

Briefing Paper

Pacific Northwest Region – Umatilla National Forest

Gulliford Prescribed Burn

Background: Nearly 100 years of fire exclusion has dramatically altered forest conditions. The exclusion of more frequent, low intensity fires resulted in a huge accumulation of flammable live and dead vegetation in eastern Oregon forests. Prescribed burns reduce intensity and extent of future wildfires.

Our desired future for your national forests is restoration of thousands of acres to conditions that are compatible with frequent, low to moderate intensity wildfires. The goal is to work toward achieving historical conditions with a mix of fire tolerant tree species in this forest where fire is a frequent visitor. We can accomplish this by thinning dense stands and re-introducing fire where appropriate.

Prescribed fires will be set under precise weather conditions to meet specific resource objectives. Burn plans, written by forest specialists, are in place and identify, or prescribe, the best conditions under which trees and other plants will burn to get the best results safely. These burn plans consider temperature, humidity, wind, moisture of the vegetation, and conditions for the dispersal of smoke. Prescribed fire specialists compare conditions on the ground to those outlined in burn plans before deciding whether to burn on a given day.

Gulliford Prescribed Burn: (map on back)

When conditions are favorable, the North Fork John Day Ranger District will implement a large-scale prescribed natural fuel burn in September 2014. The Gulliford Prescribed Fire consists of approximately 3,444 acres of open ponderosa pine and mixed conifer stands with open grassy ridges. The intent of this project is to improve foraging habitat for big game, reduce long term wildfire risk through reductions in existing fuel loading, and restore the ecological functions of a fire adapted ecosystem. Better habitat for big game means more animals and hunting opportunities in the future.

The area is divided into two separate but adjacent units (Unit 1 and Unit 2). These units are located west of State Highway 395 and north of forest road 53 (Western Route) between forest roads 5314 and 5308.

Issues: Prescribed burning will impact access and camping opportunities in the Heppner Hunting Unit. Area, road and trail closures will go into effect just prior to, and during, burn operations which typically take 2-5 days. During this time the public will not be allowed to camp, drive, or hike through the closure area. We are advising hunters through several means (news releases, websites, community contacts and organized groups) to plan ahead and avoid using the following designated prescribed burn area.

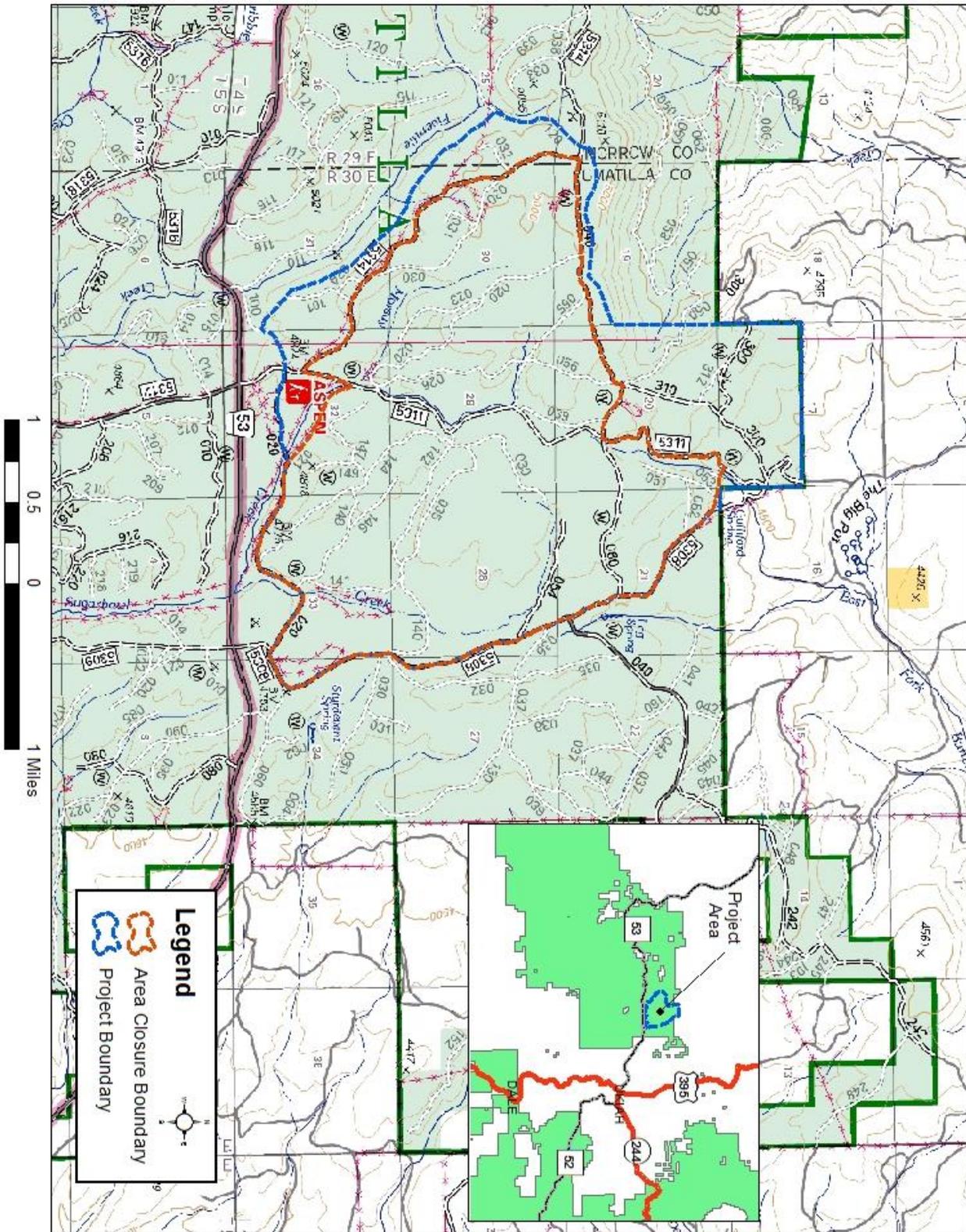
Smoke: Managing the smoke produced by prescribed burns is a significant challenge and the hardest to forecast. Managers work closely with the Oregon Dept. of Forestry and the Washington Department of Natural Resources in accordance with their smoke management plans to determine when, where, and how much can be burned on a daily basis. Unfavorable weather conditions, especially those leading to an adverse smoke management forecast, are the primary reason a prescribed burn would be postponed.

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for the greatest good



Gulliford Prescribed Fire