



# IN BRIEF - AN INFORMATION UPDATE

April, 2010

Above photo: County Road 18 Thinning Project - funded with Recovery dollars.

## **AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT (ARRA) PROJECTS AND UPDATE**

The Malheur received nearly \$23 million dollars for facilities upgrades, roadwork, fuels and timber stewardship projects, and fuels reduction projects. A pellet plant grant for \$5,000,000 was awarded to Malheur Lumber Company in partnership with Bear Mountain Timber Products - it is estimated to be fully operational by the end of summer 2010. Anticipated annual consumption of 45,000 green tones of biomass. Purchase of biomass to begin this summer.

*For more information, contact Curt Qual at 541-575-3438 or [cqual@fs.fed.us](mailto:cqual@fs.fed.us)*

### **Putting People to Work**

The Forest hired 52 temporary employees in addition to the regular temporary work force from the local areas of Grand and Harney Counties to work on Recovery projects.

Approximately \$5 million has been awarded and/or obligated (local contracts, temporary salaries, etc.). An additional estimated \$15 million is committed for future contracts. It is anticipated that the outstanding contracts will be awarded by June 1, 2010.

## **BLUE MOUNTAINS FOREST PLAN REVISION UPDATE**

- April - May 2010: NEPA process begins with the release of the Proposed Action - public meetings held.
- Currently in the scoping process, which ends May 28, 2010.
- Summer 2010: Issues identified and alternatives developed.
- Fall/Winter 2010: Effects analysis conducted.
- March 2011: Release Draft Environmental Impact Statement - 90 day public comment period.
- June 2011 - January 2012: Consider public comments - write Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).
- March 2012: Release FEIS, objection/appeals process. (It will be decided when the DEIS is released whether or not an objection or appeal process will be used).
- 2012: Decision and implementation begins.

*For more information, contact Katie Countryman, Teamleader at (541)523-1264 or [kcountryman@fs.fed.us](mailto:kcountryman@fs.fed.us). or visit [http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/uma/blue\\_mtn\\_planrevision/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/uma/blue_mtn_planrevision/).*

## **FUELS**

Due to mild winter conditions, many permanent seasonal employee tours were extended to perform Recovery related thinning projects and contract preparation. Approximately 1,300 acres of thinning in the Dads, 18 Road, Balance, Silvies, W2 and Hobo project areas were completed.

The Districts are preparing for the up-coming spring under-burning season. Projects planned for spring burning include Salt Canyon on the Emigrant Creek RD (6,000 acres), North Fork, Clear Salvage and Bobo on the Prairie City RD (1,000 acres), and Antelope, Spion, Murderers Creek on the Blue Mountain RD (2,000 acres).

*For more information, contact Roy Walker at (541)575-3105 or [rlwalker@fs.fed.us](mailto:rlwalker@fs.fed.us).*





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**BLUE MOUNTAIN RANGER DISTRICT PLANTATION THINNING**

Contracts were awarded for 1600 acres of precommercial thinning and hand piling of slash. An additional 1900 acres are to be awarded this spring or early summer. Funding for these projects is a mix of appropriated and Recovery funds.

**AQUATICS**

- The John Day River Basin supports the largest remaining wild runs of spring Chinook salmon and summer steelhead trout in the Mid-Columbia River Basin. On average, the Middle Fork John Day River (MFJDR) and its tributaries account for 24% of the Chinook salmon production and 30% of steelhead production in the John Day River Basin. Bull trout and inland Columbia Basin redband trout also inhabit the MFJDR watershed. The Mid-Columbia River steelhead and Columbia River bull trout populations are both Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed “threatened” species.

In response to the Steelhead Recovery Plan (Carmichael 2007), Draft Bull Trout Recovery Plan (2002), and the John Day Sub basin Plan (CBMRC&D), the Malheur National Forest and partners developed a John Day Basin Restoration Strategy (March, 2009). Priority watersheds were identified as well as potential projects that would put the watersheds on a trajectory to recovery.

As part of the ongoing prioritization process The Camp Creek Watershed Action Plan (WAP) (December 2008) was developed to identify and prioritize site-specific restoration activities that would directly address limiting factors in the watershed. The plan provides a road map to complete nearly \$1.8 million of high priority actions , which when coupled with ongoing aquatic restoration activities, will contribute to whole watershed restoration of the entire Camp Creek Watershed. Thus far, roughly 50% of the work identified in the WAP will be completed by the end of FY2011.

- Watershed Action Plans for the Upper Middle Fork John Day River, Upper Malheur River and Wolf Creek will be completed in 2010.
- In 2010 watershed restoration projects are planned for 31 acres and four miles of fisheries restoration projects. *For more information, contact Steve Namitz at (541)575-3167 or [smnamitz@fs.fed.us](mailto:smnamitz@fs.fed.us).*

**SOILS**

As part of the Collaborative Restoration Forest Health Support (Recovery project), there are two soils sub-projects on the north end of the Forest in support of future fuels and vegetation treatments in the Large Landscape Projects area. One sub-project is Terrestrial Ecological Unit Inventory (soil survey). The second sub-project is doing soil assessments in Starr, Soda Bear, Antelope, & Elk16 planning areas.

*For more information, contact Hersh McNeil at (541)\_575-3464 or [rmcneil@fs.fed.us](mailto:rmcneil@fs.fed.us).*

*This document is intended to provide a brief update of what is occurring on the Malheur National Forest.*

*More information can be found at [www.fs.fed.us/r6/malheur](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/malheur).*





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**VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROJECTS PLANNED**

- **County Road 18 Fuels Break Project (HFRA) - Blue Mountain Ranger District**
- Reduction of hazardous fuels adjacent to approximately 21 miles of County Road 18.
- Decision signed: September, 2009.
- May include commercial/noncommercial thinning, natural and project generated fuel treatment, and prescribed burning on up to 4,000 acres.
- Expected offer - Spring, 2010.
- Estimated volume - 2 mmbf.

*For more information, contact Lori Stokes at 541-575-3331 or [lstokes@fs.fed.us](mailto:lstokes@fs.fed.us).*

**Galena - Blue Mountain Ranger District**

- Reduction of hazardous fuels and improving forest health on forest lands west of Austin Junction in the Vinegar Creek and Little Boulder/Deerhorn Creek subwatersheds.
- Includes commercial/noncommercial thinning, mechanical fuel treatment and underburning, road closures and decommissioning.
- Decision expected: Fall, 2010.
- Estimated volume - approximately 20-30 mmbf plus potential for biomass utilization.

*For more information, contact Eric Wunz at 541-575-0340 or [ewunz@fs.fed.us](mailto:ewunz@fs.fed.us).*

**Damon Fuels Reduction Project (HFRA) - Blue Mountain Ranger District**

- Reduction of hazardous fuels and improving forest health in Van Aspen and Shirttail subwatersheds.
- Proposed action is under development as part of collaboration with Blue Mountain Forest Partners.
- Includes commercial/noncommercial thinning, underburning, designating old growth stands, aspen thinning and protection.
- Decision expected: Spring, 2010.
- This is the second collaborative project with the Blue Mountain Forest Partners.

*For more information, contact Ryan Falk at (541)820-3800 or [rfalk@fs.fed.us](mailto:rfalk@fs.fed.us).*

**Starr (HFRA) - Blue Mountain Ranger District**

- Reduction of hazardous fuels and improving forest health on forest lands on the north and west sides of Bear Valley in the Starr Creek subwatershed.
- Includes commercial/noncommercial thinning, mechanical fuel treatment and underburning, road closures and decommissioning.
- Decision expected: Fall, 2010.
- Estimated volume - approximately 5-10 mmbf plus potential for biomass utilization.

*For more information, contact Lorie Stokes @ (541)575-3331 or [lstokes@fs.fed.us](mailto:lstokes@fs.fed.us).*

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**VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROJECTS PLANNED (CON'T)**

**Green Ant - Emigrant Creek Ranger District**

- Formerly the Ant Project, revised due to 2007 Egley Fire Complex.
- Environmental Assessment (EA) released for public comment June 10, 2009.
- Decision Notice signed December 1, 2009.
- 45-day Appeal Period ended on January 25, 2010.
- Includes commercial/noncommercial thinning and aspen restoration.
- Expected offer - Winter/Spring 2010.
- Estimated volume - 3-4 mmbf.

*For more information, contact Lori Bailey at 541-573-4366 or [labailey@fs.fed.us](mailto:labailey@fs.fed.us).*

**Jane Hazardous Fuels Reduction (HFRA) - Emigrant Creek Ranger District**

- Scoping completed August 7, 2009.
- Currently in the effects analysis stage.
- Environmental Assessment (EA) planned to be released for 30-day objection period in May 2010.
- Decision expected: June 2010.
- Includes commercial and precommercial thinning and biomass removal.
- Expected offer - July 2010.
- Estimated volume: 25-35 mmbf under multiple offerings.

*For more information, contact Lori Bailey at (541)473-4366 or [labailey@fs.fed.us](mailto:labailey@fs.fed.us).*

**Dairy - Emigrant Creek Ranger District**

- Scoping completed in September 2003.
- Environmental Assessment (EA) planned to be released for public comment June, 2010.
- Decision expected: August 2010.
- Includes commercial and precommercial thinning and biomass removal.
- Expected offer - September/October 2010.
- Estimated volume: 1-2 mmbf.

*For more information, contact Lori Bailey at (541)573-4366 or [labailey@fs.fed.us](mailto:labailey@fs.fed.us).*

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