



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

1301 South G Street
Lakeview, Oregon 97630
www.or.blm.gov/lakeview

In Reply Refer To:
7220 (015)

April 1, 2004

Dear Interested Party:

The Lakeview Resource Area in the Lakeview District of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is beginning to prepare the Deep Creek Watershed Vegetation Treatment Plan and Environmental Assessment, to address vegetation management in the BLM-administered portion of the 180,046 acre Deep Creek Watershed in Lake County, Oregon. BLM lands account for 31% of the total watershed or 55,814 acres. This plan will develop comprehensive long-range management direction for BLM-administered lands within the watershed. Scheduled for completion in 2004, the plan will provide detailed vegetation management direction consistent with the Lakeview Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Record of Decision 2004, and will analyze the cumulative impacts of vegetation management on BLM-administered lands, as well as, current and future management on adjacent United States Forest Service and private lands within the watershed.

The purpose of this vegetation treatment plan would be to provide site specific direction for vegetation management on BLM-administered lands within the Lakeview Resource Area. The Environmental Assessment will fulfill requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that requires BLM to prepare environmental analyses on BLM management actions consistent with principles of multiple use and sustained yield. The two acts also require public participation and close coordination with other federal, state and local agencies.

The need for the proposed action is to restore vegetative diversity within the BLM – administered portion of the Deep Creek Watershed to move toward desired future condition. Problems within the watershed are described in the Deep Creek Watershed Analysis, Ecosystem Analysis at the Watershed Scale, July 1998. Vegetative diversity has been lost due to a combination of factors including the suppression of fire, past livestock grazing practices, encroachment of Western juniper on shrub-steppe rangelands and aspen stands, increase of sagebrush densities, the loss of cottonwood and aspen, changes in hydrologic regimes and erosion. Vegetation treatment is also needed to restore functional watershed conditions, maximize response to management on critical riparian zones, restore watershed integrity on shrub-steppe rangelands and forest – fringe ecosystems, increase soil infiltration, decrease overland flow and minimize erosion.

The following preliminary issues were identified from informal public comments and ongoing contacts with federal, state and local agencies including the United States Forest

Service, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and internal staff discussions.

1. What should be done to improve or maintain watershed and wildlife habitat conditions where past management practices have allowed juniper encroachment into shrub-steppe and aspen communities?
2. What methods should be used to manage juniper encroachment on shrub-steppe communities and aspen stands and reduce sagebrush densities where increased shrub densities have reduced vegetative diversity?
3. How should residual juniper, sagebrush and bitterbrush stands be managed to provide an optimum ratio between forage and hiding and thermal cover for deer?
4. How should old-growth juniper within the BLM-administered lands in the Deep Creek Watershed be managed to meet botanical, wildlife and other resource objectives?
5. How should Wilderness Study Area management objectives be considered when developing vegetation management objectives, including the use of prescribed fire?
6. How should Visual Resource Management (VRM) objectives be utilized to protect important viewsheds or travel corridors while meeting other resource objectives?

Your comments will be considered in defining issues, management concerns, resource objectives, and alternatives for this Deep Creek Watershed Vegetation Treatment Plan and Environmental Assessment. Public involvement is an essential step in ensuring this plan considers the many possible vegetation management treatments and provides for those land uses to best serve the public interest. I encourage you to review this scoping letter and attached map and submit your comments to the Lakeview District Office by May 7, 2004, so that we may benefit from your thoughts as we proceed with this planning process.

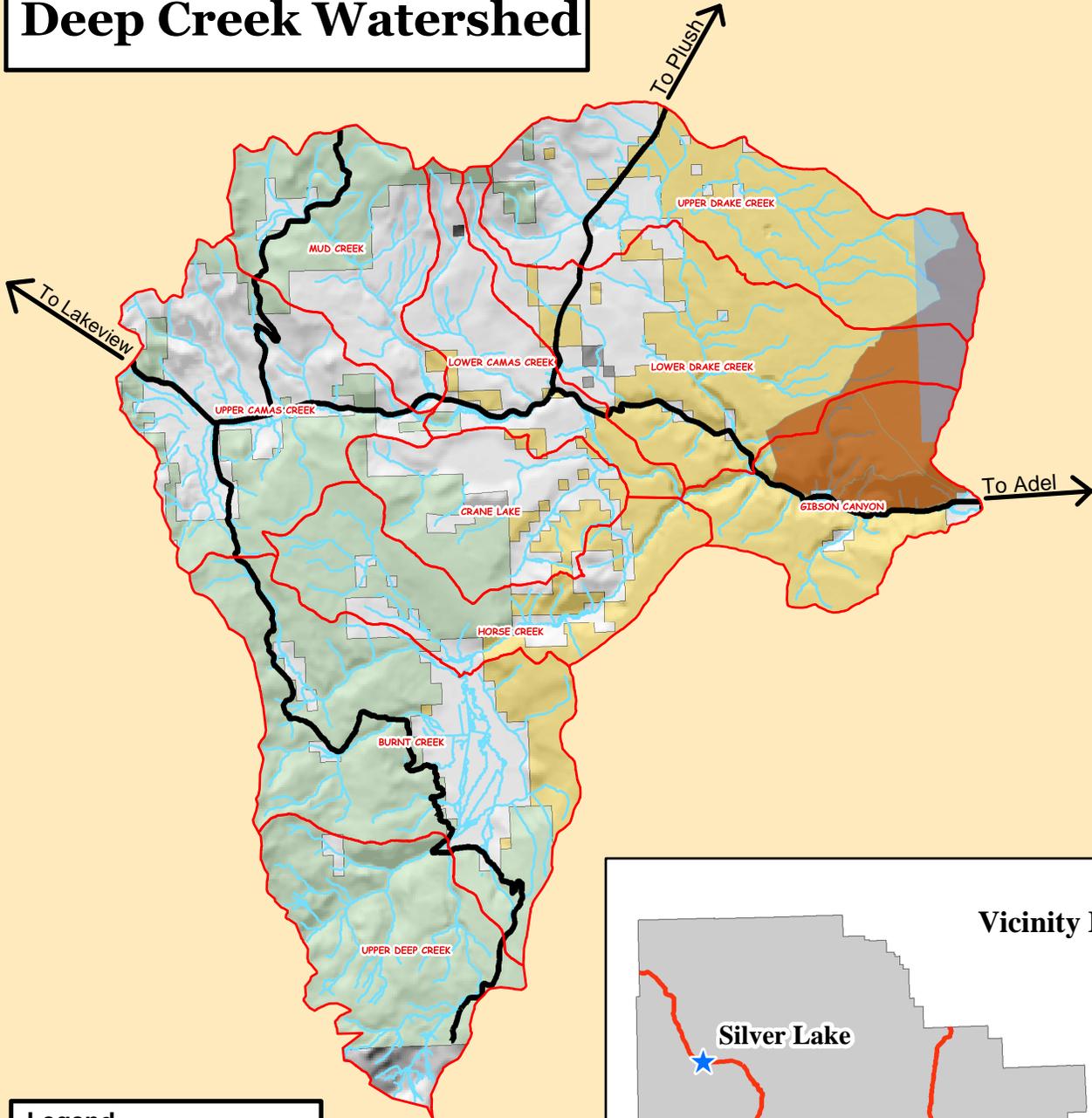
Please contact Vern Stofleth, Deep Creek project team leader, on my staff, at (541)947-2177 if you have any questions about this planning effort or would like to be on our mailing list.

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Rasmussen, Manager
Lakeview Resource Area

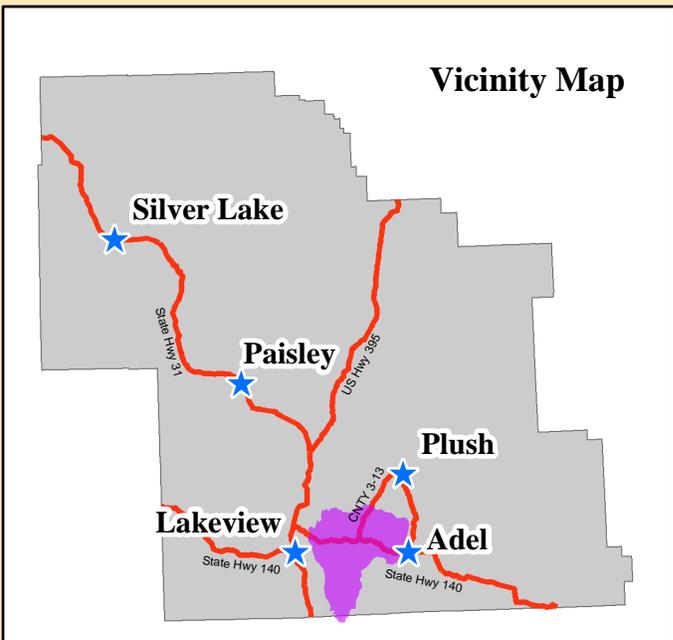
VS.dpScoping.doc

Deep Creek Watershed



Legend

- ACEC
- Bureau of Land Management
- US Forest Service
- Private
- Wilderness Study Area
- 6th Field Watershed Boundary
- Streams
- Major Roads



5 2.5 0 5 Miles

A scale bar showing 0, 2.5, and 5 miles. To the right is a north arrow with cardinal directions (N, S, E, W) labeled.

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