

# Using an Integrated Landscape Approach for Project Identification and Planning



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Blue Mountain RD  
Malheur NF

# Acknowledgements

- Malheur Forest Supervisor
- BMRD District Ranger
- BMRD IDT Members
- BMFP and HCRC
- PNW and RMRS Researchers
- Grant and Harney County Courts

# Outline

1. Background
2. Forest Strategy
3. District Strategy
4. Big Mosquito Project

# Issues at the Malheur

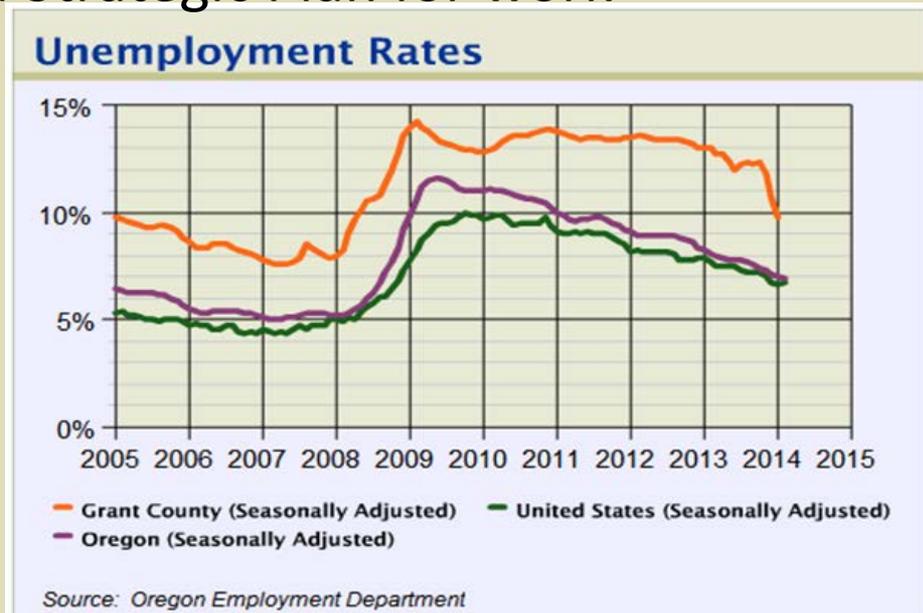
- Ecological

- Changing vegetative/forest conditions
- Disturbance processes out of balance
- Loss/degradation of meadow/riparian habitat



- Social/Economic

- Multiple efforts to establish a Strategic Plan for work
- Grazing highly regulated
- High employee turnover
- Unemployment rates
- Economy tied to Malheur NF
- Malheur Lumber announced shutdown



# Catalyst for Change

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## 'INFINITELY SADDENED'

### Malheur Lumber Co. will mothball its John Day sawmill in November

Layoffs loom for 75 percent of workforce

By Scotta Callister  
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY – Charlie Wilson remembers starting work at Malheur Lumber Co. in March 1983, when "it was just cottonwood trees and gravel pits around here."

On his shift as a sawyer Monday, he was circumspect about the impending shutdown of the sawmill.

"We made a good run at it here," he told a co-worker. That run will come to a

end last Friday at the John Day plant to break the news. Malheur Lumber is a subsidiary of the Prineville firm.

He said the sawmill will be "mothballed," but the smaller biomass facility – the pellet fuel and wood brick production, the chipper and log shaver – will continue to operate. Malheur Lumber will continue to purchase timber sales from national forests and other sources to support that ongoing work, the company said.

The shift will mean layoffs for about 75 percent of the company's workforce. Ochoco has about 95 employees, 90 of them in John Day and the rest in offices in



"I'm out of aces up my sleeve," he said. "The system has failed – it has failed us, and it has failed our communities."

On Monday, he said the announcement brought "an amazing outpouring" of concern and support from the forest products industry.

"Our product has been the best in the industry coming out of the Northwest," Daucavage said. "Our customers are very upset."

When they ask what they can do, he tells them to write letters to the decision-makers at the state and national level, urging them to prevent "something like this from happening to another small business."

While the business may be

## Shutdown plan saddens, frustrates leaders

Blue Mountain Eagle

Community leaders and elected officials were disheartened by news of the impending sawmill shutdown in John Day.

Grant County Judge Mark Webb noted the way Malheur Lumber Co. and its parent company, Ochoco Lumber, had tried to adapt and adjust to challenging times and keep the mill going.

Webb is frustrated that the bureaucracy and leadership seem to be working in an older paradigm, one that

no longer addresses the needs of the forests or rural communities.

Announcing the shutdown plan, Ochoco president Bruce Daucavage also was critical of the "lack of urgency" in Washington, D.C., other than that shown by U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden and U.S. Rep. Greg Walden.

"With the exception of Sen. Wyden and Congressman Walden, there has been little effort made in solving the issues that plague our forests and rural communities," Daucavage said.

Wyden said the announcement "sends a clear message that we have a lot of work to do" to ensure reasonable harvest levels to maintain the mills.

"If we are ever going to restore the health of the overstocked forests, we need the infrastructure and that means successful mills and skilled workers," he said.

Wyden offered a hopeful note that the continued operation of the biomass facility would preserve some infrastructure "for the day when we can assure access to timber."

Walden pledged to continue working for legislation to provide active forest man-

agement – to allow federal land managers to do their jobs in the forests, and to ensure natural resources are available to create local jobs and healthy forests.

"Malheur Lumber, its employees, and the community of John Day have become another victim of the broken federal forest policy dogged by bureaucracy and lawsuits," he said. "This unfortunate closure is a stark example of the urgency faced by our federally forested communities."

"We must make a change in forest policy or risk losing all timber infrastructure and the economic foundations of many rural commu-

nities."

Mark Witty, Grant School District No. 3 superintendent, worries about the "cascading effects" of the closure on the community, its businesses, and the schools.

"At District 3, we're looking to see how it will impact us," he said. "Obviously, we have some families affected by this. My heart goes out to those folks who are in the position of losing a job."

The ripple effect for the schools comes when out-of-work residents with school-age children must leave the area for jobs elsewhere.

The district has already

downsized its campuses and some programs in the face of declining enrollment and state funding.

"We were looking toward a plateau in that, but it's likely this could change the plateau," Witty said.

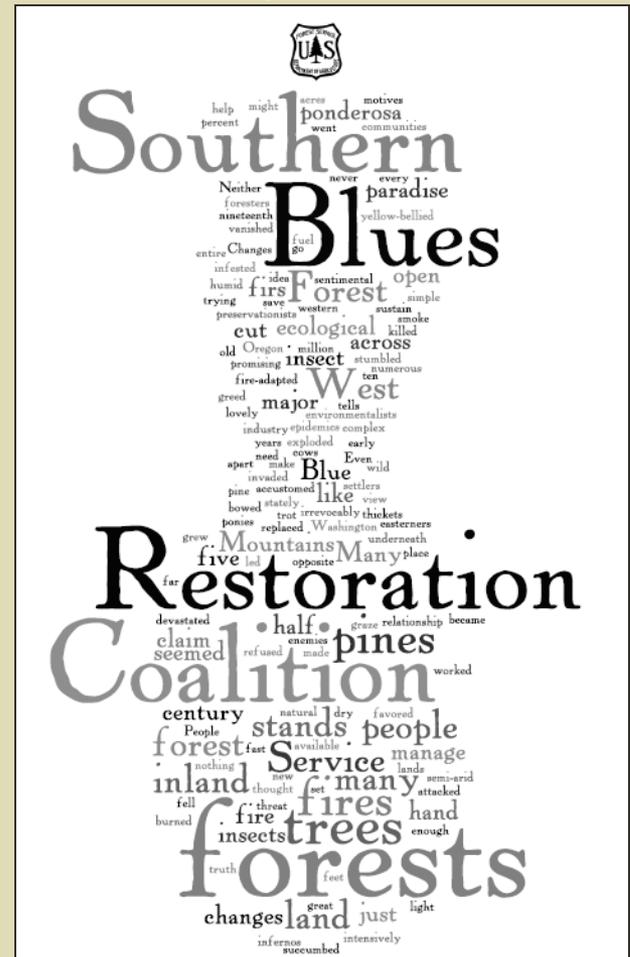
He said the impact could be devastating for the community, but he sees a glimmer of hope in the continued operation of the Malheur biomass plant.

"As a community we've got to maintain hope and keep looking for opportunities," Witty said. "Because we really are done, if we stop trying."

"The 80 jobs lost in John Day as a result of the mill closing is a functional equivalent to 22,000 jobs lost in Portland"

# Strongpoints of the Malheur

- Malheur NF was capable of quick response due to several factors:
  - BMFP and HCRC
  - Strong relationships between FS employees and local public
  - Funding sources
  - Strong forest leadership
  - Support from the RO and WO



# Accelerated Restoration

- Ecological

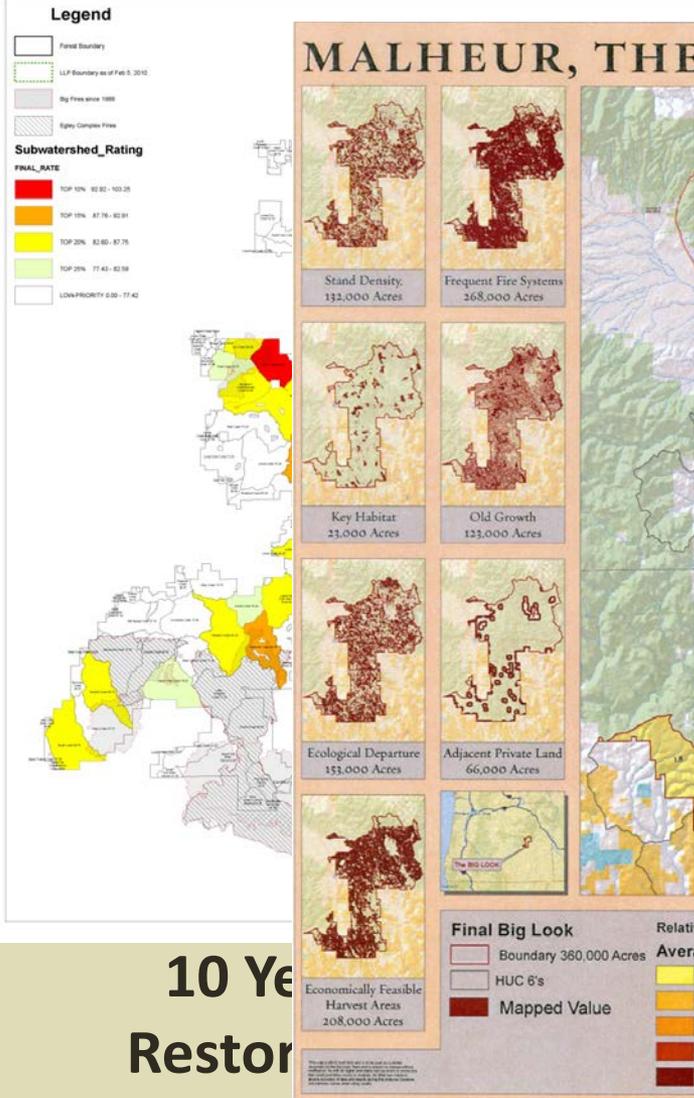
- Landscape restoration approach
- Increase pace and scale of projects



- Social/Economic

- Increase target from 28 MMBF to 75 MMBF
- 10-year stewardship contract
- Work closely with strong collaboratives





**10 Year  
Restoration**

**USDA** United States Department of Agriculture  
**Forest Service** Malheur National Forest Blue Mountain Ranger District

**CAMP CREEK WATERSHED ACTION PLAN**  
MIDDLE FORK JOHN DAY RIVER

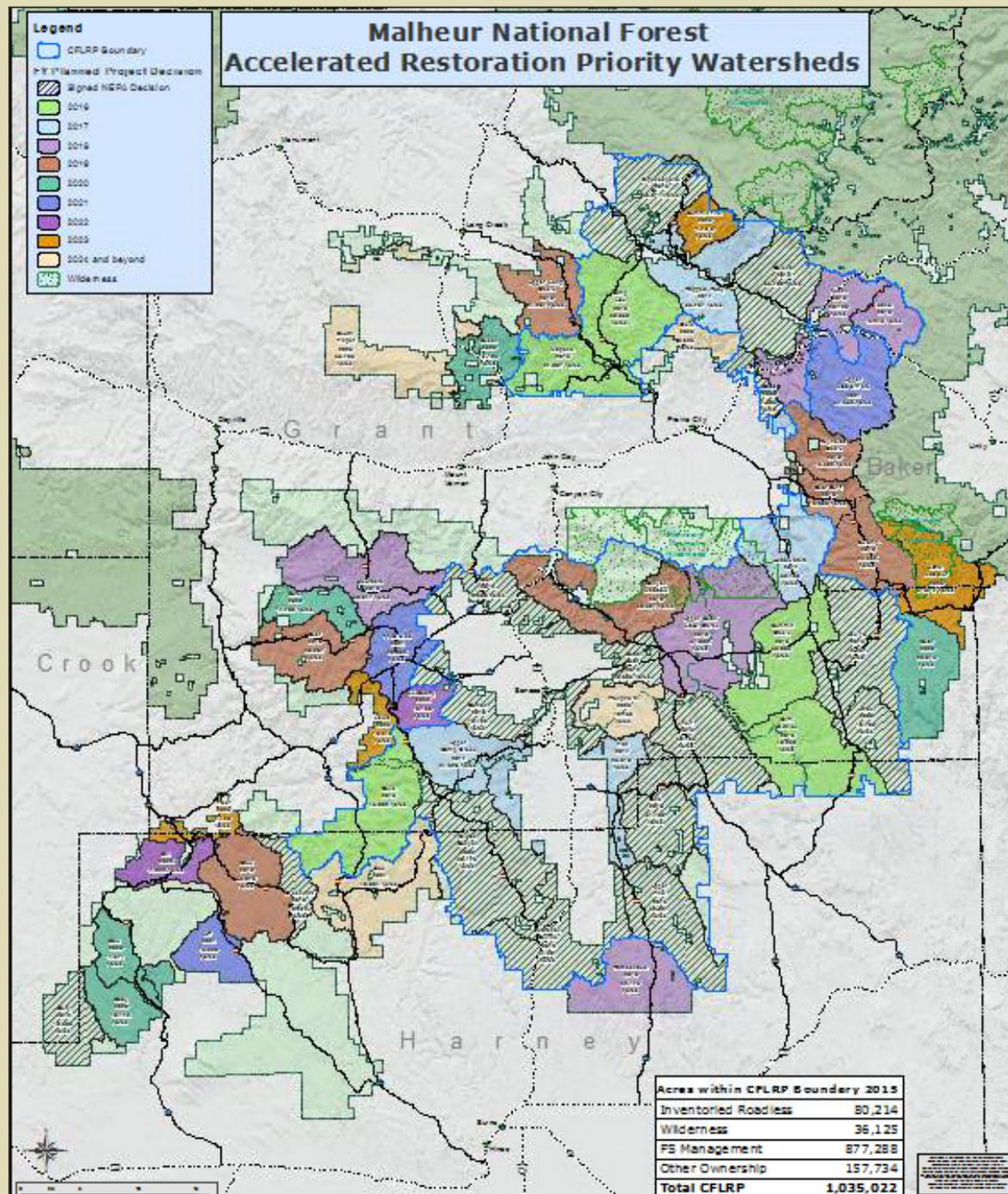
A NECESSARY STEP IN IMPLEMENTING THE MIDDLE COLUMBIA RIVER STEELHEAD RECOVERY PLAN & JOHN DAY SUBBASIN PLAN

NOVEMBER 2007

1. Priority Watersheds
2. WRAPs
3. WCFs

# Accelerated Restoration Plan

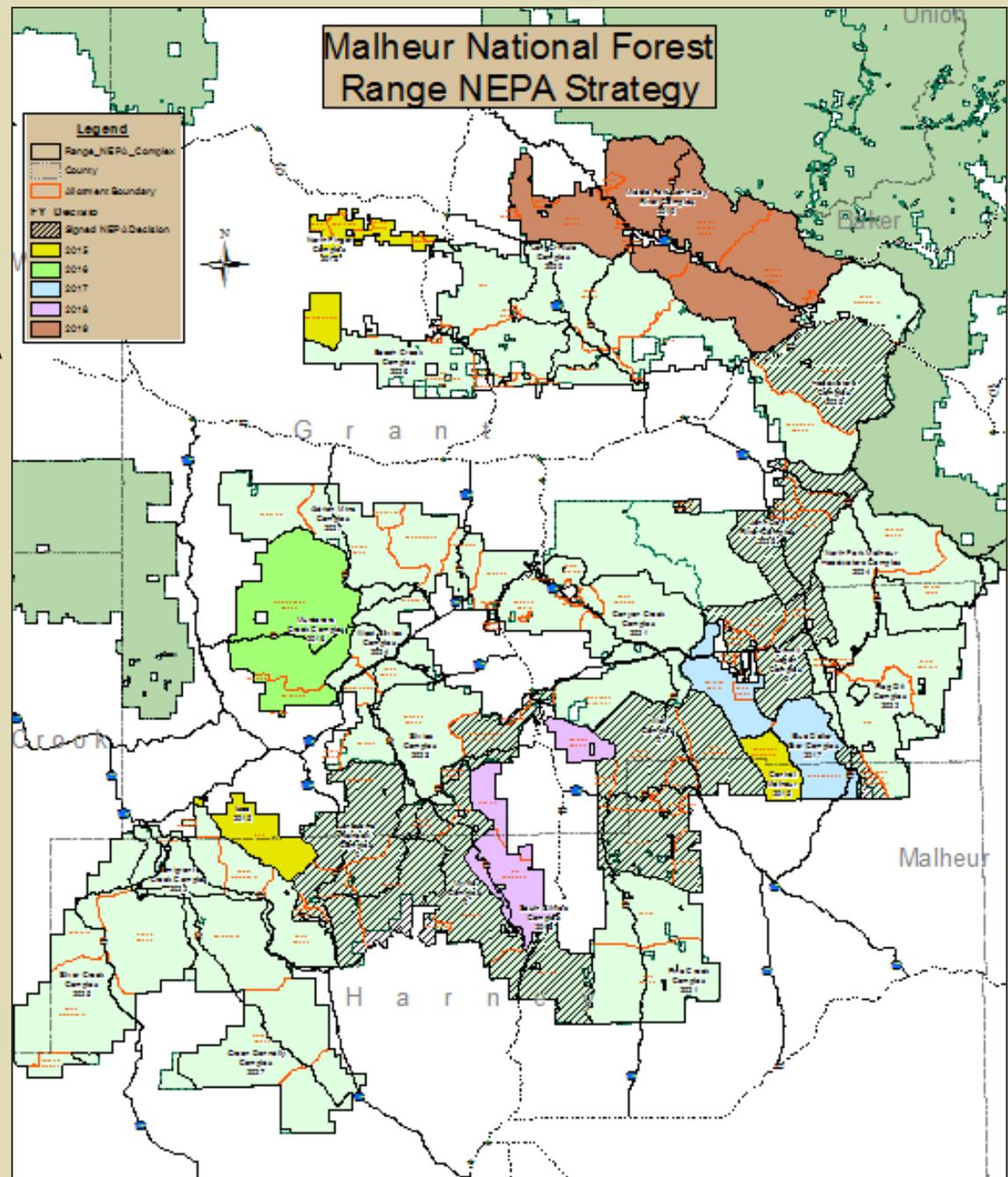
- Developed by DLTs
- Negotiated by priority subwatersheds for all resources
- Considered WAPs, watershed/fisheries, old growth, fuels reduction, range, timber, etc.



# 3-Pronged Approach

1. Vegetation NEPA
2. Aquatic Restoration EA
3. Range NEPA

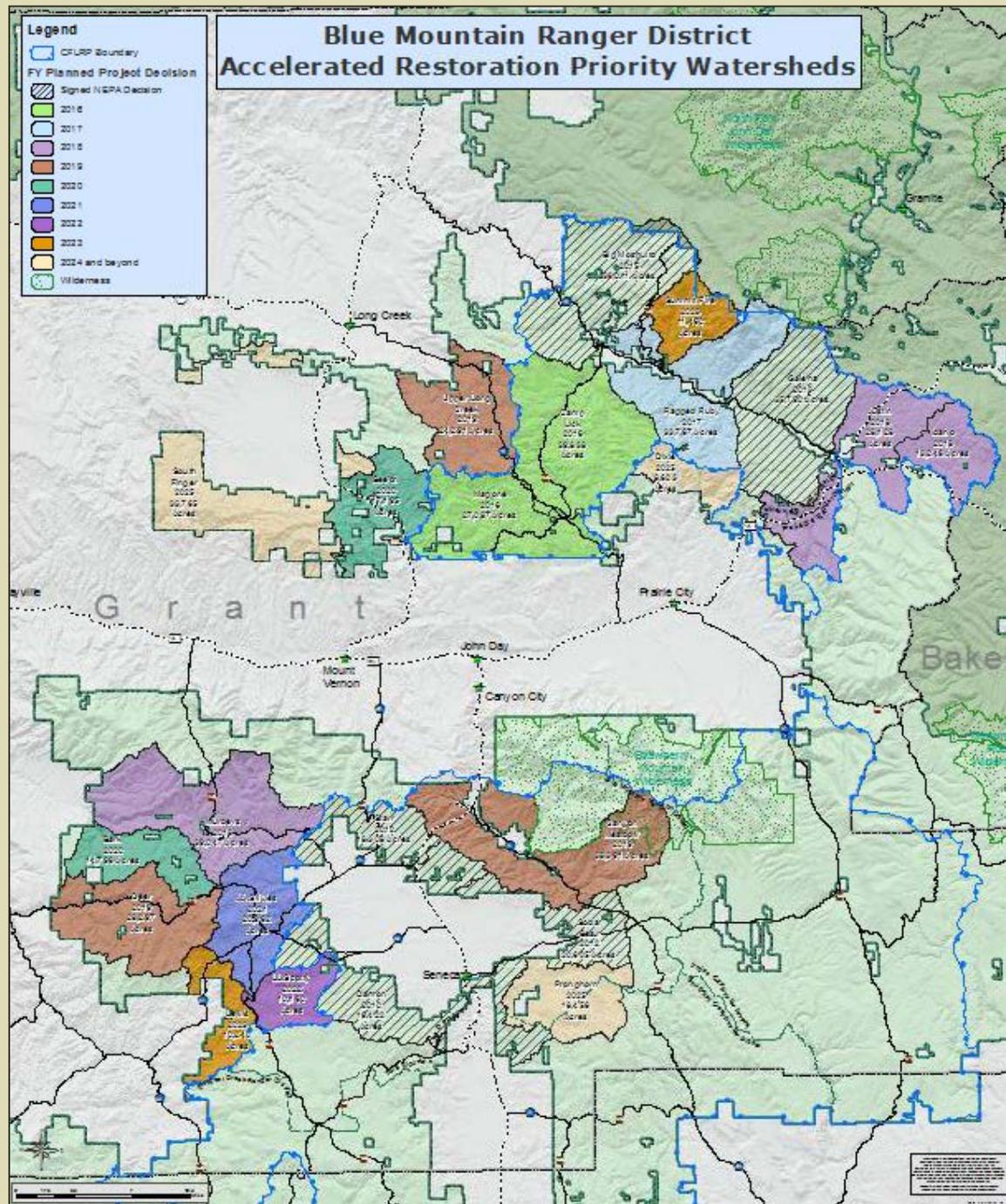
- Combine data collection and planning
- Range NEPA team
- Range NEPA follows closely behind Vegetation NEPA and Aquatics projects



# Blue Mountain RD Approach

## Increase Forest and Community Resiliency

- Restoring process and function.
- Increase public and collaborative involvement.
- Integrate restoration from the stream bottom to the ridgetops.
- Timber is by-product of restoration actions

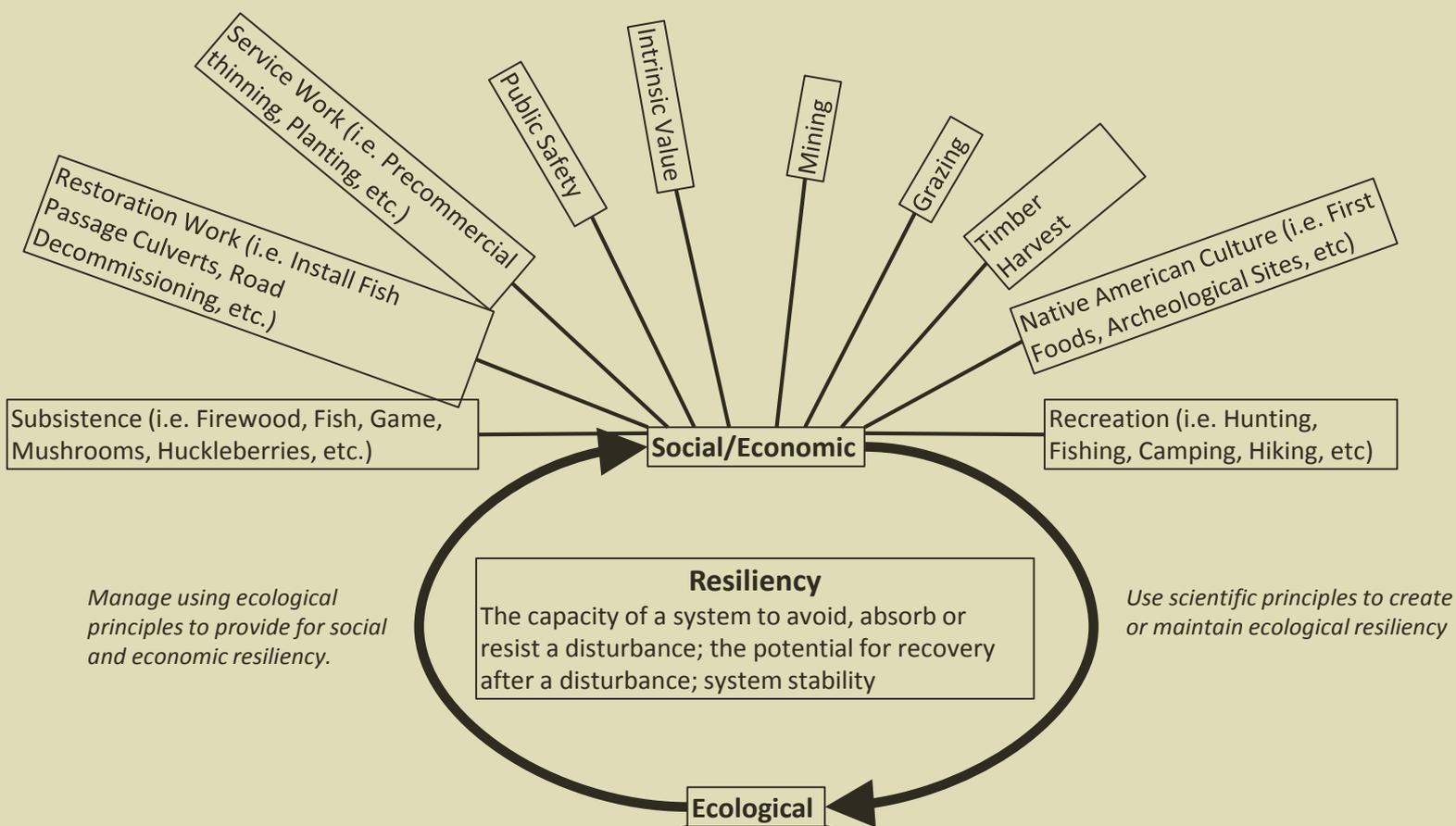


# Project Level Integration

## Blue Mountain Ranger District

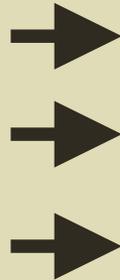
- Process – a series of actions or changes that bring about an end or result
- Function – something closely related to another thing and dependent upon it for its existence, value, or significance
- Are we maintaining process and function that allows resiliency or creates resilient landscapes?





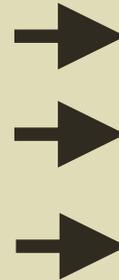
**Disturbance/Process**

1. Fire Regimes
2. Climate Change
3. Floods/Floodplain Storage/Connectivity



**Structure/Function**

1. Stand structure, stand density, species composition, fuel loading, wood supply, litter fall, primary production
2. Increased temperatures, milder winters, prolonged summer drought, decreased snowpack, earlier runoff, lower base flows
3. Surface water storage, high water table maintenance, sediment accumulation, streamside vegetation maintenance (shade, biomass, biodiversity, root reinforcement)



**Management Actions**

1. Commercial/precommercial thinning, harvesting, prescribed burning, mastication, tree tipping, felling large woody debris
2. Thinning, add large woody debris, remove anthropogenic features within floodplains, remove fish passage barriers
3. Remove levees, install beaver dam analogues, add large woody debris, plugging incised channels, mine reclamation, valley bottom road decommissioning and relocation

# Collaborative Involvement



# Riparian Restoration Zones of Agreement

- Working document
- Outlines the background, agreements, science, and discussion around the issues.
- Helps the FS gauge the level of social agreement around a particular issue.
- Drafted together by FS and BMFP.



## RIPARIAN RESTORATION ZONES of AGREEMENT

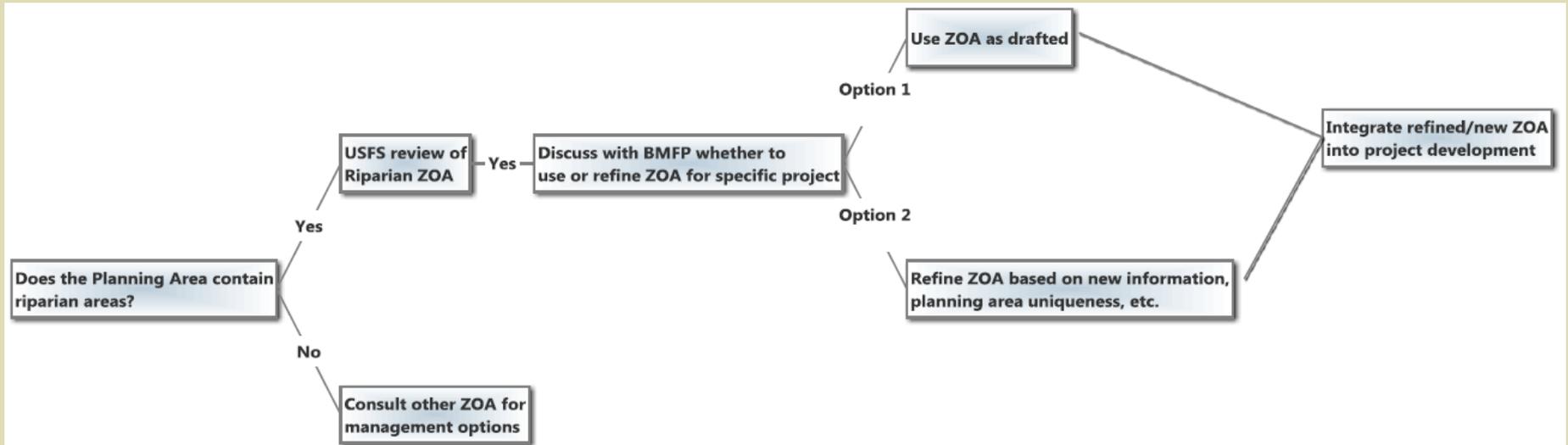


July 2015

**Blue Mountains Forest Partners**

Zones of Agreement for the restoration and management of riparian areas on the Malheur National Forest prepared by the Blue Mountains Forest Partners.

# Riparian Restoration Zones of Agreement



Collaboration on the  
Malheur National Forest

# Riparian Restoration Zones of Agreement



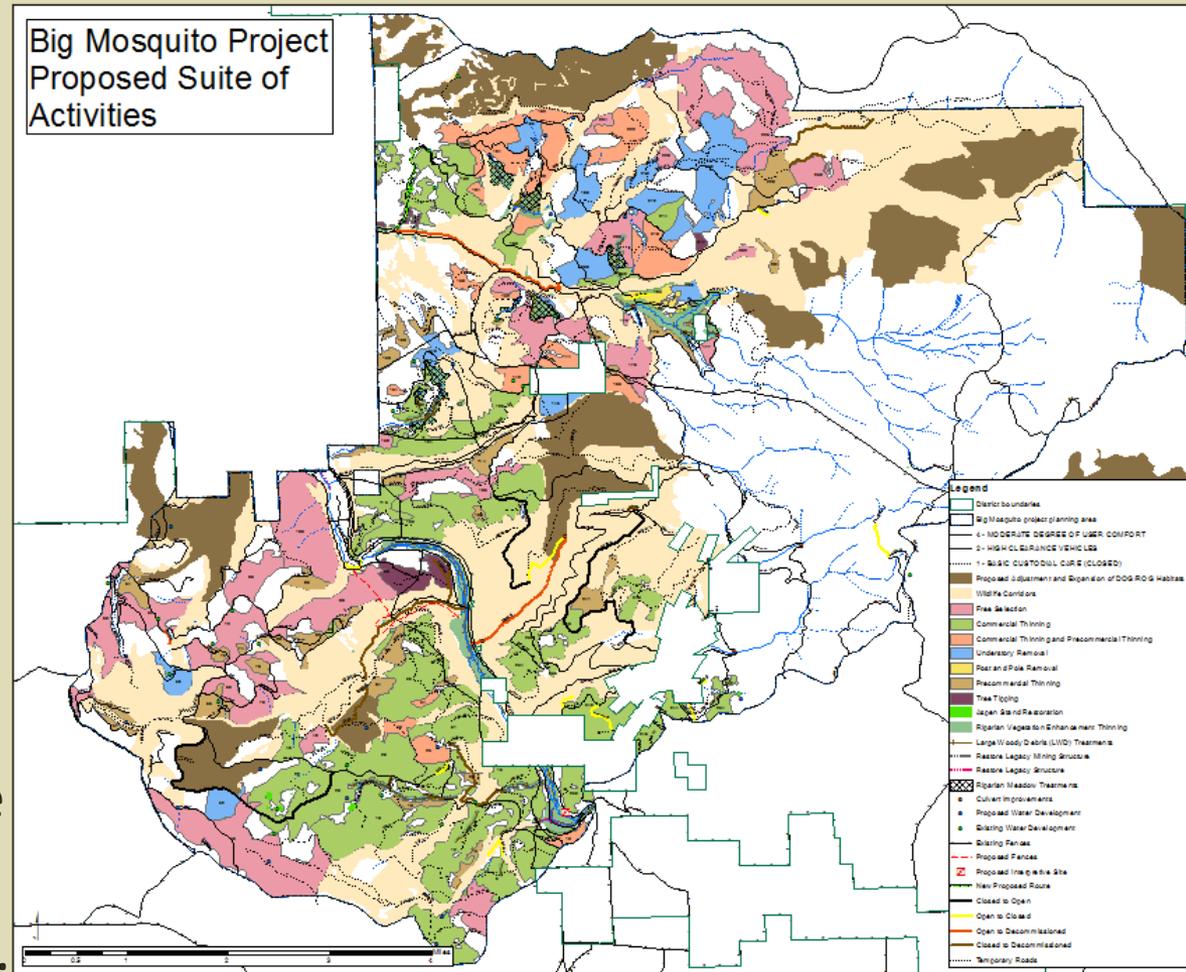
## **BEAVERS**

*“BMFP supports the use of in-stream “beaver support structures” that encourage native species to assist in riparian restoration. Monitoring of the efficacy of these structures should occur. BMFP is also interested in beaver reintroduction, and encourages the USFS to explore this opportunity in the future.”*

# Project Level Integration

## Big Mosquito Project

- Why here, why now?
- All resources identify needed projects to provide resiliency.
- Full IDT discuss resource issues and compromise on solutions.
- Authorize projects under the appropriate decision documents (Veg/Aquatics/Range).



# Project Level Integration

## Big Mosquito Project Example: Improve Fish Habitat

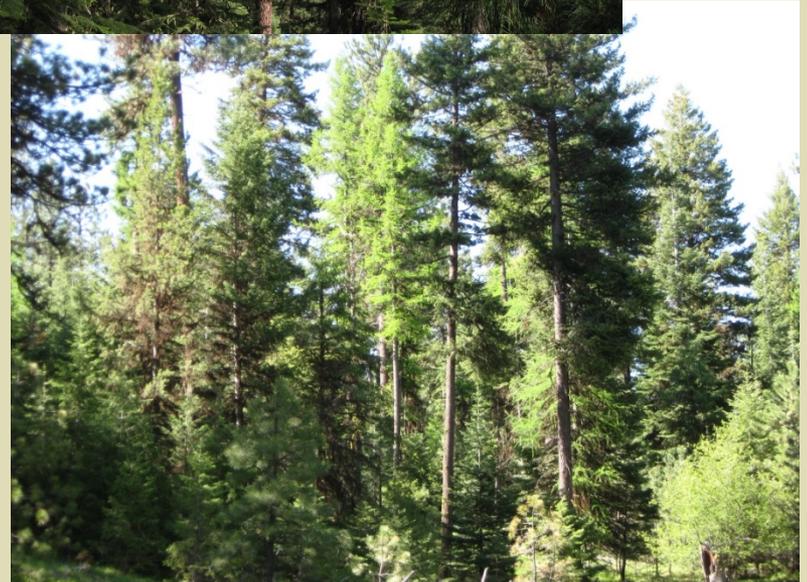
- Watershed – LWD/CWD, plant hardwoods, floodplain restoration
- Silviculture – canopy openings, Riparian Enhancement Thinning (RET)
- Transportation – culvert replacement, floodplain road decommissioning/relocation
- Range - upland water sources
- Heritage – mine tailings
- Fuels – Rx burning



# Project Level Integration

## Big Mosquito Project Example: Thin Cool Moist stands

- Silviculture – variable density thinning, openings, planting, thin throughout diameter range
- Wildlife – vertical and horizontal structure, multiple canopy layers and age classes
- Fuels – Rx burn for fuels and natural regeneration



# Lessons Learned

- Alignment between FS and other agencies/organizations is critical to accomplish our vision.
- Need a common vision across the forest.
- Need a safe environment to learn and make mistakes, i.e. learning culture.
- We are not fully integrated yet; still learning ways to be more integrated and efficient.

# Current Issues



**'AN APOCALYPS**  
Nation's top fire priority; could burn until

**By Angel Carpenter**  
*Star-Mountain Staff*

**JUDY DAY** — Firefighters battling the Canyon Creek Complex fire will probably remain in place for at least another week, and a small fire will likely hold the line as completely as the Oregon Department of Forestry, said a Canyon Forest Area Supervisor for a press conference Friday afternoon. The fire is burning in a canyon north of the town of John Day, where the fire went out of control.

At least 20 homes were destroyed in the fire and more than 100 homes are at risk, according to the Oregon Department of Forestry. The fire is burning in a canyon north of the town of John Day, where the fire went out of control.



**Fire roars through canyon like a loc**

**Red ashes fall in Dean and Betty Elliott's yard**

**By Angel Carpenter**  
*Star-Mountain Staff*

**CANYON CITY** — The 90-degree wind gust and heavy rain that fell over the town of John Day on Friday, Aug. 19, was a relief for the firefighters battling the Canyon Creek Complex fire. The fire is burning in a canyon north of the town of John Day, where the fire went out of control.



**Long Creek pot grower gets green light**

**Council approves land use compatibility statement**

**By Brad West**  
*Star-Mountain Staff*

**GREEN DAY** — The John Day National Forest is holding a public meeting Friday to discuss proposed amendments to the Silver Mountain Plan. The meeting, organized last summer, was cancelled due to the catastrophic Canyon Creek Complex fire that destroyed 43 homes.

**SHOOTOUT, DEATH END STANDOFF**

**Bundy, others arrested on way to John Day**

**One killed during arrest of leaders of refuge occupation**

**By Brad West**  
*Star-Mountain Staff*

**JOHN DAY** — A shootout between a group of people and law enforcement officers on Friday, Aug. 19, resulted in the death of one person and the arrest of several others. The incident occurred on the way to John Day, where the Canyon Creek Complex fire is burning.



*"I oppose this timber sale. Its just one of many tragic timber sales I have read about on the Malheur NF. Clearly the Malheur National Forest is swarming with "timber beast" line officers and staff. The resource specialists are frightened not to please these people and ignore the likely resource destruction that will result.....You would be wise to contact OGC attorneys and suggest they start putting together a defense for Supervisor Beverlin soon."*

# Next Steps

- Integrating avenues for other actions/decisions, i.e. recreation
- Maintain strong relationships and find new ways of working with partners
- Stabilize workforce transitions
- Secure outside sources of funding
- Keep learning/rolling with the punches
- Research salvage



It's a balancing act:

**Ecological Resilience, Economic Sustainability, Social Agreement**