



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Grants Pass Interagency Office

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Public Scoping Notice

Cedar Flat Forest Management Project
Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-ORWA-M070-2025-0002-EA

Dear Reader,

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Medford District, Grants Pass Field Office is developing the Cedar Flat Forest Management Project Environmental Assessment. This project is being prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements. The NEPA advises gathering early public input through the process of scoping. The purpose of this letter is to give the reader information about why the BLM is proposing this project, where it would occur, and how to provide comments.

Why is the BLM proposing the Cedar Flat project?

The 2016 Southwest Oregon Record of Decision & Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP) provides management direction for every acre of BLM-administered land by assigning each acre a Land Use Allocation (LUA). The RMP directs the Grants Pass Field Office to manage those lands based on the assigned LUA. The BLM is planning commercial forest management and hazard fuels reduction (HFR) treatments in the following LUAs.

The LUAs within the project, and the primary reasons for treatment as described in the 2016 Southwest Oregon Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan, are listed below:

- Late-Successional Reserve – Promote northern spotted owl habitat and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire.
- Riparian Reserve – Reduce the risk of stand-replacing crown fire to ensure stable instream wood.

The 2016 ROD/RMP directs the Medford District to apply 17,000 acres of commercial thinning or selection harvest per decade in the Late Successional Reserve LUA. These treatments are designed to enable forests to recover from past management practices and respond positively to disturbance such as drought, wildfire, and disease. These treatments are intended to contribute to northern spotted owl recovery by reducing the risk of losing late-successional forest habitat.

The town of Williams is ranked as having the 13th highest community exposure rating to wildfire in the state of Oregon, in the 2018 PNW Quantitative Risk Assessment. This project area was also selected to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire to the Williams and surrounding communities. Commercial thinning and HFR treatments reduce tree density, ladder fuel connectivity, and surface fuels leading to lower risk of stand replacing crown fire, lower fire intensity, and lower fire severity.

What is being proposed?

The activities proposed include commercial thinning and selection harvest of timber and HFR treatments such as non-commercial thinning, pile burning, and prescribed fire. To facilitate these treatments, road and landing construction are being considered in addition to road maintenance. The proposed treatment areas are within the Williams Creek, Deer Creek, and Sucker Creek fifth field watersheds. The BLM's proposed treatments cover approximately 2,588 acres. This includes 1,834 acres of commercial thinning & selection harvest and HFR in Late Successional Reserves and 754 acres in Riparian Reserves. A draft of the Environmental Assessment Chapters 1 & 2 will be provided on ePlanning showing maps and additional project details.

How can you participate?

Public comments are most useful when they are specific to the project described in this letter, question the accuracy of the information presented, present new information relevant to the future analysis, and contain information which could cause changes to the project. Public comments are least helpful if they express favor for or against the project without reasoning, agree or disagree with BLM policy without justification, are comments which do not pertain to the areas within the project or scope of work, and comments which take the form of vague, open-ended questions (BLM NEPA Handbook H1790-1, Section 6.9.2.1).

Please be aware of your privacy rights when submitting public comments. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personally identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment –including your personal identifying information– may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so (Authority: 40 CFR 1506.6, 40 CFR 1506.10, 43 CFR1610.2, 43 CFR 1610.5).

Public comments will also be considered when preparing the full draft Environmental Assessment. Your input will be most helpful if it is received within a month from the signing of this letter. Another 30-day public comment period for the full draft Environmental Assessment will also be provided in the future. We look forward to working with you throughout the development of this project.

To submit a public comment, go to the BLM's ePlanning website <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2036044/510> and click participate now.

Sincerely,

Heidi L. Lowery
Field Manager
Grants Pass Field Office