

Business & Ag

BLM does Juniper lop and lay project in Baker County

BY TODD ARRIOLA
Todd@TheBakerCountyPress.com

Fuels Specialist Scott English, of the Vale Bureau of Land Management (BLM)/Baker Resource Area, spoke about the recent thinning projects in the Rooster Comb, Pedro Mountain, and Mormon Basin areas west of Bridgeport by Medford-based contractor Summitt Forests, Inc., aimed at reducing juniper expansion.

As a ten-year project so far (planning started in 2006), with ten more years' worth of work possible (pending funding), the overall goal is to "... help maintain range land, restore plant communities, and improve wildlife habitat diversity, including elk, antelope, deer, and birds," English said.

Around 3,700 acres' worth of cutting and hand piling in the Rooster Comb area was completed in June, after about four weeks of work, that

involved three crews of between 10 and 20 people each, from Summitt, he said. Cutting and hand piling by a crew of 20 will continue in the Mormon Basin area for another one to two weeks, with around 2,700 acres as the goal there.

The cost to taxpayers was not available at the time of print.

Future effort includes machine piling, and eventually, burning the piled juniper this fall, English said. He explained that reducing juniper expansion means eliminating it all. "You get rid of all of the juniper; we're not saving any. It's considered a weed tree. A tree can suck up to 30 to 40 gallons of water a day, and it will crowd out the pine..." he said.

He explained that with advancements in the suppression of wildfires, more of the landscape is saved, including juniper, and that the goal is restoration.

"The overall goal is to get it back to what it was, before we were here...We've changed the landscape, and juniper is crowding... Eventually, it will crowd out the sage brush, and eventually, it will overtake grasses...When you have a pure juniper stand, there's nothing in there..." for deer, elk, and other animals to eat, he said.

English said it would be impossible to treat every single acre with juniper issues, since there are too many factors affecting that ideal goal, but there is some good news for community members: firewood cutting opportunities, possible once fire restrictions are lifted. "We'd rather have them use it for that," he said. "If there were someone who could take it off our hands, and who could use it for whatever (if there was a market)," he said that would be the ideal situation. "We would sell it super cheap...A lot of it's right next to the road."

Summitt was awarded a four-year, local IDIQ (Indefinite-Delivery/Indefinite-Quantity) contract, having the lowest bid. The contract is currently in its third year, English said. Summitt, in operation throughout the western U.S. for over 30 years, has completed thousands of forestry contracts for government agencies, as well as private land owners.

Federal and State government agencies are its largest clients, with contracts worth millions of dollars completed yearly with those agencies, according to the company.

"If we have enough funding for ten years straight, we've got enough work for ten years straight...That's what's frustrating; we never know what our funding's going to be," English said, emphasizing the difficulty in predicting what funding may be available, year to year, or even within the same year.

Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision call held for public

BY TODD ARRIOLA
Todd@TheBakerCountyPress.com

On Wednesday, July 13, 2016, 5:30 p.m., representatives of the United States Forest Service (USFS) held a conference call, in order to update the public, regarding the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision (BMFPR). The update included discussion of four main topics covered in the BMFPR Team's latest newsletter, published in June: Recommended Wilderness, Backcountry Areas, Wildlife Corridors, and Designated Routes.

BMFPR Team member and Public Affairs Officer Peter Fargo acted as facilitator for the call, and he explained that, because of the possibility of a total of 250 listeners, the Team decided it would be easier to hold a one-way call, though it would still be interactive, as listeners could submit questions live via email. Questions and concerns from the public were also submitted beforehand to the Team.

The rest of the representatives were introduced: Malheur National Forest Supervisor Steve Beverlin, BMFPR Team Leader Sabrina Stadler, BMFPR Team Recreation Planner Dennis Doherty, and Malheur National Forest Public Affairs Specialist Mike Stearly.

Fargo explained the conference call process, and he said that further calls and newsletters are planned, in order to update the public. There are no final decisions yet, he said, which was also stated in the June newsletter.

Stadler provided an update on the status of the BMFPR. She said that within the next few months, the draft Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) should be ready for the Regional Office to review, followed by public review, which may possibly be early next

year.

Fargo asked a Stadler a question, submitted from a member of the public: "Will the public have a opportunity to review the two, new Alternatives, that we announced in the April newsletter?" Stadler responded that currently, there will be an opportunity to object to what is seen in the Alternatives, plus a chance to object to material not already in the Alternatives.

Beverlin discussed the major points of the June newsletter, as he explained that it echoed details from the April newsletter, that the Team was analyzing two, new Alternatives in the EIS, based on public comment, issues, and concerns. As pointed out in the newsletter, he said, after consideration of public comments regarding the Vinegar Hill/Indian Rock Scenic Area, USFS staff reevaluated the area, and found that it had some conflicting uses, and it didn't meet all of the criteria for Recommended Wilderness. In particular, the existence of mining claims was noted, in addition to significant over-the-snow use.

He discussed the next topic, Backcountry Areas, explaining that there are two different types in the EIS, motorized, and non-motorized, and generally, the areas overlap with Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRA). Beverlin said that generally, the USFS does not have the ability to change the IRA boundaries, though the USFS can adjust the boundaries of Backcountry Areas, to better align with IRA boundaries. According to the newsletter, public comment caused the USFS to recommend the following: to align the boundaries of the Backcountry Areas with the IRAs, as much as possible; and to fix mapping errors between the motorized, and non-

motorized portions of the Backcountry Areas, to better fit existing uses, roads, and motorized trails.

Beverlin said there were some Wildlife Corridors identified in the Plan, for the Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests, and none were identified for the Malheur National Forest, and after consideration, the Team isn't recommending including Wildlife Corridors in the new Alternatives (they'll remain in the existing Alternatives, he said). This issue can be addressed on a project-by-project basis, according to the USFS.

In discussing what Beverlin called a "somewhat controversial" topic, Designated Routes, he said that Travel Management planning has not been completed for either the Wallowa-Whitman, or the Malheur National Forests, regarding Subpart B analysis (designation of roads, trails, and areas for motorized use). He said that the term "designated routes" was removed from the Plans for both the aforementioned National Forests, while the USFS is stating that it is required to manage all roads, trails, and areas consistent with national laws, policies, and regulations.

While he discussed the major topics, Beverlin noted to listeners the different Management Area designations used: Congressionally Designated Wilderness Area (1A); Recommended Wilderness Area (1B); Wilderness Study Area (1C); Wild and Scenic River (Included Designated, Eligible, and Suitable Rivers) (2A); Research Natural Area (2B); Botanical Area (2C); Geological Area (2D); Historical Area (2E); Scenic Byway and All-American Road (2F); Nationally Designated Trail (2G); Scenic Area (2H); Starkey Experimental Forest and Range (2I); Municipal

Watershed (2J); Backcountry (non-motorized) (3A); Backcountry (motorized) (3B); Wildlife Corridor (3C); General Forest (4A); Riparian Management Area (4B); and Developed Site, Administrative Area (5).

Fargo began a public Q&A session, with previously submitted questions, and live questions submitted via email. Among the questions asked were the following:

"Can the Forest Service preserve large areas for non-motorized use, to provide quiet, natural spaces, and limit impacts to the quality of hunting, camping, hiking, fishing, etc.?" Doherty said that yes, the USFS can do this, and he elaborated on the subject, providing some examples.

"Why are some Backcountry Areas designated as motorized, whereas, others are designated as non-motorized?" Doherty said that there is a distinction between the two, that the USFS recognizes Backcountry Areas and IRAs have overlapping boundaries, and that the USFS recognizes the existing uses.

"Can the Forest Service create more wilderness areas, including Wildlife Corridors, to create refugia, for climate-challenged resources?" Stadler said the USFS can't create a Wilderness area, but it can recommend one to Congress, to designate. She said that the current Wilderness areas in the Blue Mountains, coupled with the IRAs, are treated differently than other areas, i.e., there wouldn't be as much timber harvest, or road-building activity, which results in more landscape-level protection.

SEE BMFPR CALL
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— WEEKLY HAY REPORT —

Friday, July 15, 2016 — Eastern Oregon

Prices trended generally steady compared to week ago prices. Most demand lays with the retail/stable hay. Many hay producers are selling or have already sold most of their first cutting hay, and are working on second cutting resulting in higher volumes of hay moving.

| Tons | Price Range | Wtd Avg |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| Alfalfa — Large Square Premium | 250 155.00-155.00 | 155.00 |
| Alfalfa — Large Square Fair | 300 100.00-100.00 | 100.00 |
| Alfalfa—Small Square Fair | 75 95.00-95.00 | 95.00 |
| Timothy Grass — Large Square Premium | 500 185.00-185.00 | 185.00 |

USDA Market News Service—AMS.USDA.gov

— CATTLE MARKET REPORT —

Wednesday, July 13, 2016

Vale, Oregon

Cattle sold through the auction: 453

Steer Calves

| | | |
|----------|----------------------|------------|
| 300-400# | Bulk N/A | Top N/A |
| 400-500# | Bulk 142.00 - 148.00 | Top 155.00 |
| 500-600# | Bulk 130.00 - 138.00 | Top 145.00 |

Heifer Calves

| | | |
|----------|----------------------|------------|
| 300-400# | Bulk N/A | Top N/A |
| 400-500# | Bulk 121.00 - 128.00 | Top 132.00 |
| 500-600# | Bulk 118.00 - 125.00 | Top 131.50 |

Yearling Steers

| | | |
|------------|----------------------|------------|
| 600-700# | Bulk 122.00 - 130.00 | Top 135.00 |
| 700-800# | Bulk 121.00 - 128.00 | Top 130.00 |
| 800-900# | Bulk 120.00 - 123.00 | Top 125.00 |
| 900-1,000# | Bulk N/A | Top N/A |

Yearling Heifers

| | | |
|------------|----------------------|------------|
| 600-700# | Bulk 115.00 - 122.00 | Top 128.00 |
| 700-800# | Bulk 112.00 - 125.00 | Top 127.50 |
| 800-900# | Bulk N/A | Top N/A |
| 900-1,000# | Bulk N/A | Top N/A |

| | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Thin Shelly Cows | 52.00 - 60.00 |
| Butcher Cows | 75.00 - 82.00 |
| Butcher Bulls | 80.00 - 86.00 |
| Older B.M. | 1000.00 - 1250.00 |
| Hfretts. | 80.00 - 90.00 |
| Stock Cows Young | 1250.00 - 1460.00 |

ProducersLivestock.com
541-473-3136

— LOG PRICE REPORT —

Price per 1,000 board feet: Northeast Oregon

Currently the local log market is flooded with fire salvage logs. The log buyer for Malheur Lumber Co. stated they have all the logs they need under contract and are not accepting any new purchases. BCC/LLC of La Grande has receive so many burned fire salvage logs they are no longer accepting logs at the La Grande log yard. Any additional pine logs have to be delivered to the Elgin Log yard cut in plywood lengths and to a 8 inch top. For these pine logs cut in plywood lengths, BCC is offering \$280.00/mbf. They are also paying \$420.00/mbf for Doug Fir & Western Larch. For White Fir they are offering \$325.00/mbf. At the Pilot Rock Saw Mill BCC is offering \$360.00/mbf for a 12 to 15 inch top, for 16 to 19 inch top \$400.00/mbf & offering \$425.00/mbf for 20 inch plus top

Courtesy of Arvid Andersen,
Andersen Forestry Consulting

— PRECIOUS METALS REPORT —

Price per ounce, USD

Gold: \$1,316.70

Silver: \$19.54

Platinum: \$1087.25

Palladium: \$674.50

Bloomberg.com

— AG COMMODITIES —

Corn: \$344.25/bu/USD

Wheat: \$413.00/bu/USD

Soybeans: \$1099.50/bu/USD

Oats: \$202.00/bu/USD

Rough Rice: \$10.81/cwt/USD

Canola: \$463.40 CAD/mwt

Live Cattle: \$108.80/lb./USD

Feeder Cattle: \$138.63/lb./USD

Lean Hogs: \$63.88/lb./USD

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