

Decision Memo
Jackpot Burn Project
US Forest Service
Crooked River National Grassland
Jefferson County, Oregon
T13S, R14E, secs 15,22,23,25,26
T12S, R13E, sec 32

Decision

I have decided to implement the Jackpot Burn Project, which will use prescribed fire to reduce hazardous fuels along road corridors and near residential areas in the wildland-urban interface, as identified in the Jefferson County Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Most of the human-caused fire on the Grassland occur along road corridors or near residential areas. Reducing juniper slash in these areas will, in the event of a wildfire, decrease fire intensity and increase the ability of firefighters to control a wildfire.

Burning will occur along Highway 26 west of Grizzly Mountain, and near Highway 97 on Juniper Butte. Concentrations of juniper thinning slash (jackpots) and handpiles will be burned under conditions when fire will not carry between jackpots and piles. Heavy smoke drift across Highways 26 and 97 will be avoided. The combined project area is 220 acres.

This project is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or an environmental assessment because the project falls within Category 10 of Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, section 31.2, which includes hazardous fuels reduction using prescribed fire, not to exceed 4500 acres, and it has been determined that there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the decision that significantly effect the environment.

Several resource conditions were considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances related to the decision warranted further analysis. The presence of one or more of these resource conditions does not preclude use of a categorical exclusion. It is the degree of the effect on resource conditions that determines whether extraordinary circumstances exist. Resource conditions that were considered include:

a. Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species.

A biological evaluation for this project determined that there are no threatened or endangered species, species proposed for Federal listing, designated critical habitat or proposed critical habitat within the project area.

b. Floodplains, Wetlands or Municipal Watersheds

This project is not located in or near floodplains. This project is not located in or near wetlands. There are no municipal watersheds on the Grassland.

c. Congressionally Designated Areas

The project area is not in or near a designated Wilderness. There are no National Recreation Areas on or near the Grassland.

d. Inventoried Roadless Areas

There are no Inventoried Roadless Areas in the project area.

e. Research Natural Areas

There are no Research Natural Areas in or near the project area.

f. Native American Religious or Cultural Sites, Archaeological Sites or Historic Properties

Two homestead sites at Juniper Butte were flagged and will be avoided. There are no other documented sites in the project area.

Public Involvement

A legal notice soliciting public comment was placed in the Bend Bulletin and Madras Pioneer on February 22, 2006. A project proposal was provided to the public and other agencies for comment during a 30-day scoping period from February 22 to March 22, 2006. One comment of support was received.

Findings Required by Other Laws

This project is consistent with the Land and Resource Management Plan for the Crooked River National Grassland, as required by the National Forest Management Act. The Plan has been amended by the Inland Native Fish Strategy, which provides standards and guidelines for protection of watersheds and riparian habitat conservation areas. There are no riparian habitat conservation areas within the project area. The project occurs within the General Forage land use allocation, which has the objective of providing natural composition and cover values of native grasses, sedges, forbs and palatable shrubs. The project is in conformance with all applicable Plan standards and guidelines.

Implementation Date

This project can be implemented immediately.

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is not subject to administrative appeal.

Contact Person

Further information about this decision can be obtained from Bryan Scholz during normal office hours (weekdays, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) at the Ochoco National Forest office, 3160 NE Third Street, Prineville, OR 97754; Phone: (541) 416-6500, Fax: (541) 416-6695; e-mail: bscholz@fs.fed.us.

\s\ Kristin Bail

March 31, 2006

KRISTIN BAIL
District Ranger

Date