the environmental analysis should address. Your input will be most useful if they are received by November 23, 2015. However, comments will be accepted and reviewed up until the time a decision is made on a project.

Please send comments to Michelle Calvert, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, Ashland Resource Area, Medford District BLM, 3040 Biddle Road, Medford, Oregon 97504, telephone (541) 618-2252, or e-mail your comments to blm_or_md_mail@blm.gov (Attention: Michelle Calvert).

If you would like to be kept informed about this project, please complete and return the attached "Interest Response Form" and you will be placed on the mailing list.

Pursuant to 7 CFR Part 1, Subpart B, Section 1.27, all written submissions in response to this notice will be made available for public inspection, including the submitter's name and address, unless the submitter specifically requests confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses submitted on official letterheads and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

Thank you for your interest in this project.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Sanborn
Acting Field Manager
Ashland Resource Area

Enclosures

Interest Response Form

ATTN: Ashland Resource Planning
BLM's Lake Blowdown Project
3040 Biddle Road
Medford, OR 97504

Please include me on the mailing list for the **Blowdown Project**:

Please Print Clearly:

Name: _____

Street: _____

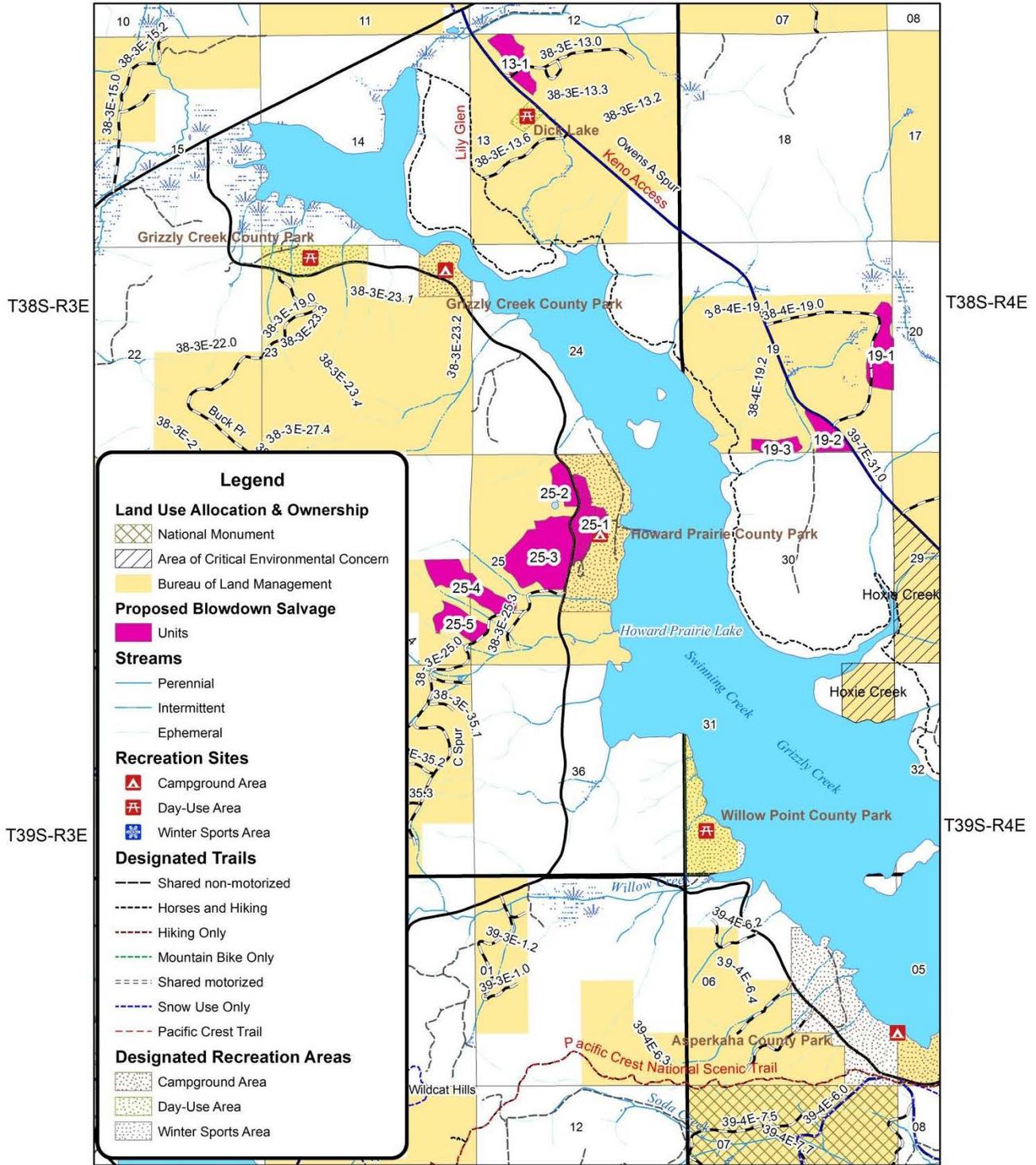
City, State, Zip Code: _____

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 and receive future mailings for this project.

Proposed Lake Blowdown Project Area



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data. Original data were compiled from various sources. This information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This product was developed through digital means and may be updated without notification.

