

Alternative D - Uniform Basal Treatment and Riparian Enhancement

The goal of this alternative is to provide a method for meeting all fire hazard reduction needs and improving stand health by considering the need presented in the Central Oregon Fire Management Services' Fire Management Plan (2002) to reduce fuel loads on Little Canyon Mountain as part of the Wildland-Urban Interface zone surrounding Canyon City. This alternative would treat the entire mountain according to the fuel break recommendation for stands near or adjacent to the Wildland-Urban Interface zone of 1.5 miles. Due to the small size of the project area and the scattered mining related structures on the mountain, this distance encompasses all the BLM managed lands on Little Canyon Mountain and defines the proposed treatment area. As a result, the entire area would be treated to maximum target basal area of 40-60 ft²/acre (Lane 2002). The project area would be thinned to reach the specified basal area (juniper greater than 20 inches DBH would be retained). All tree species would be included in basal area targets. This basal area target would be on the low end of the recommended basal area for reducing crown fire potential and therefore would eliminate the need for additional mechanical fuels treatments for a period of up to roughly 30 years.

Tree removal would be done using ground based logging (701 acres) and aerial logging (1390 acres). On slopes greater than 35 percent, an aerial yarding system capable of full suspension of logs would be required. On slopes less than 35 percent, yarding would be accomplished by a ground based yarding system capable of one end log suspension. The project area would be whole-tree logged for commercial trees (greater than 7 inches diameter) and trees with less than commercial value would be cut and piled for burning or removal.

A total of 10 acres of riparian overstory removal would occur in selected areas along Little Pine Creek to open the forest canopy and release suppressed understory hardwoods. A culvert which acts as a fish barrier on a road easement would be replaced or the stream channel re-contoured to provide passage for fish. The main road from the county road to the National Forest Trailhead would be upgraded and improved to reduce erosion and sedimentation concerns along its length. This action would involve re-routing portions of the existing road. Realignment would occur on approximately 0.5 miles of road in conjunction with obliterating approximately 0.15 miles of road within Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas along Little Pine Creek.

Thirty-three roads segments have been considered for closure and obliteration in order to reduce sedimentation and erosion impacts to the stream from these roads.

Approximately 1.0 miles of new fence would be constructed along the BLM boundary near Little Pine Creek to eliminate livestock access from the BLM portions of Little Pine Creek.

The 'pit' area would be closed at the county road entrance to vehicles over 50 inches in width to discourage garbage dumping within the 'pit' area while still accommodating motorcycle and off-highway vehicle (OHV) use. A parking area would remain at the

entrance. The 'pit' would also be buffered by a 100-250 foot non-treatment area to provide a line-of-site barrier and maintain the ability to use vegetation for future management such as trail designation and closure.

The average basal area within stands within the project area before treatment is 95.8, after treatment the average will be 50.

The project area will be set for subsequent prescribed burning in future years to maintain stand conditions.