



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT OFFICE
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IN REPLY REFER TO:

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AUG 25 2003

Interested Citizen:

This letter is to inform interested parties of my decision concerning the Bobar Landscape Project. In December, 2002, the Ashland Resource Area completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Bobar Landscape Project. The EA was distributed for a 60 day public review and comment period. Planning for the Bobar project has been ongoing for a number of years. Extensive outreach and dialog with the public has taken place. Numerous letters, articles in local newspapers, community meetings, field trips and discussions with individuals and groups have taken place.

Again, I want to thank those of you who took the time to write letters, attend meetings and become involved in the discussions. From the public outreach and the review of EA comments, it is quite clear that there is a wide range of opinions and ideas about resource management on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands in the project area. There appears to be general consensus in several areas: a) the potential for damaging wildfires is high and that the consequences to the community of such fires could be enormous; b) there is a widespread desire that the wild fire potential be addressed and reduced in a substantive way; c) there is a widespread desire to frame BLM's public land management activities in a way that will promote forest ecosystem restoration. Although there may be consensus on the above values, there is a great diversity of views about what this means, and how best to achieve those goals.

My staff and I have reviewed carefully the public comments about this project. I want to again emphasize, the Bobar project is a comprehensive, watershed based approach to long term forest management for multiple objectives. While we try to plan and design projects to reflect many of the views of the public, the central driver of the project design is the existing Northwest Forest Plan and the Medford Resource Management Plan. The Bobar project was not designed solely for fuels hazard reduction nor was it designed solely for the production of timber. The project is our best effort at incorporating local ideas and views along with the resource management mandates set forth in the various laws and resource plans that we are required to work with. In designing the Bobar project, we have created what we believe to be the best balance of forest health, fuel reduction and commodity production.

In April of 2003, I made the first decision concerning the Bobar Project. Decision record #1, authorized the treatment of a portion of the non-commercial units in the Bobar Project. Between April 30 and July 11th, about 650 acres of BLM land have been treated in the Bobar project area. Additionally, private landowners were able to treat 55 acres of their land neighboring BLM by acquiring National Fire Plan fuels reduction grants. These treatments will help restore vigor and species diversity to the area while helping to reduce the potential harmful effects of wildfire.

Enclosed with this letter is Decision Record #2, which authorizes work to begin on the remainder of the activities and treatments discussed in the EA.

This week, in the Mail Tribune, we will be announcing a Stewardship Contract to perform some of the management activities for the Bobar Project. This contract will combine small diameter timber harvest, non-commercial tree thinning, tree planting, road decommissioning, roadside brushing and slash disposal into one contract package. We also will be announcing the larger Bobar Timber Sale this week in the Mail Tribune.

The administrative remedy information for those opposed to these projects is contained in the newspaper advertisements mentioned above.

Additional questions about the Bobar project can be addressed to Ed Reilly of the Ashland Resource Area at (541)618-2384.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard J. Drehobl". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

Richard J. Drehobl
Field Manager
Ashland Resource Area

Enclosure (as stated)