

Natural Resource News

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Fremont-Winema National Forests
Lakeview District BLM
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USDA's Fremont-Winema National Forests
(Includes Bly, Chemult, Chiloquin, Klamath, Lakeview, Paisley, and Silver Lake Ranger Districts)
USDI's Bureau of Land Management, Lakeview District
(Includes Klamath Falls and Lakeview Resource Areas)

For Immediate Release

Toolbox Fire Recovery Project Final Environmental Impact Statement Available

Lakeview, OR: The Toolbox Fire Recovery Project Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) has been completed and is available to the public.

On July 12, 2002, a lightning storm ignited 67 fires on the Fremont National Forest. On the Silver Lake Ranger District, two of these fires, the Toolbox Fire and the Silver Fire, became the primary fires within the Toolbox Complex. In total, the Toolbox Complex includes approximately 85,000 acres, 49,500 of which are on National Forest lands.

The FEIS analyzes a "No Action" alternative and five "Action" alternatives for managing the Toolbox Fire Recovery Project area. Actions include timber salvage, fuel reduction, road reconstruction, road closure and decommissioning, reforestation, and riparian and wildlife habitat improvement projects. Alternative G has been identified as the preferred alternative.

Alternative G would implement specific combinations of actions to promote the development of future sustainable late and old structural forests, on approximately 20,800 acres. This combination of actions includes salvage removal of fire and insect killed trees with follow-up fuels reduction, site preparation, and planting. Considered separately, Alternative G would implement salvage harvest on approximately 10,230 acres, fuel treatments on about 20,200 acres, and conifer planting on about 20,200 acres. Snag retention, both in blocks of identified optimal or suitable snag and down wood habitat and within harvest units and other treatment units, is an integral part of the design of all alternatives. Additional projects in Alternative G include placement of large woody debris (9.6 miles of stream) and deciduous planting for riparian improvement (7 acres), aspen enhancement (690 acres), road reconstruction (re-surfacing of 4.0 miles), road decommissioning (72 miles) and closure (10 miles) and precommercial thinning of existing plantations (2,200 acres).

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A final decision regarding which combination of actions to implement will consider how fully the project purpose and need is met by each of the alternatives, and the manner in which each alternative responds to the key issues raised and public comments received during the analysis. The Record of Decision (ROD), which will be issued in late April 2004, will include details of the decision and a Notice of Rights to Appeal. The responsible official is requesting an emergency situation determination, as provided for in 36 CFR 215.10.

The Toolbox Fire Recovery Project FEIS has been mailed to those people who expressed interest in the project. Copies of the FEIS are available upon request by contacting the Silver Lake Ranger District office at 541-576-2107 or P.O. Box 129, Silver Lake, OR 97638. The FEIS is also available on the internet at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/winema/management/analyses/toolbox/>

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