

Bear Grub study release due soon

BY KYLE SULLIVAN

The Bureau of Land Management Medford District is still hard at work managing your public lands. To the greatest extent possible, we are working to maintain services to the American people while focusing on the safety and well-being of our employees and the public.

Forests and woodlands in southwestern Oregon evolved with frequent low- to mixed-severity fire. Even though we go to great lengths to put fires out, wildfire will likely always be a part of our landscape. Fire patterns and forest fuels have changed and, unfortunately, wildfire risk has increased. The BLM is working to reduce wildland fire risk to communities, create conditions on the ground that improve our ability to timely manage and suppress wildfires safely, and make the landscape more fire resilient.

The Integrated Vegetation Management for Resilient Lands Programmatic Environmental Assessment (IVM-RL EA) proposes an array of tools for treatments across Medford District BLM-managed lands. This approach allows us to address overcrowded forests through a combination of small-diameter thinning, commercial harvest, and controlled burning. Use of the IVM-RL EA also reduces risks near older complex forests and promotes more old, complex forests in appropriate places on the landscape.

In late 2019, we hosted a scoping period for IVM-RL EA, which included public meetings, two comment periods, and draft chapters 1 and 2 of the environmental assessment. As you read this, we are refining alternatives and analyzing anticipated environmental effects based on comments submitted during the scoping period. The EA will be available this summer on ePlanning (go.usa.gov/xmuJV).

The Bear Grub Vegetation Management Project (VMP) increases the age/class diversity of forests near the Applegate Valley, reduces wildfire risk, and provides

commercial timber opportunities as required by the O&C Act and subsequently the 2016 Southwestern Oregon Resource Management Plan. Approximately two-thirds of the potential treatment areas are proposed for hazardous fuel reduction treatments only, while the remaining one-third is proposed for a combination of commercial timber harvest and hazardous fuels reduction.

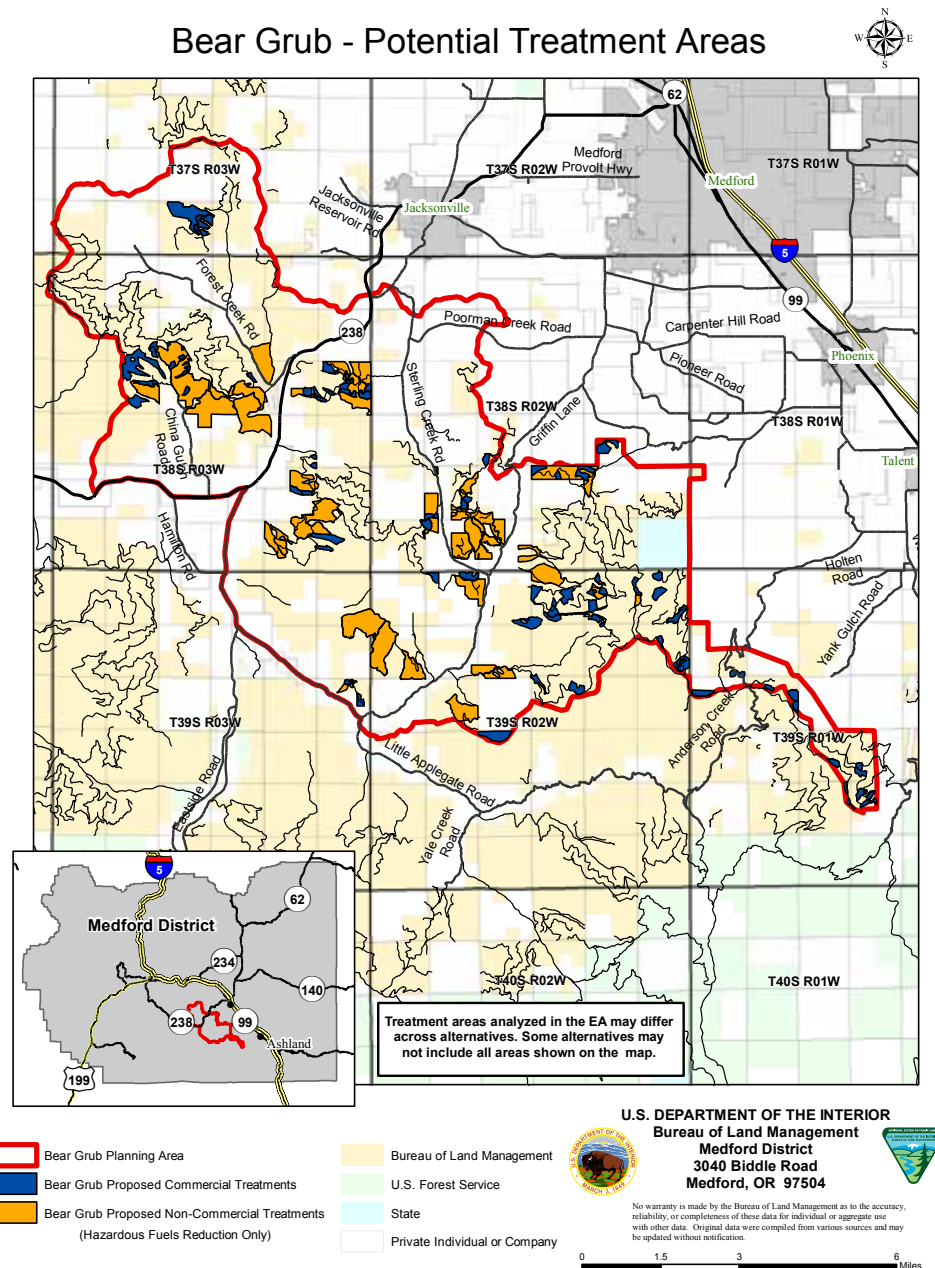
Even in areas proposed for commercial timber harvest, fuels reduction is a critical component. The BLM plans to have an EA available for public review and comment in late spring or early summer of this year. Learn more on ePlanning (go.usa.gov/xvySb).

The Jack-Ash Trail Phase II is a continuation of the Jack-Ash Phase I project and a portion of the larger, planned Jack-Ash trail system that would ultimately provide non-motorized trails connecting Jacksonville and Ashland. Phase I of the Jack-Ash trail was completed in 2017 and connects the north and south ends of the Sterling Mine Ditch Trail (SMDT).

Phase II of the Jack-Ash trail would create new mid-length loops connecting to the SMDT system, extend the existing Jack-Ash trail on the north, and connect close to the East Applegate Ridge Trail to the west. The proposed action would create 24 miles of new non-motorized trails with no changes to current allowable uses on adjacent existing roads and trails. There are no designations for motorized roads or trails being proposed in this project. The BLM is currently evaluating the comments received during the April comment period. Project updates and notifications of a decision will be posted to the ePlanning page (go.usa.gov/xvySZ).

The BLM evaluates all of our actions, including comment periods, on a case-by-case basis and makes adjustments where needed, to ensure we are allowing appropriate public input while protecting the health and safety of the public and our

Bear Grub - Potential Treatment Areas



The BLM Bear Grub Planning Area includes "treatment areas" proposed for hazardous fuel reduction and commercial timber harvest scattered over a wide area from the Wellington Wildlands on the northwest to Bald Mountain on the southeast.

employees. Please contact us to be added to our mailing list, and you will be notified when project updates are available.

During these challenging times, please find some time to enjoy your public lands for the values that are near and dear to your heart, whether you are a part of the community that relies on public lands for employment or a part of the community that relies on public lands for recreation,

relaxation, and meditation. And know that we are still here, working in the field, at home, or in the office, to fulfill our responsibility to you. Please say "hi" and wave to us when you see us out in the field.

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COVID-19 forces cancellations of Applegate Lake events

BY JOHN MCKELGOTT

We hope this finds you and your family safe, healthy, and ready for better times ahead. At Star Ranger Station the Forest Service family is staying strong, supporting one another and our neighbors. We have missed our co-workers, the forest visitors, all our volunteers, the contractors who keep us up and running, and our partners. The list of partners and friends of the forest is long, and their contributions are humbling.

One of these partners is the Special Use Concessionaire, AZTOOR. The group's commander-in-chief, Glenn Richardson, has helped the Siskiyou Mountains Ranger District maintain and operate a developed recreation program for over a decade.

Through low-water years, brutal fire seasons, and challenging budget realities, Glenn has tried to provide safe, reliable and high-quality opportunities for campers, picnicking families, boaters, swimmers, and enthusiastic special-events groups.

The sad reality of COVID-19 effects continues to grow, and the challenges of getting the gates open with adequate

staffing are hurdles that the Forest Service and their partners will navigate together as the 2020 recreation season unfolds.

But one thing is sadly certain. There will be no Triathlon, Swim Meet, Pine to Palms, or any other large special event at Applegate Lake this summer. After so many years of friendly co-operation, the Granite Man has had to cancel its 2020 triathlon, as have the folks who manage the Master Swim Meet and equally dedicated groups who have arranged more recent events such as the Pine to Palms "Enduro."

While these events bring visitors and additional cash flow to our valley, they also provide opportunities for family-oriented and crowd-pleasing entertainment that is a large part of the Applegate Lake recreational experience. We appreciate these partnerships and plan to bring these events forward in summers to come.

John McKelligott
Developed Recreation Coordinator
Siskiyou Mountains Ranger District
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— Report illegal burning —

If you witness what you think is illegal burning, either of prohibited materials or on a no-burn day, report it to the following:

- Jackson County Environmental Air Quality at 541-774-8206 or Josephine County Environmental Health Services at 541-474-5325.
- If the fire is burning, also call your local fire department.

Penalties: \$600 fine per incident and further legal action if required.

Prohibited materials include wet garbage, plastic, wire insulation, automobile parts, asphalt, petroleum products or treated materials, rubber, asbestos, animal remains, animal or vegetable matter resulting from the handling, preparation, cooking or service of food, any material that emits dense smoke or noxious odors. This applies to open/barrel burning and solid fuel burning devices such as wood stoves. (From Jackson County Health & Human Services website at jacksoncountyor.org.)

For more information, contact Tom White with Jackson County Environmental Air Quality at 541-774-8206 or Josephine County at 541-474-5325.

Happy Father's Day to all dads on June 21!