

Rogue River Hazardous Fuel Reduction Project

The Rogue River Hazardous Fuel Reduction Project was selected as the only Healthy Forest Initiative project in Oregon. A model environmental assessment component was used to administratively streamline the environmental assessment process and allow for more efficient management of fuel reduction efforts and fire-adapted ecosystem restoration projects

Purpose of the project is to reduce and manage the wildfire-fuel hazard within the approximately 8,000 acres of public and private land that comprises the Hellgate Recreation Section of the Rogue National Wild and Scenic River. The Hellgate Recreation Section includes portions of three communities at risk and approximately 190 residences, most of which are in 12 localized areas.

An environmental assessment was completed for the entire project area in October 2003. Subsequent categorical exclusions for neighborhood plans are being prepared. The BLM Medford District Office anticipates completion of 20 to 30 neighborhood plans within the 8,000 acre corridor over the next two years.

Planning work on the first neighborhood community plan at Rand, Oregon was completed in September 2004. BLM began on the ground work for 150 acres this fall and winter. An Oregon Department of Forestry ten person crew has completed work on approximately one-third of the Rand neighborhood. Treatment consists of clearing understory brush and small diameter trees and hand piling the slash. The piles will be burned next fall. This treatment is focusing on residential structural protection by treating most heavily in the areas around home ignition and defense zones.

Approximately five additional neighborhood plans for a total of 1,704 acres will be completed in calendar year 2005. The next neighborhood, Paradise-Greentree South, is in the planning stages with plan completion in January 2005.

BLM's Medford District will continue to work closely with river user groups, Oregon Department of Forestry, Josephine County, residents and private landowners within the project area. Because Oregon's Department of Forestry has fire prevention and suppression responsibilities for the lands in the project area, BLM anticipates extensive involvement with them during neighborhood planning and project implementation. For information on this project, please visit the BLM Medford District website on this project at:

http://www.or.blm.gov/medford/rr_fuel_project/fuel_home.htm

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The Rand neighborhood project involved clearing brush and small diameter trees, hand piling, and burning next fall as part of the Rogue River Hazardous Fuel Reduction Project.