



# United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Tillamook Field Office  
4610 Third Street  
Tillamook, Oregon 97141  
<http://www.or.blm.gov/salem>

Dear Interested Party:

The Bureau of Land Management Tillamook Field Office is proposing the Testament Creek Complex Forest Development Project in the Testament Creek-Nestucca River subwatershed in Tillamook and Yamhill Counties, Oregon. The featured objective of the proposed project, as defined by the Salem District Resource Management Plan (RMP) within the Late Successional Reserve, Adaptive Management Area and Riparian Reserve land use allocations, is to increase complex forest habitat for the northern spotted owl, a complex forest dependent species with a large home range. Northern spotted owl population trends continue to decline in the Oregon Coast Range. One of the primary reasons for the decline is the lack of contiguous, complex forest habitat and essential habitat features, which include forest stands with: multiple canopy layers; large conifer trees with large crowns and large limbs; and numerous large snags and downed-woody debris in varying decay classes. The proposed Testament Creek Complex Forest Development Project would use a combination of forest management treatments, including density management thinning implemented through timber sale contracts and wildlife structure creation and underplanting implemented through service contracts, to change the developmental trajectory of selected upland and riparian stands which currently lack many complex forest features. These treatments are expected to increase individual stand complexity, while concurrently continuing to build a large block of complex forest habitat, aiding in the recovery of the northern spotted owl.

Additional objectives of the proposed project include: contributing a supply of timber to support the stability of local communities and industries (developed to meet the O&C Lands Act of 1937) by implementing complex forest treatments through multiple timber sales; and, through forest stand treatment, maintaining and improving the development and function of riparian forests for a number of riparian associated aquatic and terrestrial species, including the northern spotted owl.

The project would occur in the Testament Creek-Nestucca River subwatershed in T.3 S., R.7 W., sections 33, 34, 35 and 36 and T.4 S., R.7 W., sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 19 and 21, Willamette Meridian; on Late Successional Reserve (LSR), Adaptive Management Area and Riparian Reserve Land Use Allocations as designated in the Salem District RMP. See enclosed maps.

For planning purposes the Tillamook Field Office analyzes lands at the 6<sup>th</sup> field subwatershed level. BLM lands in the Testament Creek-Nestucca River 6<sup>th</sup> field subwatershed were selected for analysis because preliminary activity planning and stand exam data has found that:

- Many of the stands are compositionally and structurally simplistic, being dominated by single-storied Douglas-fir.

- The analysis area is highly fragmented due to past actions and events, with suitable spotted owl habitat interspersed with a variety of younger stand ages and types.
- Some of the stands are heavily stocked and are at, or very near, a density which has or will slow tree growth and stagnate the formation of late successional forest characteristics such as large crowns, large limbs and intermediate canopy of shade tolerant trees.
- Many stands lack adequate amounts of coarse woody debris (CWD) and large snags.
- Many of the riparian forest stands are densely stocked and/or simplistic with little understory development or compositional complexity.

We are preliminarily planning to conduct density management treatments on forest stands ranging in age from approximately 40 to 100 years old. An Interdisciplinary Team has conducted a comprehensive look at all of the BLM forest land in the Testament Creek-Nestucca River subwatershed and developed a preliminary proposal that entails density management on approximately 900 acres. The tentative proposal is as follows:

- 726 acres – Upland Density Management
- 174 acres – Riparian Density Management
- Selected acres – Snag and CWD Creation
- Selected acres – Underplanting

Density management thinning treatments within all LUAs, along with associated wildlife structure development and understory tree planting actions, would be designed to increase individual stand complexity, while at the same time continuing to build a functioning, landscape-level late seral forest system. Density management thinning would generally be conducted through “thin-from-below” treatments (removing a portion of the smaller diameter trees of a stand while reserving most larger diameter trees) by thinning to a target basal area (the cross-sectional area of all stems in a stand measured at breast height and expressed per unit of land area). In addition to density management treatments throughout proposed stands, spatial and compositional diversity will be promoted by: creating clumps and gaps within the treated stand; creating wildlife structures and CWD; and underplanting shade tolerant trees.

The acreages shown above are based on information derived from Geographical Information System data, stand exam data, and field reconnaissance by resource specialists. We expect that as the proposal is developed more thoroughly that these acreages may change.

You have been identified as someone who might have specific knowledge or interest in this area. The purpose of this letter is to give you an opportunity to share any information or concerns you may have about this proposed project and to provide potential alternatives to the proposed project that continue to meet the stated purpose and need.

The enclosed maps show the location of the proposed project areas. I would appreciate your written comments by **May 13, 2016**. Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the Tillamook Field Office during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays, and may be published as part of environmental analysis documents or related correspondence. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or street address 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.

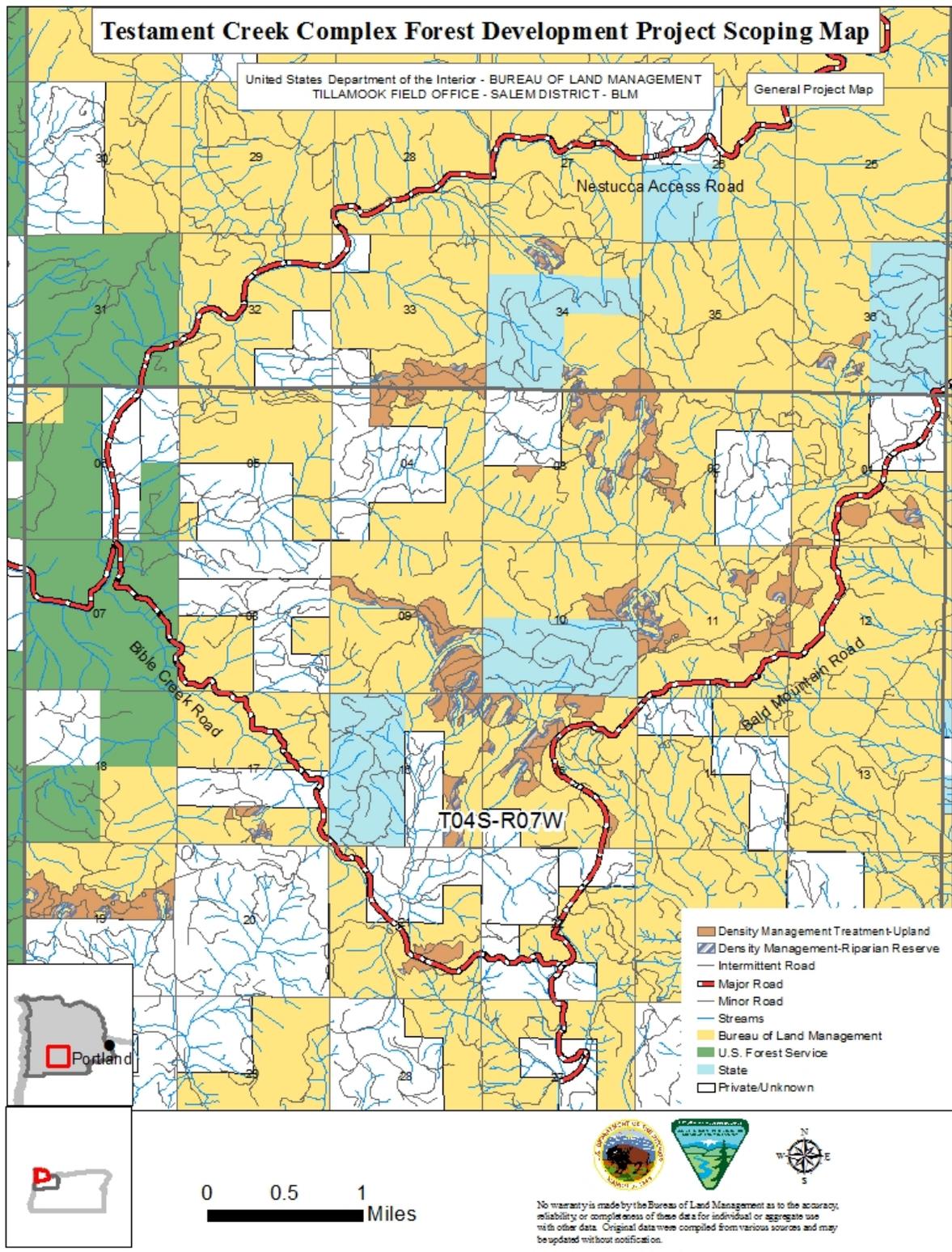
If you have any questions about this project, please contact Landon Rhodes at (503) 815-1460. Written comments may be sent to Karen M. Schank, Field Manager, Tillamook Field Office , 4610 Third Street, Tillamook, OR 97141, or by email to:  
**blm\_or\_sa\_tillamook\_mail@blm.gov**, Attn: Karen Schank.

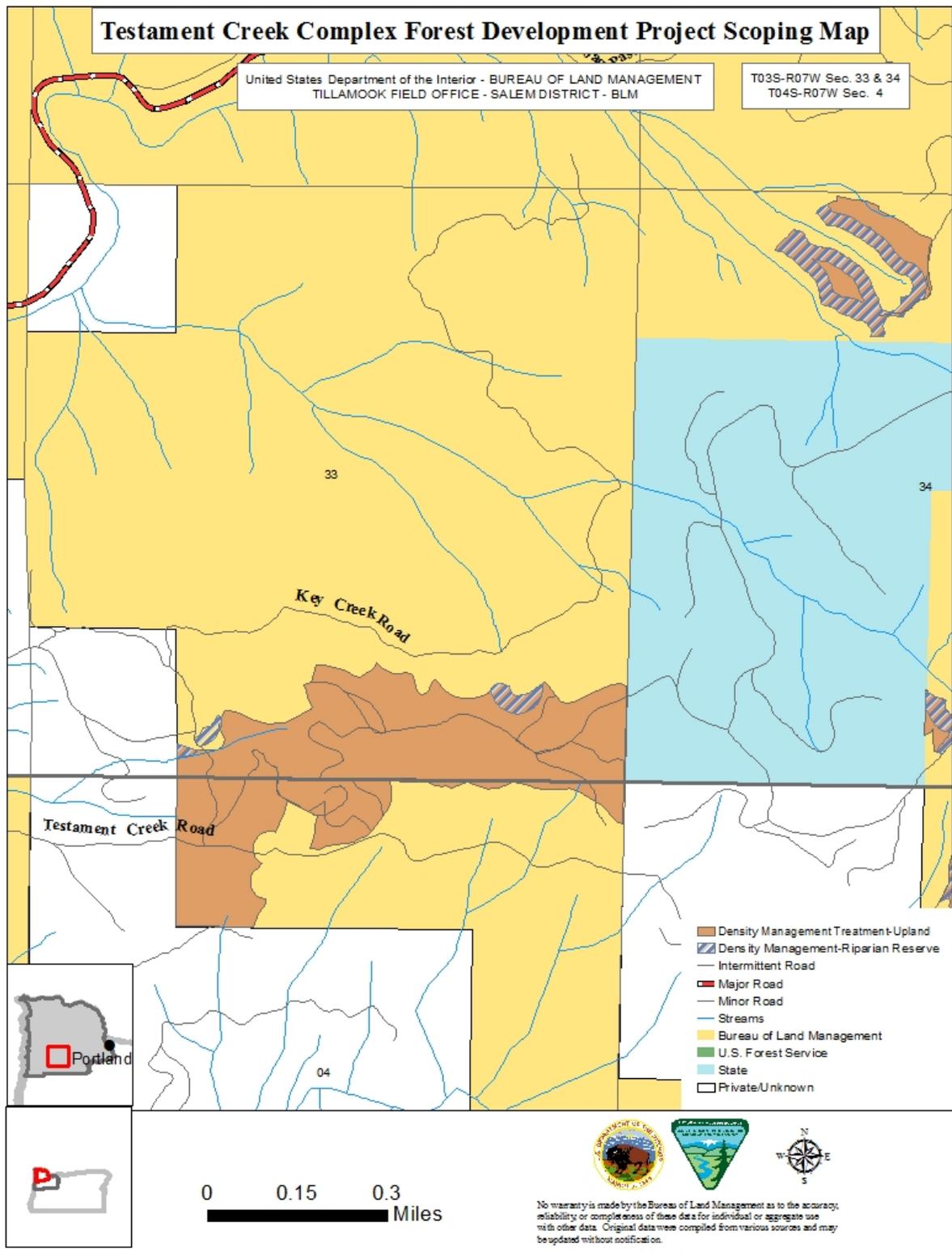
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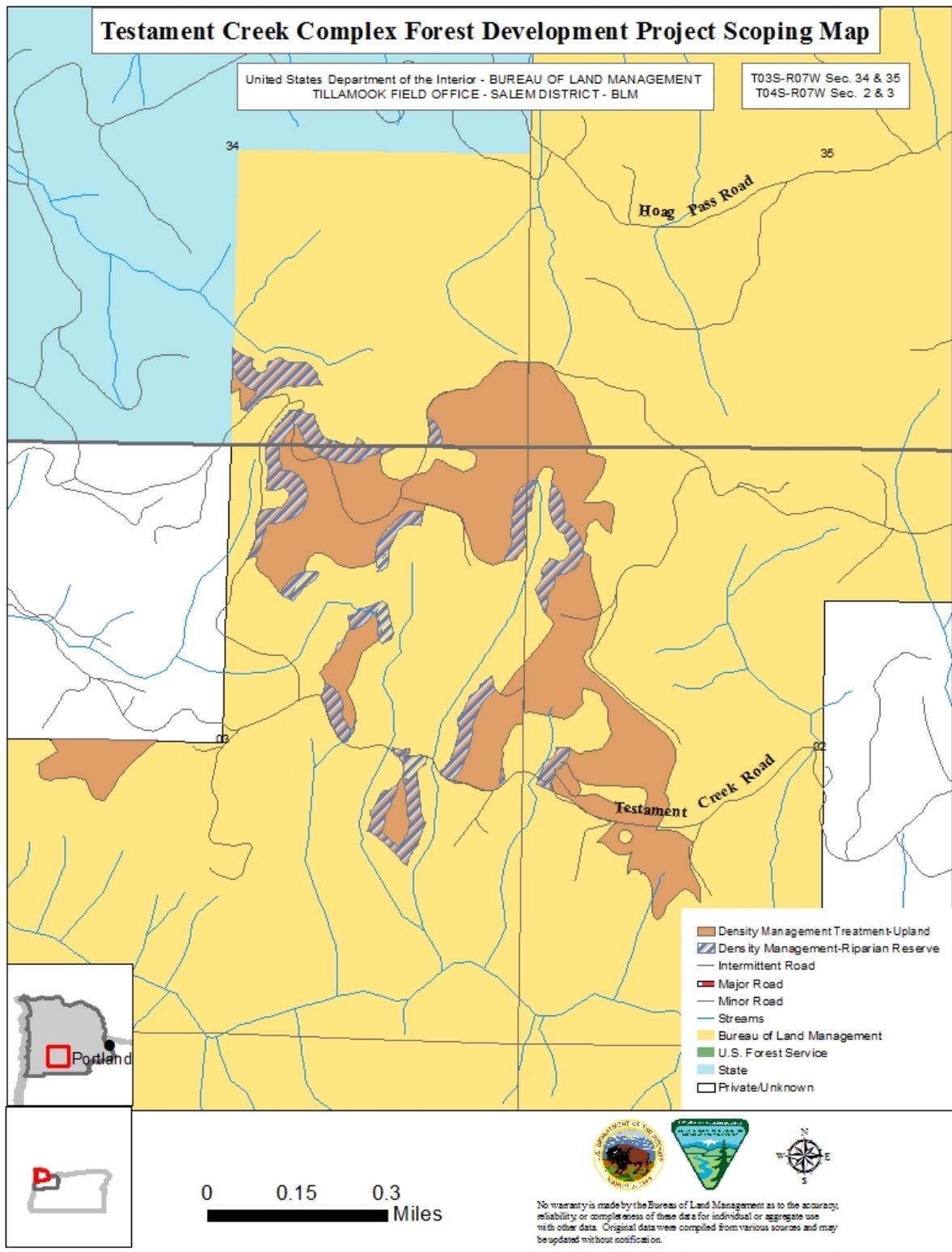


Karen M. Schank  
Field Manager, Tillamook Field Office

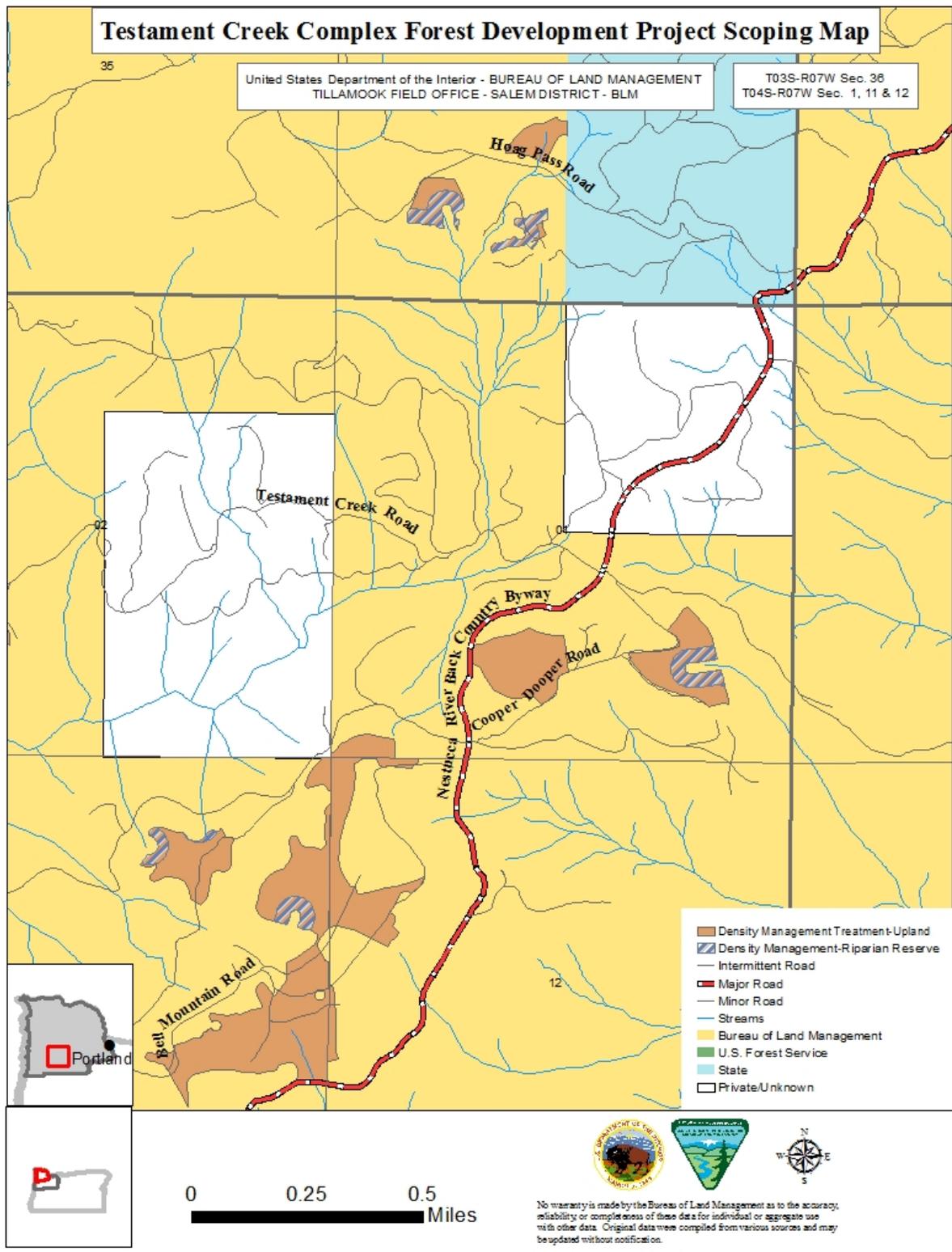
Enclosures (6)

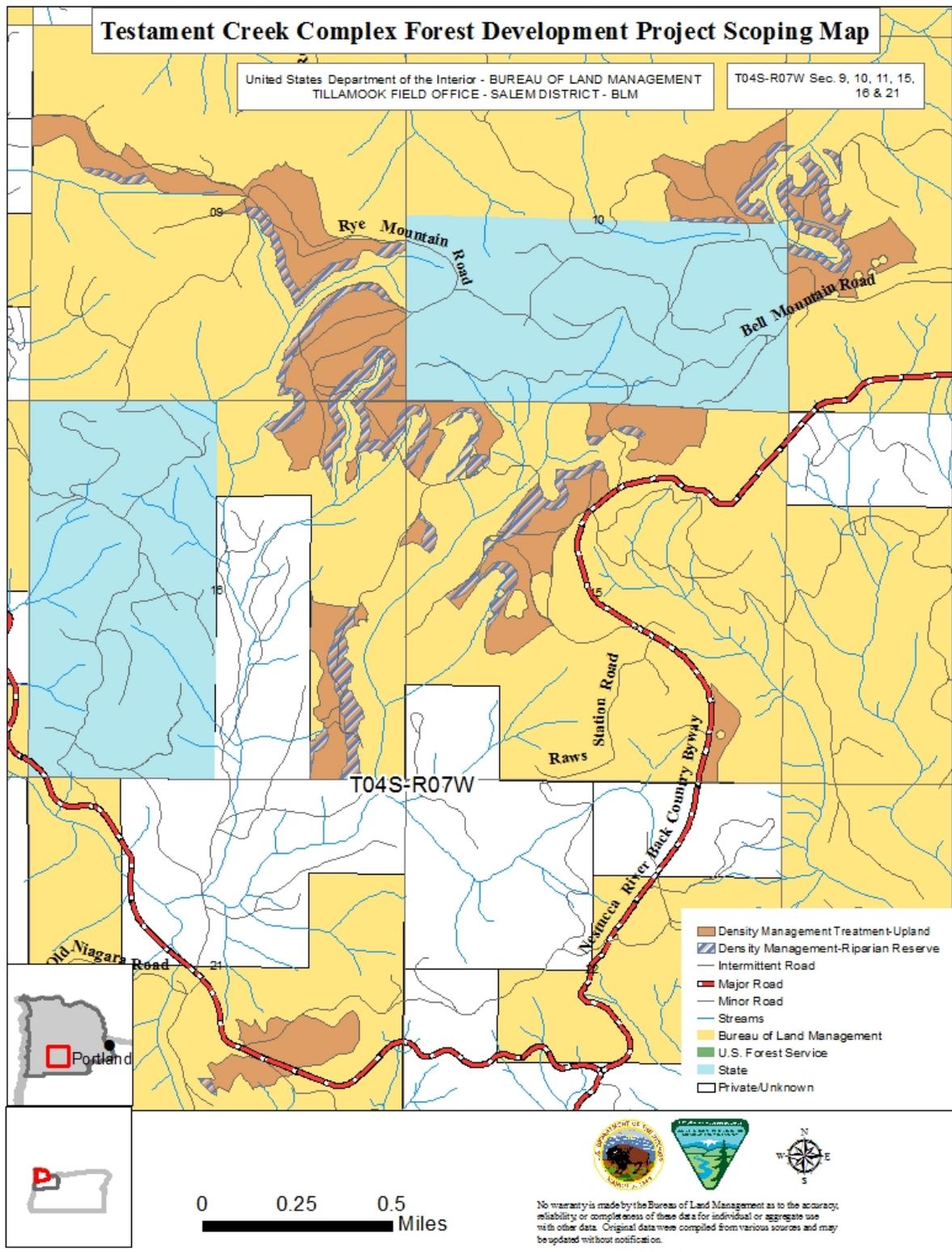


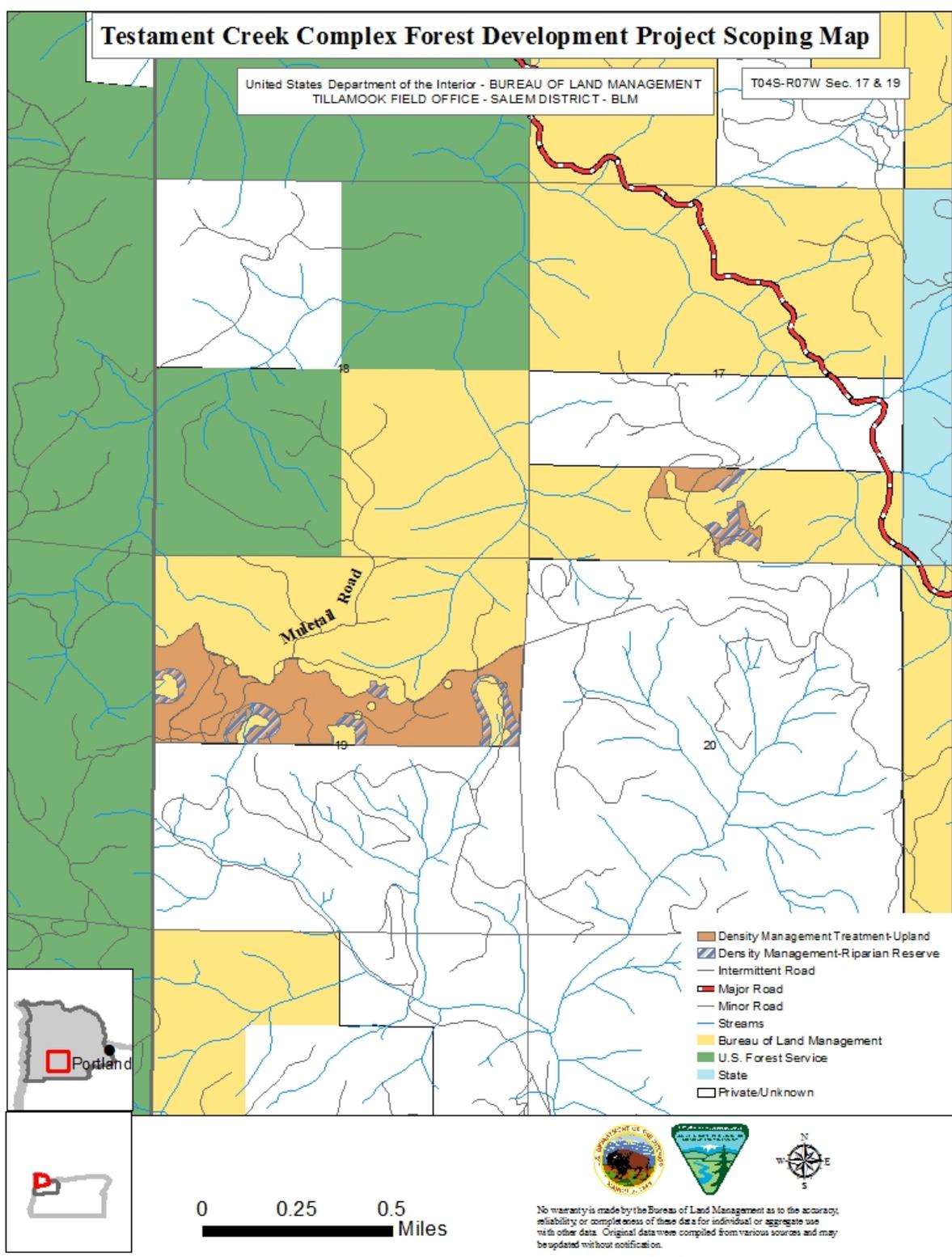




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