



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Medford District Office  
Butte Falls Resource Area

December 2003



# Timbered Rock Fire Salvage and Elk Creek Watershed Restoration Final Environmental Impact Statement Volume I: Chapters 1-5



Photo by Teresa Vaughn



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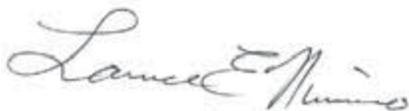
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# Timbered Rock Fire Salvage and Elk Creek Watershed Restoration Final Environmental Impact Statement

December 2003

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IN REPLY REFER TO:

1614(OR115)  
Timbered Rock/Elk Ck.  
FEIS Review  
B53165(JW:tp)

DEC 2 2003

Dear Reader:

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Timbered Rock Fire Salvage and Elk Creek Watershed Restoration is available for review. Based on public comments received and internal review of the Timbered Rock Fire Salvage and Elk Creek Watershed Restoration Draft EIS (published August 15, 2003), changes, corrections and clarification were made in the FEIS.

This plan analyzes six action alternatives, including the Preferred Alternative, and a No Action Alternative. The alternatives address salvage opportunities and restoration projects designed to bring future resource conditions closer to those objectives identified in the Medford District Resource Management Plan, Northwest Forest Plan, Elk Creek Watershed Analysis, and the South Cascades Late-Successional Reserve Assessment. Two types of salvage - area and roadside - are discussed in Alternatives C through G. Alternatives A and B propose no salvage. Alternatives C, D and G were designed using specific guidance related to post-fire salvage and/or Late-Successional Reserve guidelines. Restoration projects are proposed in the action alternatives, Alternatives B through G. Alternative A (No Action) has no restoration projects proposed, but the rehabilitation and stabilization projects proposed in the Timbered Rock Fire Emergency Stabilization Rehabilitation Plan (ESRP) would be implemented.

The preferred alternative, Alternative G, includes two research proposals; 1) to evaluate mixed-species reforestation plantings to identify and characterize temporal patterns of vegetation, structural development and species diversity; to assess temporal dynamics of fuel loading and fire risk; and to determine impacts of snag retention on survival and growth of planted and naturally regenerated trees; 2) to evaluate various snag retention levels on wildlife species (birds and small mammals). Roadside salvage is designed to reduce existing or potential public safety concerns while recovering economic value.

Release of this FEIS initiates a 30-day availability period after which the Record of Decision (ROD) will be prepared and published. Any comments received, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the Medford District Office; 3040 Biddle Road, Medford, Oregon during regular business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday through Friday, except holidays. **If you wish to withhold your name and/or 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.

We want to acknowledge and thank those who took advantage of the public review period to provide comments on the Draft EIS. We recognize and appreciate the planning team's dedication and hard work.

Sincerely,

Timothy B. Reuwsaat  
Medford District Manager

# Timbered Rock Fire Salvage and Elk Creek Watershed Restoration Final Environmental Impact Statement

1. **Responsible Agency:** United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management

2. Draft ( )                      **Final (X)**

3. **Administrative Action (X)**                      Legislative Action ( )

4. **Abstract:** The Timbered Rock Fire Salvage and Elk Creek Watershed Restoration Final Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) considers seven alternatives to analyze possible salvage opportunities resulting from the Timbered Rock Fire and proposed restoration projects designed to move resource conditions closer to the desired future conditions identified in the Northwest Forest Plan (NFP), Medford District Resource Management Plan (RMP), Elk Creek Watershed Analysis (WA), and South Cascades Late-Successional Reserve Assessment (LSRA). In 1994, the NFP designated the Federal lands (85,424 acres) within the Elk Creek Watershed as Late-Successional Reserve (LSR). The Butte Falls Resource Area, Medford District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administers 23,866 acres within the Elk Creek LSR.

A catastrophic fire occurred within the Elk Creek Watershed in 2003. The Timbered Rock Fire burned with varying degrees of intensity across 27,000 acres of mixed Federal, private, and commercial forest lands. About 12,000 acres of BLM-administered land, primarily within the Elk Creek LSR were burned. Due to the Timbered Rock Fire, the BLM proposed to take two actions: implementation of restoration projects within the Elk Creek Watershed and economic recovery of fire-killed trees (salvage).

Two types of salvage, area and roadside, are discussed in Alternatives C through G. Alternatives A (No Action) and B propose no salvage. Alternatives C through G were designed using specific guidance relating to post-fire salvage and/or Late-Successional Reserve guidelines. Included in Alternative G is research to study the effects of various snag retention levels on birds and mammals, and various reforestation in vegetation control treatments. Research could occur in any alternative.

Four levels of restoration projects are proposed in the six action alternatives (B-G): focused, moderate, extensive, and focused within the fire perimeter only. Restoration varies by the scope of the projects, intensity of the treatments, and location of the treatments. Restoration projects are located within the Timbered Rock Fire perimeter and outside the fire perimeter. Most projects are located within the Elk Creek Watershed.

Alternative G is the BLM Preferred Alternative.

Release of this Final EIS begins a 30-day availability period.

5. **The 30-day availability period for the Timbered Rock Fire Salvage and Elk Creek Watershed Restoration Final Environmental Impact Statement begins when the Environmental Protection Agency publishes a Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*.**

6. **For further information, contact:**

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# User's Guide

The Timbered Rock Fire Salvage and Elk Creek Watershed Restoration Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is divided into six sections: Summary, Chapter 1 (Introduction), Chapter 2 (Alternatives), Chapter 3 (Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences), Chapter 4 (Consultation and Coordination), and Appendices. The following is an overview of these sections to assist in the review of the document and in understanding the planning process.

## Chapter 1

Chapter 1 provides the introduction to the plan. It defines the purpose (objectives) and need for the plan and provides a description of the planning area. The issues or concerns identified through scoping and the planning process are included. Also included is an explanation of the relationship of this plan to existing laws, regulations, policies, and other plans.

## Chapter 2

Chapter 2 describes the range of alternatives, including the No Action Alternative (Alternative A) and the BLM's Preferred Alternative (Alternative G). The seven alternatives propose a variety of management actions in order to address the plan objectives and the underlying need for this planning effort.

## Chapter 3

Chapter 3 combines the affected environment and the environmental consequences into one chapter. The affected environment includes the pre- and post-fire conditions for the physical, biological, social, and economic resources in the planning area. The resources that would be affected by or would affect the proposed management actions are emphasized. Chapter 3 also analyzes the environmental consequences of implementing each alternative as compared to the existing conditions.

## Chapter 4

Chapter 4 identifies the specialists and supporting technical specialists involved in the preparation of this plan. A summary of the public involvement process and a list of the agencies, organizations, and individuals who were consulted in the DEIS process are included.

## Chapter 5

Chapter 5 contains reproductions of the comment letters received on the DEIS during the 60-day comment period. Substantive comments from those letters and the BLM responses to those comments are also included.

## Maps

A folded map of the Preferred Alternative, Alternative G, is included with this FEIS. At the back of the document are attached four z-fold maps. Maps charts, and tables are also included throughout the document.

# Document Layout

The EIS is set up using a modified decimal system: 1.0/1.1, 1.2 . . ./1.1.1, 1.1.2 . . ./etc. The first figure in the numbering system represents the chapter number. For example, 1.0, 1.2.3, and 1.5.2.7 are all topics found in Chapter 1. The second decimal figure is the second level heading. All information under that heading will contain the same first two numbers. For example, 1.2, 1.2.6, and 1.2.10 are all topics found in Chapter 1, Section 2. The decimal numbering system continues down to a fourth level heading.

**Example of FEIS decimal numbering system:**

## **1.0 Purpose of and Need for Action**

### **1.5 Scoping and Identification of Issues**

#### **1.5.2 Major Issues to be Addressed in Detail**

##### **1.5.2.3 Issue 3: Coarse Woody Debris and Snag Levels**

Figures and tables are numbered in sequence using the modified decimal numbering system. The first number is the chapter number, the second number is a second level section number, and the third number indicates the order that figure or table occurs in the section. In Chapter 3, for example, all figures and tables related to section 3.12, Wildlife, begin with 3.12. They are numbered in order of appearance in Wildlife until section 3.13, Grazing, resets the numbering to 3.13-1.

Maps are numbered with chapter number and sequence. A letter may also be used to indicate the location of the map in the document. A map number followed by the letter 'f' (e.g., Map 2-6f) is the large, folded map found in the map packet. A map number followed by the letter 'b' (e.g., Map 3-3b) is a z-fold map attached in the back of the document.

# Acronyms

|           |   |       |  |
|-----------|---|-------|--|
| ACS       | Aquatic Conservation Strategy                             | NSO   | Northern Spotted Owl                               |
| BA        | Biological Assessment                                     | O&C   | Oregon and California Railroad                     |
| BAER      | Burned Area Emergency Response                            | OAR   | Oregon Administrative Rules                        |
| BFRA      | Butte Falls Resource Area                                 | ODF   | Oregon Department of Forestry                      |
| BLM       | Bureau of Land Management                                 | ODFW  | Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife             |
| BMP       | Best Management Practices                                 | OFPA  | Oregon Forest Practices Act                        |
| BO        | Biological Opinion  | ONHP  | Oregon Natural Heritage Program                    |
| CEQ       | Council of Environmental Quality                          | OSHA  | Occupational Safety and Health Administration      |
| CFR       | Code of Federal Regulations                               | OSU   | Oregon State University                            |
| CHU       | Critical Habitat Unit                                     | PCT   | Pre-Commercial Thinning                            |
| CWA       | Clean Water Act   | PDF   | Project Design Feature                             |
| CWD       | Coarse Woody Debris                                       | PIF   | Partners in Flight                                 |
| DBH       | Diameter at Breast Height                                 | REO   | Regional Ecosystem Office                          |
| DEIS      | Draft Environmental Impact Statement                      | RMP   | Resource Management Plan                           |
| DEQ       | Oregon Department of Environmental Quality                | ROD   | Record of Decision                                 |
| DFC       | Desired Future Condition                                  | ROS   | Rain-on-Snow                                       |
| DFPA      | Douglas Forest Protection Association                     | RUSLE | Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation               |
| DMA       | Designated Management Agency                              | S&M   | Survey and Manage                                  |
| DO        | Dissolved Oxygen  | SHPO  | State Historic Preservation Office                 |
| EA        | Environmental Assessment                                  | SONC  | Southern Oregon/Northern California                |
| ECA       | Equivalent Clearcut Acres                                 | SPCC  | Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plan |
| EFH       | Essential Fish Habitat                                    | T&E   | Threatened and Endangered Species                  |
| EIS       | Environmental Impact Statement                            | TEP   | Threatened, Endangered, and Proposed Plant Species |
| ESA       | Endangered Species Act                                    | TMO   | Transportation Management Objectives               |
| ESRP      | Emergency Stabilization/Rehabilitation Plan               | tpa   | Trees per Acre                                     |
| ET        | Evapotranspiration  | TSZ   | Transient Snow Zone                                |
| FEIS      | Final Environmental Impact Statement                      | USACE | United States Army Corps of Engineers              |
| FEMAT     | Federal Ecosystem Management Assessment Team              | USDA  | United States Department of Agriculture            |
| FMZ       | Fuel Management Zone                                      | USDI  | United States Department of the Interior           |
| FOI       | Forest Operations Inventory                               | USFS  | United States Forest Service                       |
| FTE       | Full Time Equivalent                                      | USFWS | United States Fish and Wildlife Service            |
| GIS       | Geographic Information System                             | VRM   | Visual Resource Management                         |
| JACTMA    | Jackson Access and Cooperative Travel Management Area     | WA    | Watershed Analysis                                 |
| LSOG      | Late-Successional/Old Growth                              | WEPP  | Water Erosion Prediction Project                   |
| LSR       | Late-Successional Reserve                                 | WUI   | Wildland Urban Interface                           |
| LSRA      | Late-Successional Reserve Assessment                      | WQMP  | Water Quality Management Plan                      |
| LWD       | Large Woody Debris  | WQRP  | Water Quality Restoration Plan                     |
| MBF       | Thousand Board Feet                                       |       |  |
| MMBF      | Million Board Feet  |       |  |
| MOU       | Memorandum of Understanding                               |       |  |
| NAAQS     | National Ambient Air Quality Standards                    |       |  |
| NEAP      | Natural Events Action Plan                                |       |  |
| NEPA      | National Environmental Policy Act                         |       |  |
| NFP       | Northwest Forest Plan                                     |       |  |
| NOA       | Notice of Availability                                    |       |  |
| NOAA-Fish | National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration–Fisheries |       |  |
| NOI       | Notice of Intent  |       |  |
| NRCS      | Natural Resources Conservation Service                    |       |  |
| NRF       | Nesting/Roosting/Foraging                                 |       |  |

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