



HFRA Strategy for the Ochoco National Forest

Location:

The project is east of Prineville Oregon, in the Mill Creek and Marks Creek drainages near the Hash Rock fire of 2000. The projects are on the Lookout Ranger District, Ochoco National Forest, Crook County, Oregon.

Purpose:

This project is being planned under as an HFRA project. It will be designed in collaboration with the adjacent landowners and the forest users. Approximately 3,800-4,000 acres are in the planning area; actual treatment areas will be determined through the planning. The objectives for the treatments are, to treat the insect and disease areas surrounding and within the Hash Rock fire, and restoration of the landscapes that have been impacted by insect and disease outbreaks following the Hash Rock fire. Within the same watersheds, more immediate restoration and salvage projects will be completed using Categorical Exclusions to treat insect and disease mortality.

The Ochoco National Forest has in the last five years experienced a series of events which have stimulated high levels of stress in large old trees in over stocked stands. This includes prolonged drought and the Hash Rock Fire in the Mill Creek drainage in 2000.

Western pine beetle and mountain pine beetle have expanded beyond normal endemic levels in these stands to an epidemic level across the forest. This past year over 3,800 new acres have been affected. This is of high concern due to the death of significant numbers of large old trees. Over 3,000 large old pines have been killed, especially those growing in dense high-risk stands. Stands with large old Ponderosa Pine are presently substantially below historic levels. Further loss of these trees affects the retention of critical wildlife habitat, may seriously affect ecosystem function in some areas and will contribute to additional accumulation of fuels in stands with condition classes outside the desired range.

The Ochoco National Forest efforts to actively manage the forests to reduce densities, increase resilience and help maintain the large, mature ponderosa pine have been stymied by appeals and litigation.

Partners:

Crook and Wheeler Counties, Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC), Central Oregon Partnerships for Wildfire Risk Reduction (COPWRR), local communities and the new Forest Inventory Center in Prineville. The Crook County Natural Resource Planning Committee, a Title II funded collaborative working group, is a key partner with this effort. The Forest hopes to incorporate biomass removal opportunities under the Coordinated Resource Offering Protocol (CROP).

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