United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Grants Pass Field Office
2164 NE Spalding Avenue
Grants Pass, Oregon 97526
www.blm.gov/or/districts/medford

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Dear Interested Party,

The Grants Pass Field Office is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA). The EA will document potential effects of the Cold Elk Forest Management Project within policies set forth in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The planning area is located within the West Fork Cow Creek Watershed, in Coos and Douglas Counties, Oregon. The legal description of the planning area includes sections within Township 31 South, Range 8 West; Township 32 South, Range 8 West; Township 31 South, Range 9 West; Township 32 South, Range 9 West; and Township 32 South, Range 10 West. You have been contacted because you live within approximately one half mile of the planning area, or you have requested to receive planning updates from the Grants Pass Field Office.

Project activities are being considered in the Land Use Allocations designated as Matrix and Riparian Reserves, under the 1994 Medford District Resource Management Plan/1995 Record of Decision (RMP/ROD). The objectives of the project are to:

- Improve the health of the forest and associated habitats, to reduce tree mortality, and to restore the vigor, resiliency and stability of forest stands that are necessary to meet land use allocation objectives (RMP, p. 62);
- Manage timber stands to reduce the risk of stand loss from wildfires, animals, insects and diseases (RMP, p. 72);
- Produce a sustainable supply of timber and other forest commodities to provide jobs and contribute to economic sustainability in the Matrix LUA (RMP, p.38);
- Maintain or restore the components of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy in Riparian Reserves (RMP, p. 22);
- Develop and maintain a transportation system that serves the needs of users in an environmentally sound manner (RMP, p. 84);
- Manage and design road systems that reduce hazards to public health and safety, fire risks, and vandalism to public and private property (RMP, p. 88); and
- Maintain haul roads to accommodate the safe movement of vehicles and machines (Oregon OSHA Chapter 437, Division 7, Section F.

Potential treatments include variable density thinning, understory reduction and roadside treatments. Forest types being considered for treatment include mixed conifer stands ranging from 40 to 250 years old. Harvest operations needed to accomplish the project objectives would include tractor, cable and helicopter logging. Existing roads would be utilized where possible, and new road construction may be proposed to access harvest units.

There are a variety of natural resources in the planning area. The interdisciplinary team, consisting of resource professionals, will work to reduce adverse effects to resources. Resource concerns within the planning area may include, but are not limited to managing for listed species and critical habitat for: northern spotted owl, marbled murrelet, and Oregon Coast coho salmon.

As the Field Manager for the Grants Pass Field Office, I am seeking your input to help identify any issues or concerns specific to this project. More information about this project, including a scoping guide and a project area map with potential treatment units, may be found on the BLM's ePlanning website at http://tinyurl.com/BLMePlanning-ColdElk. Please submit your written comments to Grants Pass Interagency Office, 2164 NE Spalding Avenue, Grants Pass, OR 97526 by February 5, 2016 by close of business. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., closed on holidays. Those who provide comments or display an interest during this scoping period will be notified when the Environmental Assessment for this project is ready for public comment.

A public meeting will be held on January 27, 2016 at the Grants Pass Interagency Office (address above) from 5:30 P.M. to 7:00 P.M. The meeting will provide members of the public an opportunity to ask questions and learn more about the project. For more information about the meeting, please visit the website above or call us at the number below.

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 by 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 on their entirety.

We appreciate your involvement in Forest Management projects. Should you have any questions, or need additional information, please contact Leah Schofield, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, at (541) 471-6504.

Sincerely,

Allen Bollschweiler,
Field Manager
Grants Pass Field Office