



The Eddy LSR Project

Pathway to a healthy future

2008

Ranger Ray's Corner

Hello to All Our Neighbors,

I would like to express my appreciation to all of you who participated in the collaboration meetings last fall (2007) and over the winter—your input has been invaluable. The product of all the time you dedicated to attending meetings and expressing your concerns and suggestions is the information summarized in this newsletter. I look forward to reading additional public input submitted during the scoping process.

This newsletter serves as the “Scoping Letter” for the project in that it describes the Purpose and Need for the Eddy Gulch Late-Successional Reserve (LSR) Project and the Proposed Action (the term “scoping” is defined later in this newsletter).

I hope you continue your interest in the Eddy Gulch LSR Project and take advantage of all future opportunities to stay involved and informed. The project website (<http://www.eddylsrproject.com>) currently contains the first newsletter, this second newsletter, and two fact sheets. Please check the website regularly for updated information.

Thank you again for all your interest and participation.

*Ray A. Haupt
District Ranger*

Collaboration Process

The first newsletter for the Eddy Gulch LSR Project was mailed in October 2007 and has also been uploaded to the project website (<http://www.eddylsrproject.com>). The first newsletter talked about the Healthy Forests Restoration Act and one of its important objectives to “strengthen public participation in developing high-priority forest health projects by providing opportunities for earlier participation.” The Act refers to this early participation as “collaboration.” Since September 2007, the Forest Service and its contractor (RED, Inc. Communications) have facilitated 14 collaboration meetings, which were held in the communities of Sawyers Bar, Forks of Salmon, Orleans, Fort Jones, and Yreka, California. Numerous collaboration meetings were also held with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Yreka. During the meetings, the Forest Service and contractor presented information about the Eddy Gulch LSR Project, summarized the Stewardship Fished Analysis that was conducted for the LSR, talked about the purpose and need for the project, and received comments on maps depicting the proposed treatments. The discussions during the meetings were very valuable—participants voiced concerns, asked questions, and offered suggestions for the project, which aided in the development of the Proposed Action. Some of those comments are listed below:

- Maintain coarse woody debris.
- Maintain old-growth characteristics.
- Protect owls that are present.
- Implement multi-party monitoring before, during, and after project implementation.
- What is the plantation acreage and what are the tree sizes? Plantations should be a priority for thinning. Consider pile and burn vs. leaving slash. Consider the amount of dollars to treat plantations.



- Will the EIS address the dollars needed for pre-commercial thinning in a plantation? There is concern about slash left after pre-commercial thinning.
- Has underburning been considered?
- Will this be a collaborative stewardship project?
- Look at the role of the hardwood component in stands and how hardwoods are used in stand structure.
- Pull in a variety of ways to tie in components: tanker sites, key emergency access routes, private land interface; use the Salmon River Community Wildfire Protection Plan in project planning.
- How does the Eddy LSR proposal lace together with what the Forest has already done and what it will be doing in the future?
- Consider 60 percent canopy closure and 27-inch diameter limit.
- Consider 80 percent canopy closure on north-facing slopes and 60 percent on south-facing slopes.
- Do not build temporary roads; road issues are sedimentation, sliding, and mass wasting.
- Don't plan treatments that can't feasibly be maintained.
- Will there be subsistence firewood opportunities for public and commercial firewood?
- Describe what logging systems will be used.
- Need to make a distinction between dominant canopy and subcanopy.
- Bring fire back to the landscape.

The above comments were reviewed during preparation of the Proposed Action. Those comments, along with additional comments that will be received during the scoping process, will be used to refine the Proposed Action.



The collaboration meetings provided opportunities to discuss the Eddy Gulch LSR Project. The comments and suggestions received during the meetings helped with the development of the Proposed Action.



Scoping—What It Is?

The scoping process is defined by Council of Environmental Quality regulations that implement the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The scoping process begins when a federal agency has its Notice of Intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) published in the Federal Register. The Notice of Intent has been uploaded to the project website.

Scoping is an early and open process to ensure that the full range of issues related to a proposed action is addressed and that all significant issues are identified. Scoping also provides the opportunity for agencies, elected officials, members of the public, and American Indian tribes to present additional background and technical information. Prior to the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, public participation was

initiated during the scoping process—after a federal agency had developed its proposed action. For the Eddy Gulch LSR Project, early citizen collaboration was used as a valuable tool in helping to develop the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action will be refined using suggestions and comments received from the public during the scoping process. We encourage you to take part in the scoping process by reading the information in this newsletter and the additional information and maps that are available on the project website (<http://www.eddylsrproject.com>). Comments on the Eddy Gulch LSR Project are welcome throughout the environmental analysis process, but to be most useful for refining the Proposed Action, we request that comments be mailed within 30 days of publication of the Notice of Intent in the Federal Register.



Purpose of and Need for Action

Three primary objectives (purposes) for the Eddy Gulch LSR Project were developed based on differences between existing and desired resource and social conditions (need for the project) in the Eddy Gulch LSR, pertinent laws, and Forest Service direction.

1. *Community Protection*—to reduce wildfire threat to communities and municipal water supplies and increase public and firefighter safety. There is a need, consistent with objectives set forth in the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, to protect wildland-urban interface (WUI) structures, and related improvements, and community access routes, from the threat of high-intensity wildfire outside, or emanating from, the Eddy Gulch LSR. Current and developing conditions in the LSR and along sections of all access roads will likely lead to moderate- and high-intensity fires caused by weather-related events (such as lightning) that will threaten structures, improvements, water sources, and travel routes.

2. *Habitat Protection*—to protect existing and future late-successional habitat from threats (of habitat loss) that occur inside and outside the Eddy Gulch LSR. There is a need to reduce fuel loading and develop a control strategy to reduce the size and severity of future wildfires in the Eddy Gulch LSR in order to continue to meet LSR and Key Watershed objectives for late-successional habitat and the delivery of high-quality cold water. The Eddy Gulch

LSR is within the Salmon River Watershed identified under the Northwest Forest Plan as critical for at-risk fish species—the watersheds provide high-quality water and fish habitat. Current risks to forest health include hazardous fuel conditions, vegetative stocking density, insects, and diseases.

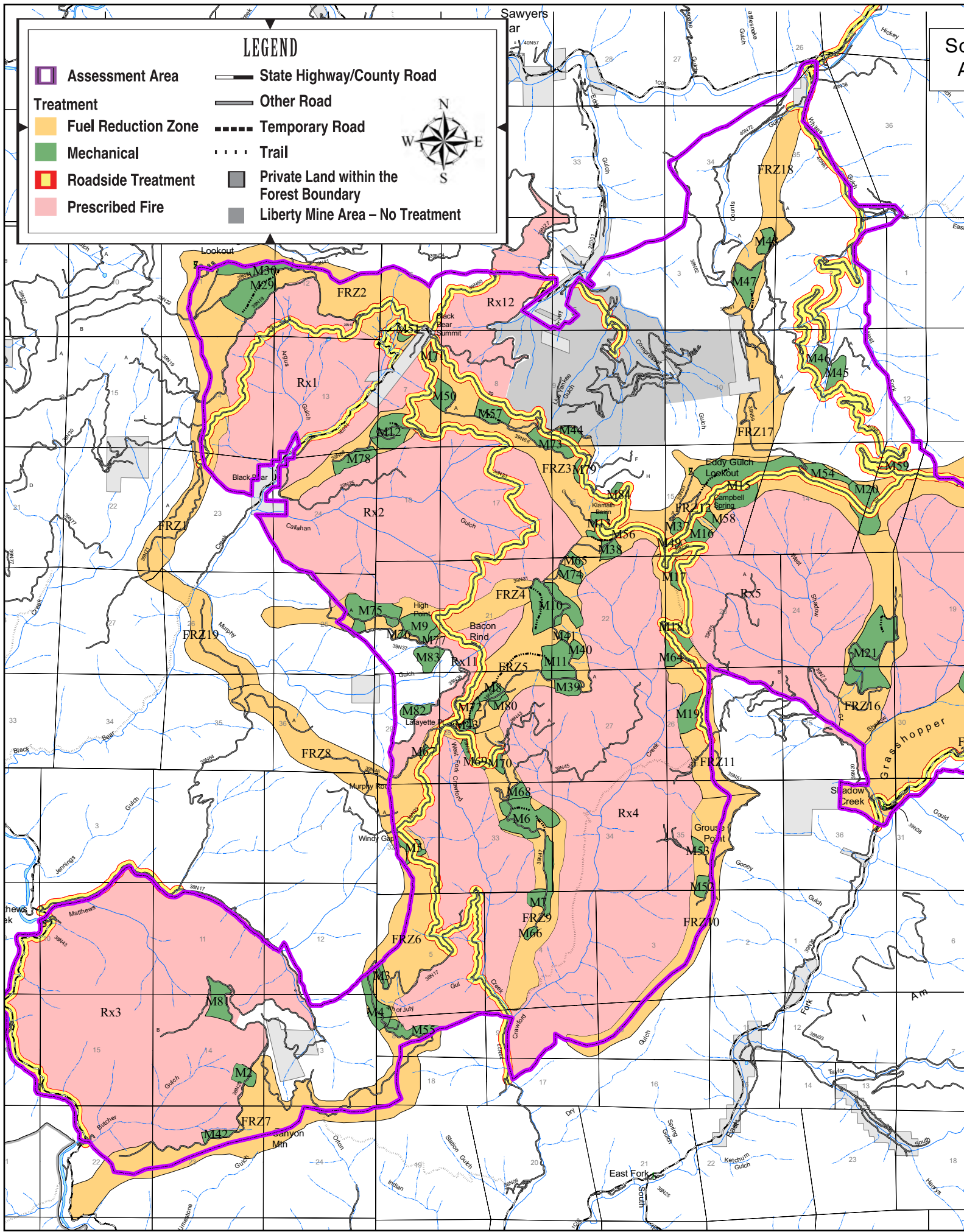
The exclusion of fire, combined with climatic conditions, has created overstocked stands. Due to fire exclusion and other policies that required the control of all fires, there have been changes in stand structures, including higher densities of ground and ladder fuels such as brush, small trees, and shade-tolerant tree species. Past fire suppression policies of controlling all fires have interrupted the historic role of fire as a thinning agent and for maintaining the volume of ground fuels. This has increased accumulation of dead and down woody material and organic debris (duff and litter) and has led to larger and more intense wildfires in the Klamath Mountains. These intense wildfires can permanently damage soil, degrade

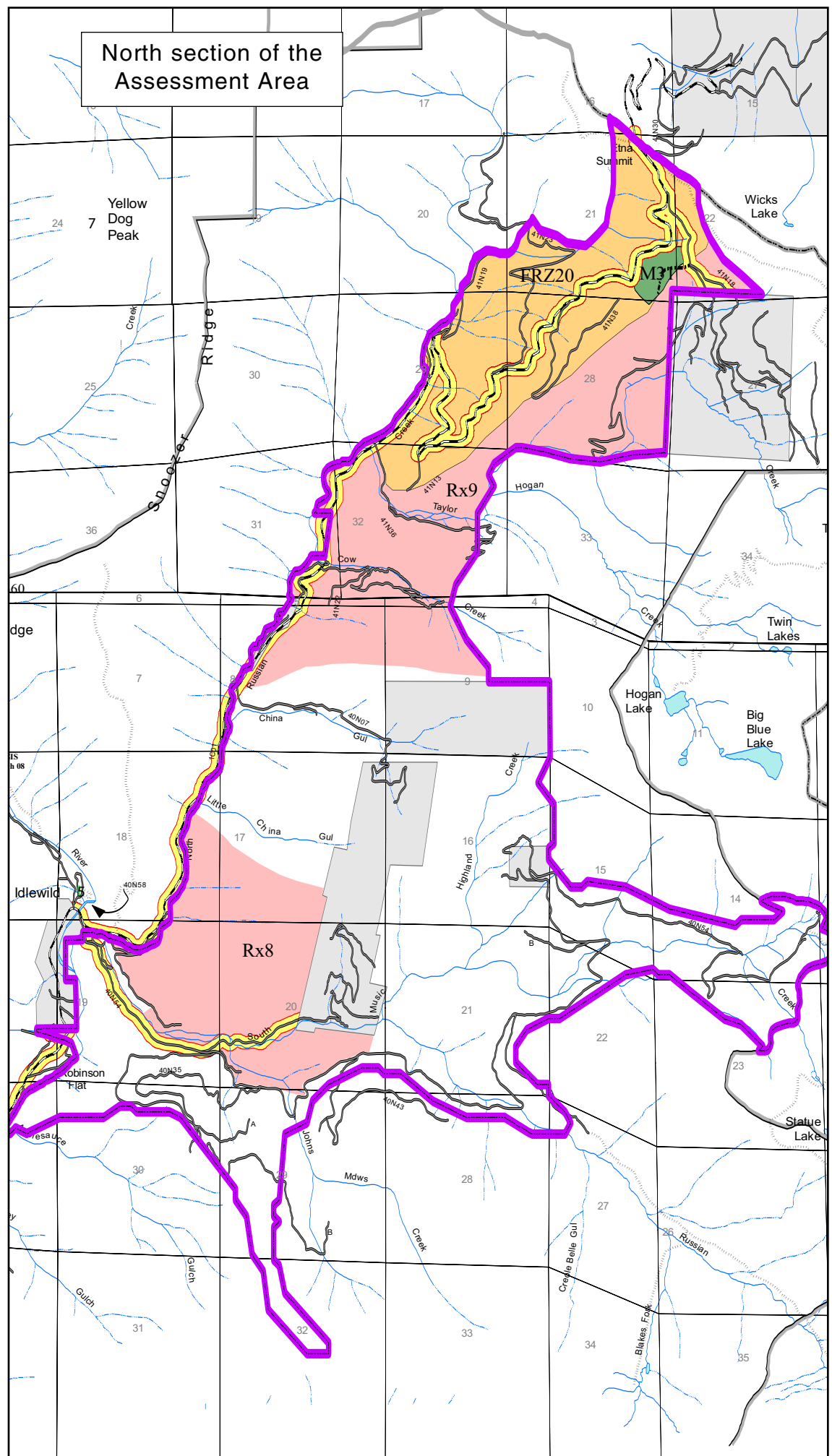
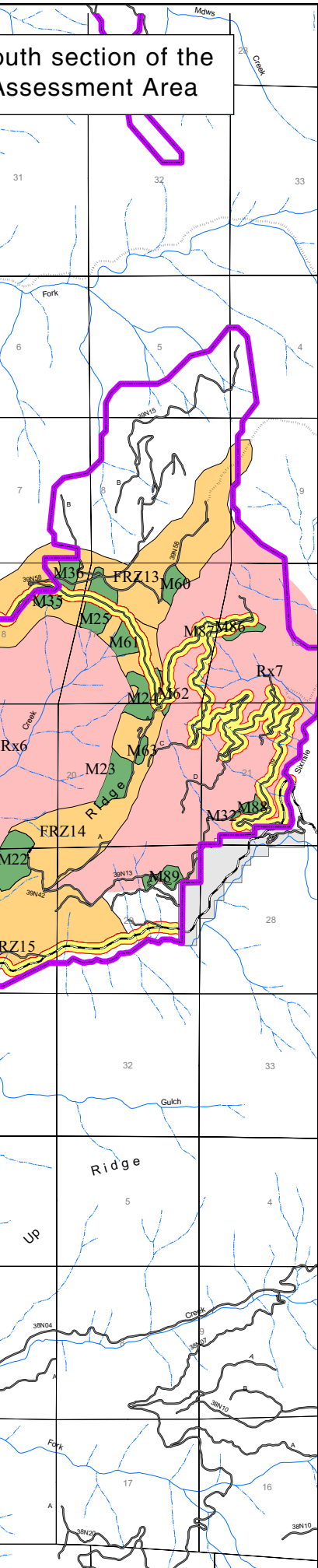
watersheds, and remove a high proportion of all vegetation over large areas, thereby slowing natural recovery and increasing impacts. Fire modeling, using current conditions, indicates that under 90th percentile weather (a hot dry August day), 50 percent of the LSR would experience active or passive crown fire. These models indicate the LSR would benefit from treatments to reduce the potential for lethal fire behavior to a level that would be more consistent with LSR, Key Watershed, and community protection objectives.

Three primary objectives
(purposes) for the Eddy
Gulch LSR Project were
developed based on
differences between
existing and desired
resource and social
conditions...

LEGEND

- Assessment Area
- State Highway/County Road
- Other Road
- Temporary Road
- Trail
- Private Land within the Forest Boundary
- Liberty Mine Area – No Treatment





3. *Habitat Development*—to promote the continued development of late-successional characteristics. There is a need to accelerate the development of late-successional forest characteristics in some existing mid-successional forest stands. Approximately 45,220 acres of the 61,900-acre Eddy Gulch LSR (73 percent) are capable of producing late-successional habitat. Currently, 18,780 acres (or about 42 percent of the 45,220 acres) are currently vegetated by late-successional habitat. The combined acres vegetated by late- and mid-successional forest total 35,710 acres (or about 79 percent of the 45,220 acres). Based on interpretation of stand conditions, past management, expected fire losses, early photos, and an understanding of the disturbance regimes, it has been estimated that the amount of late-successional forest reasonably sustainable in the Eddy Gulch LSR is 45–65 percent of the capable area at any one time. The LSR would be considered functioning if it falls within this identified range. The Klamath National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan specifies that LSRs are to be managed to maximize the amount of late-successional forest to a level reasonably sustainable.

The above three objectives helped guide the development of the proposed treatments and activities designed to maintain or establish a trend towards desired resource and social conditions.

The proposed treatment locations and treatments were also developed in response to protection targets identified in the Salmon River Community Wildfire Protection Plan, Black Bear Ranch Cooperative Fire Safe Plan, Rainbow Cooperative Fire Safe Plan, the Stewardship Fireshed Analysis that was conducted for the Eddy Gulch LSR Project, the citizen collaboration workshops for the Fireshed Analysis and Eddy Gulch LSR Project, and direction provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Yreka, California. Numerous Forest Service documents guided development of the Proposed Action: the Klamath National Forest Forest-wide Late-Successional Reserve Assessment, Klamath National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, North Fork Ecosystem Analysis, Upper South Fork Ecosystem Analysis, and Callahan (Main Salmon) Ecosystem Analysis.

Scoping comments will be used to refine the Proposed Action, as will additional data collected during extensive field reconnaissance during the spring and early summer of 2008.

Proposed Action

Scoping comments will be used to refine the Proposed Action, as will additional data collected during extensive field reconnaissance during the spring and early summer of 2008.

The Proposed Action has been designed to meet the three objectives described above and satisfy the need for action by using mechanical, manual, and prescribed burn treatments.

The proposed treatment acres across the Eddy Gulch LSR Assessment Area are summarized below. The various treatment areas overlap, so the total area proposed for treatment is less than the sum of the acreages shown below:

- 1,999 acres in 69 mechanical treatment areas in the 20 proposed Fuel Reduction Zones (FRZs)
- 8,583 acres of underburning in the 20 FRZs
- 17,808 acres of underburning in the 11 prescribed burn areas (areas other than in FRZs)
- 2,251 acres in 6 mechanical treatment areas in the 11 prescribed burn areas
- 102 acres in 6 mechanical treatment areas not in an FRZ or prescribed burn area
- 70 miles of mechanical treatments along roads
- 4.5 miles of temporary road construction to access 885 acres in 14 of the mechanical treatment areas



Twenty Fuel Reduction Zones

An FRZ is a strategically located and designed strip of land on which a portion of the surface fuels (both living and dead), ladder fuels, and canopy fuels are treated (removed, burned, or masticated) in order to limit the potential size of and loss of resources (including homes) from large, high-intensity wildfire. FRZs are wide enough to capture most short-range spot fires within the treated areas and are designed to bring crown fires into surface (ground) fire conditions, as well as to provide safe locations for fire-suppression personnel to take fire-suppression actions during 90th percentile weather conditions.

Stands would be thinned to reduce stand densities, thereby reducing canopy cover (and the potential for passive and active crown fires).

Eighty-one Mechanical Treatment Areas

- *Thinning to reduce density*—mechanical treatments would be used to remove or rearrange fuels to reduce crown, ladder, and ground fuels and to shorten the time to reach the desired future conditions compared to the use of prescribed fire alone. Stands would be thinned to reduce stand densities, thereby reducing canopy cover (and the potential for passive and active crown fires).

The resulting fuels from thinning would be removed or piled and burned. Thinning activities would also provide an opportunity for biomass utilization of the material.

- *Thinning to reduce ladder fuels*—thinning smaller diameter trees would increase the distance between the lower limbs of residual trees and brush or ground fuels. Ladder fuels consist of denser conifer vegetation and brush near the forest floor that can extend into residual trees. Ladder fuels increase the likelihood of a ground fire creating enough heat to ignite the ladder fuels (torching), with the subsequent fire reaching the crowns of the largest trees. Crown fires are more intense, harder for firefighters to suppress, and result in more devastating effects. In an effort to reduce the potential for crown fires, ladder fuels would be mechanically treated. After mechanical treatments, the fuels would be removed and treated with prescribed fire or masticated.



- *Thinning to develop habitat*—Overstocked mid-successional stands experience inter-tree competition that slows the stand’s development into late-successional habitat. Thinning these stands from below would maintain or increase growth on the residual trees, thus accelerating the stand’s development into late-successional habitat (“thinning from below” refers to the process of thinning a conifer stand by removing the smallest diameter trees and successively removing larger diameter trees until a canopy cover standard is met for the stand).

In an LSR, stands would be considered for treatment only where thinning would increase, by 30 years, the stand’s development into late-successional habitat, when compared to the stand’s projected natural (unthinned) development.

Eleven Prescribed Burn Treatment Areas

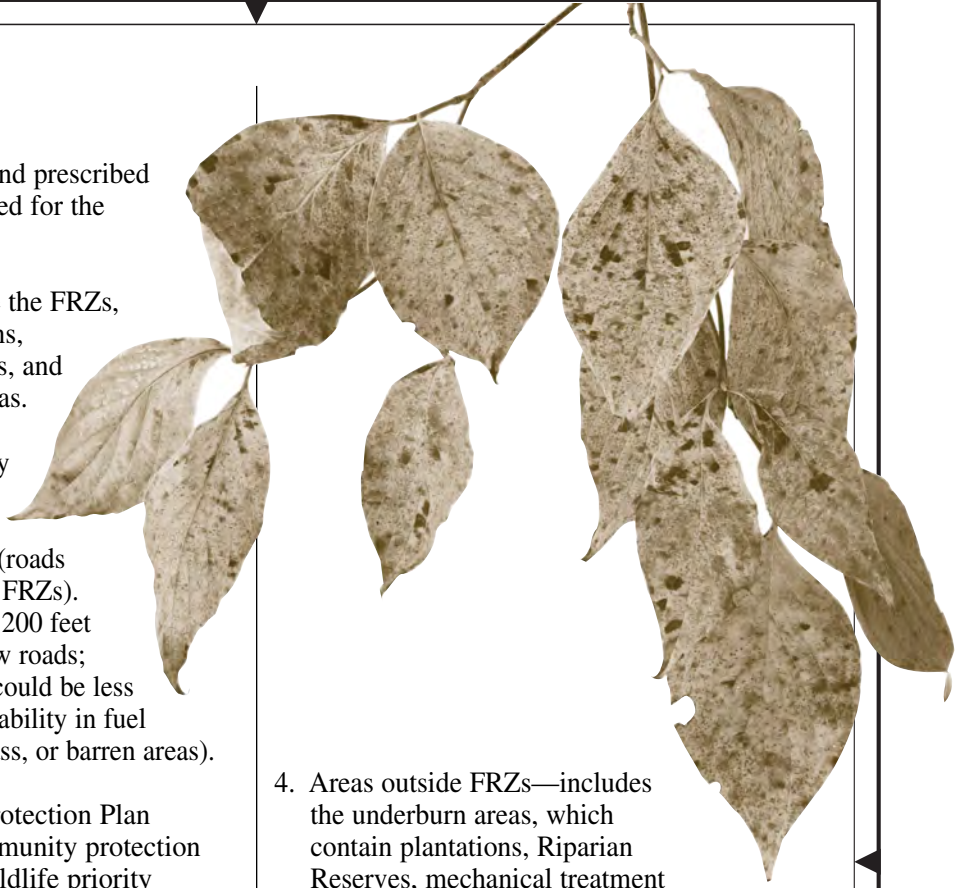
Prescribed fire would be used to reduce hazardous fuels and interrupt the horizontal, and sometimes vertical, continuity of flammable materials on the forest floor.

- *Pile burning*—naturally occurring fuels and thinning residues (branches and limbs) would be piled and burned.
- *Underburning*—a prescribed burn under an existing canopy of trees (hardwoods or conifers) would be designed to reduce excess live and dead vegetation and scorch to kill vegetation to reduce ladder fuel conditions. Firelines would be constructed by mechanical or manual treatment methods.

Treatment Locations

The mechanical, manual, and prescribed burn treatments are proposed for the following locations:

1. Along ridges—these are the FRZs, which contain plantations, Riparian Reserves, roads, and habitat development areas.
2. Along roads—emergency access routes, open National Forest System roads, and county roads (roads occur inside and outside FRZs). Treatments would occur 200 feet above and 200 feet below roads; some areas along roads could be less than 200 feet due to variability in fuel types (such as brush, grass, or barren areas).
3. Community Wildfire Protection Plan and other fire plan/community protection areas, U.S. Fish and Wildlife priority protection areas, and northern spotted owl activity centers.
4. Areas outside FRZs—includes the underburn areas, which contain plantations, Riparian Reserves, mechanical treatment areas and roads, and owl habitat development areas.



Summary of the Eddy LSR Project Schedule

Fall, 2007

- Citizen, tribal, and agency collaboration activities
- Preparation of the Fireshed Analysis for the Eddy Project Area
- Development of the Preliminary Proposed Action based comments and suggestions received during ongoing collaboration efforts
- Field analysis by the contractor ID Team

Early Spring, 2008

- Official NEPA scoping
- Forest Service and contractor ID Team review and respond to citizen, tribal, and agency scoping comments on the Proposed Action

Spring and Summer, 2008

- Preparation of Final Proposed Action
- Additional analysis by the contractor ID Team

Late Summer Early Fall, 2008

- Preparation of the Eddy LSR Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- Public comment period on the draft EIS
- Contractor ID Team and Forest Service review public comments, prepare responses to comments, incorporate comments to create the final EIS

Winter-Early Spring, 2009

- Preparation of the final EIS
- Issuance of Forest Service Record of Decision on the Eddy LSR Project



We Want to Hear From You

Dates:

Comments concerning the scope of the EIS analysis must be mailed within 30 days of publication of the Notice of Intent in the Federal Register. The draft EIS is expected in late fall of 2008, and the final EIS and Forest Service Record of Decision are expected in spring of 2009.

Addresses:

Send written comments to
RED, Inc. Communications
P.O. Box 3067
Idaho Falls, ID, 83403
ATTN: Eddy Gulch LSR Project.

The address for emailing comments is eddylsr@redinc.com. The project website is <http://www.eddylsrproject.com>.

For further information:

Visit the project website
at <http://www.eddylsrproject.com>

or contact

Ray Haupt
Scott and Salmon River District Ranger
Klamath National Forest
11263 N. Highway 3
Fort Jones, CA 96032
or 530.468.5351



The Eddy LSR Project

c/o RED, Inc. Communications
P.O. Box 3067
Idaho Falls, ID 83403
208-528-0051 Ext. 201



United States
Department
of Agriculture

Klamath
National Forest

Pacific
Southwest
Region