

USFS project updates

BY ERIN CONSIDINE

Happy 2024, Applegate community and partners!

We at the Siskiyou Mountains Ranger District (i.e., Star Ranger Station) are hoping to provide more consistent updates on projects that may affect you as a landowner, partner, or general enthusiast of the Applegate Valley. To do this, we will aim to provide a short update on select projects in each issue of the *Applegater* as well as website links where you can find even more information. We hope this additional avenue of communication will help increase awareness and opportunities for your involvement.

Where can you find information?

GovDelivery. This is a primary method of communication. GovDelivery is a web-based e-mail subscription system that allows you to subscribe to information on specific topics or projects that interest you. Whenever the US Forest Service or a district makes information on that project available, you will receive an email. You may customize and manage your subscription profile to receive exactly the types of information you desire, and you may cancel your subscription at any time. To subscribe, go to public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAFS/subscriber/new. If you need help signing up for GovDelivery, please contact Amanda Merz at amanda.merz@usda.gov.

Constant Contact. Another primary form of communication, Constant Contact, is a web-based email subscription that allows a member of the public to subscribe to our news-release mailing list.

To subscribe, visit our forest web page at fs.usda.gov/rogue-siskiyou.

RRSNF web page. To view current and recent projects across the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest (RRSNF), please visit fs.usda.gov/projects/rogue-siskiyou/landmanagement/projects.

RRSNF Facebook page. Information shared here will be the same as what is shared via GovDelivery but is generally more focused on opportunities for public comment or field trips. Visit facebook.com/R6RRSNF.

Upper Applegate Watershed Restoration Project (UAWRP)

The Decision Notice for this 52,000-acre project, signed in August 2020, was a unique collaborative approach between stakeholders and federal agencies aiming to restore ecological conditions resilient to disturbances and climate change. For information about the project, including maps, please visit fs.usda.gov/detail/rogue-siskiyou/landmanagement/projects/?cid=fseprd662282.

Progress to date. Commercial thinning is currently progressing in units 62, 63, 67, 68, 109, 110, and 111. Two hundred fifty acres of felling are complete in units 63, 67, 68, and 110, and 20 acres have been yarded via helicopter, resulting in 485 tons of material removed. Due to recent weather patterns and mechanical issues with the helicopter rotors, progress has been slower than anticipated. However, Lomakatsi, the US Forest Service, and Timberline Helicopters remain committed to treating commercial units in UAWRP. We anticipate progress to increase as weather conditions improve.



View from Elliott Ridge. Photo: US Forest Service.

Shaded fuel breaks

This project aims to reduce hazardous fuels along strategic linear features such as roads, trails, and ridgelines or key access routes. These projects would provide and maintain shaded fuel breaks, allowing firefighters to safely engage with wildfires and provide a safer ingress and egress for the public. Utilizing the public comment period, as well as numerous public field trips, we initially identified four priority fuel breaks: Grayback, Elliott Ridge, Wagner, and Sevenmile Ridge. For more information about the project, visit fs.usda.gov/project/?project=63141.

Progress to date. Utilizing public comments, we decided to make Grayback the priority fuel break and defer the Elliott, Wagner, and Sevenmile fuel breaks. Instead, these three fuel breaks will be incorporated into a landscape-scale vegetation management project called Yellowjacket.

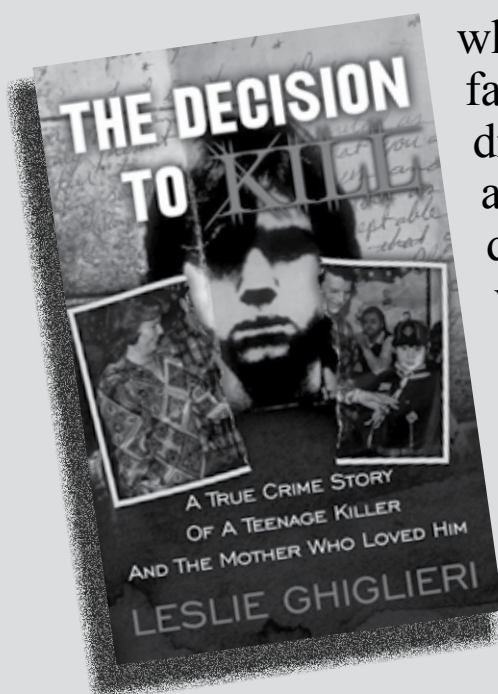
Yellowjacket Environmental Assessment (formerly Little Applegate Environmental Assessment)

Originally, this proposed project was limited to the Little Applegate Watershed, between the UAWRP (see above) and Ashland Forest Restoration project footprints. Over the past several months, we continued to assess the overall landscape objectives. This led us to expand the project boundary to the west, doubling the proposed acres, and renaming it Yellowjacket. The primary focus will be to address the unprecedented Douglas-fir mortality through fuel reduction treatments along main roads (Forest Service roads 20 and 22, as well as any four-digit roads), around infrastructure and communication sites, and adjacent to private and state property.

Progress to date. We anticipate starting formal public engagement for this project late spring or early summer of 2024 and plan to offer several field trips to look at areas of interest.

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