



*US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**BLM Seeking Public Input for Rogue River Fuels Hazard Reduction Project**

**Medford, Oregon, February 12, 2003**-The Medford District of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is seeking public input in preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Rogue River Fuels Hazard Reduction Project.

The purpose of this project is to proactively reduce and manage the wildfire/fuel hazard within the Hellgate Recreation Section of the Rogue River and protect property and the scenic values of the river. Recent wildfires, such as the Biscuit Fire last summer, highlight the risks and potential consequences of wildfires in Southern Oregon.

The overall project planning area consists of approximately 8,000 acres of land within the Congressionally designated Hellgate Recreation Section of the Rogue National Wild and Scenic River, which extends from the mouth of the Applegate River to Grave Creek. The selected corridor includes portions of three designated National Fire Plan Communities at Risk, approximately 190 residents most of which are in 12 localized areas, and two designated National Historic Sites.

This project is one of ten initially selected from the President's Healthy Forest Initiative pilot projects with an emphasis on administratively streamlining the planning process to allow for more efficient management of fuels-adapted ecosystem restoration projects. This is the only project selected in Oregon.

On BLM lands, project implementation is anticipated to start in the fall of 2003 contingent upon fire season work restrictions. The Medford District Office anticipates completion within two years after beginning work. After completing the corridor wide plan, the BLM will work closely with individual neighborhoods to prepare and implement focused neighborhood fuel reduction project plans.

The BLM will work in coordination with the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), Josephine County, Wild and Scenic River user groups, and residents and private land owners within the project area.

The public will have opportunities to comment during the scoping phase of this project. Two open houses are planned:

February 18, 2003, at the Galice Community Hall from 5:00 pm to 7:00pm,  
February 25, 2003, at the Ann Basker Auditorium, Grants Pass, 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm.

The open houses will provide an opportunity for initial project scoping comments and informal discussions with the BLM resource specialists who will be preparing the plans and treatment prescriptions. There will also be an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed plan when it is completed. Comments can also be submitted by e-mail or110mb@or.blm.gov, fax (541) 618-2400, or mail to the following address:

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