IVM-RL SELECTED ALTERNATIVE OVERVIEW

Integrated Vegetation Management for Resilient Lands (IVM-RL) (EA Ch.1 & 2)

Purpose and Need is to promote and develop:

- Safe and effective wildfire response opportunities and to reduce wildland fire risk to Highly Valued Resources and Assets (HVRAs)
- Fire and disturbance resilient lands and fire resistant stands
- Habitat for Special Status Species and unique native plant communities

The BLM has approved a programmatic Decision Record for a modified Alternative C as the "Selected Alternative," which includes prescriptive constraints based on Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) nesting-roosting habitat, proximity to communities, vegetation type and topographic position, and modified to allow temporary road construction, only. The Selected Alternative consists of a program of work broadly referred to as Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) to meet the purposes above that would be performed by the BLM over a 10-year period. Implementation of the IVM program of work will contribute toward creating safe and effective fire management opportunities to limit large fire growth, reducing the risk of important habitat loss and degradation, and creating vegetation conditions resilient to disturbance. Projects could include a combination of activities including small diameter thinning, commercial thinning, group selection harvest, individual tree selection harvest, pile burning, understory burning, broadcast burning, jackpot burning, pruning, or thinning of shrubs. **The IVM-RL DR *does not* authorize specific projects or vegetation/surface disturbing activities.** The IVM Treatment Area (685,184 acres) includes all BLM-administered lands within the Medford District evaluated under this EA among all Alternatives. The specific areas where treatments may occur over the 10-year lifetime of this EA are confined by the prescriptive constraints of the selected Alternative (e.g. "Eligible Footprint"), consistent with the parameters in Appendix 1 of the IVM-RL EA.

Management Actions and Maximum Implementation Authorized *(EA. Ch.1)*

Management Action	Maximum Annual Implementation	Percent of Treatment Area	Maximum 10-year Implementation	Percent of Treatment Area
Prescribed Fire	7,500 acres	1.1%	70,000 acres	10.2%
Small-diameter Thinning	6,500 acres	1.0%	60,000 acres	8.7%
Commercial Thinning/Selection Harvest	4,000 acres	0.6%	20,000 acres	2.9%
Temporary Road Construction	10 miles	N/A	90 miles	N/A

Where could future actions happen?
(EA Ch.1, Appendix 1)

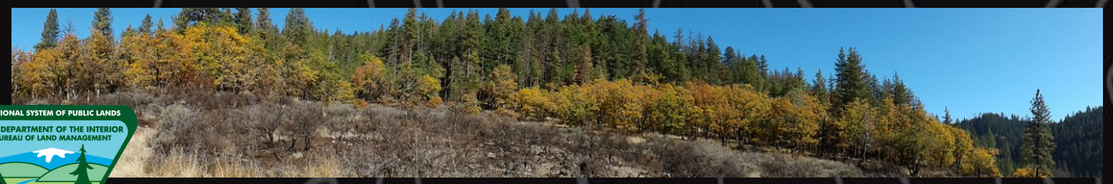
- No Actions authorized in: Cascade Siskiyou National Monument, Wild and Scenic Rivers, or Congressional Reserves
- Small diameter thinning and prescribed fire authorized in all IVM-RL Treatment Area Land Use Allocations (LUAs)
- Commercial thinning and selection harvest only authorized in Late Successional Reserve, suitable District DDR-TPCC, or Riparian Reserve LUAs within the IVM-RL Treatment Area

How does *programmatic* NEPA work?

⇒ Programmatic analysis of environmental impacts is conducted (IVM-RL EA)
⇒ A Programmatic Decision is released (IVM-RL March 2, 2022)
⇒ A site-specific project is developed – this can take many years
⇒ BLM evaluates projects to determine consistency with the IVM-RL Decision and EA

What will the public involvement process be for projects?

For every project with commercial actions, there will be an opportunity for public involvement
BLM Field Managers may decide (for any treatment actions) to engage in additional public involvement, such as, public comment periods, meetings, field trips, etc.



https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/123406/570
https://www.blm.gov/programs/planning-and-nepa/plans-in-development/oregon-washington/ivm

Creating Heterogeneity

Skips — Portions (at least 10%) of stands would be left untreated to increase variability of forest conditions, maintain nesting- roosting habitat in LSR, and to create desirable ecological conditions.

Openings — In portions (up to 25%) of stands, trees would be harvested to create group selection or modified (with large tree retention) openings of variable size for a variety of purposes not limited to:
●regenerate fire adapted species ●increase heterogeneity/ layering ●disrupt fuel profiles and create variability in litter fall and surface fuel accumulations ●decrease competition in insect and disease patches and low vigor forested areas

Opening Size (Acres)	Description of opening type and purpose
0.1 — 2.0	Group selection opening or modified w/large tree retention
2.1 — 2.5	Modified opening w/large tree retention for pine regeneration
2.5 — 4.0	Modified opening w/large tree retention for areas of insect/ disease infestation or very low vigor area

IVM-RL Objectives

- Improve landscape and stand-level spatial heterogeneity (diversity)
- Promote the development and retention of large trees, including hardwoods
- Develop or maintain diverse stands of drought tolerant and fire resistant conifers, hardwoods, and a mixture of shrubs and other native species
- Promote or enhance the development of stand-level structural complexity
- Maintain and create skips & openings to promote spatial heterogeneity and fire-adapted plant communities
- Maintain or restore natural processes, native species composition, and vegetation structure in natural plant communities
- Speed the development of northern spotted owl (NSO) nesting-roosting habitat or improve the quality of northern spotted owl nesting-roosting habitat
- Maintain NSO nesting-roosting habitat function (including key elements) at the stand-level.
- Create conditions favorable for the initiation, creation, and retention of snags, down wood, and large vigorous hardwoods
- Restore fuel loading and arrangement and species composition to levels characteristic of low and mixed severity fire regimes
- Decrease fuel continuity to reduce risk of large-scale, high severity wildfire
- Protect and repair degraded meadows, grasslands, and other open plant communities
- Apply prescribed fire to modify fuel profiles, reduce potential wildfire severity and behavior, emulate natural processes, stimulate native fire-dependent species, and enhance culturally significant plant populations.

Large Tree Culturing

- Competing trees adjacent to legacy trees (i.e., conifer and hardwood species) would be removed.
- Clumps of fire tolerant legacy/relic trees with interlocking crowns would be retained.
- Adjacent fuels would be removed to reduce risk of fire related mortality.
- All conifer trees (pine and Douglas fir > 36 inches DBH that were established prior to 1850) and hardwoods >24 inches DBH would be retained
- In non-conifer plant communities Retain large conifers and hardwoods (often >24 inches DBH).

Example current condition

Example current condition

Example post-treatment condition

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Conifer Forest (EA Appendix 1)

Tree density targets for commercial thinning prescriptions vary by current NSO habitat conditions, the potential for developing future NSO nesting-roosting habitat, proximity to Communities at Risk from wildfire, and by moist and dry forest types (EA Appendix 1, Table 32, p.106). Beyond a quarter mile from Communities at Risk and outside of NSO nesting-roosting habitat, commercial treatments would vary to create a range of open and closed conditions, depending on forest type and abiotic factors (such as topographic or slope position and aspect).

Before Ladder Fuel Thinning

After Ladder Fuel Thinning

Example current forest condition

Example post-thinning condition

- No commercial thinning or selection harvest would occur within the Harvest Land Base, DDR-ACEC, DDR TPCC Non-Suitable Withdrawn.
- No commercial treatments would occur in NSO nesting-roosting habitat in old, dense forest (late-seral closed) in landscape locations that support habitat persistence or in older structurally complex forest, which would be protected
- Incidental take of NSO territorial pairs or resident singles would not occur from commercial harvest
- Individual trees with full crowns (>30% crown ratio) are preferred for retention
- Stand level variability would be increased by clustering leave trees.
- Trees competing with legacy trees and healthy shade-intolerant trees would be targeted for removal
- A proportion of the dominant (largest) cohort in the stand would be retained
- Small diameter thinning (including ladder fuel reduction) would generally target removal of trees and shrubs less than 8 inches diameter, but may remove trees up to 12 inches in diameter

Chaparral and Oak Chaparral — (EA Appendix 1)

- Thin shrubs to reduce continuous fuel profiles in areas that pose a fire hazard to homes, communities, or large oaks and pine, and to promote varied age structure and reclaim/maintain grassy patches and openings in order to promote habitat for special status plants and native plant habitats.
- Retain a portion of chaparral in variable sized (up to eight acres) skips toward the interior of units as untreated.
- Aggregate smaller untreated chaparral patches (skips) within close proximity to one another.
- Retain live shrubs >12 inches diameter at base.

Example current condition

Example post-treatment condition

Example post-treatment condition

Meadows & Grasslands — (EA Appendix 1)

- Thin to remove young conifers (seedlings up to 60 years) in and around grasslands.
- Remove a portion of decadent shrubs when present, to allow regeneration of browse species.
- Rehabilitate tire tracks or resource damage created by unauthorized use by ripping or blading and seeding with native species.
- Block or protect areas with structures (i.e. fences, boulders, boardwalks etc.) to protect vegetation as needed from damage by vehicles, Off Highway Vehicle, equestrian use, etc.

Example current condition

Example meadow restoration fire

Implementation Activities (EA Appendix 1)

Forest Product Removal — Generally, on slopes < 35 percent, saw logs and/or woody biomass created from thinning operations would be cut, skidded, hauled or chipped to landings or roadsides. On slopes ranging from 35 to 50 percent, product removal would be completed with cable or helicopter yarding or with specialized ground-based equipment (machines specifically designed to operate on slopes >35 percent).

Example ground based removal

Temporary Roads & Landings — Temporary roads constructed to allow operators access to treatment units where no previous roads exist would be located on stable areas such as ridges, stable benches, and gentle to moderate slopes, where topography allows. After use, temporary roads would be decommissioned.

Prescribed Fire — Prescribed fire would be applied in compliance with Fire Management Plans and National and State policy requirements and used to modify fuel profiles (reduce surface, ladder, and activity fuels and raise canopy base heights) to reduce potential wildfire severity and behavior, emulate natural processes, stimulate native fire-dependent species (including native deciduous riparian associate tree species), and enhance culturally significant plant populations.

Example understory burning

Hand piling and burning — Woody material, such as limbs, stems, cut boles, etc. (1–6" diameter and >2ft long) will be placed in piles outside the drip lines of leave trees and away from large logs or stumps. As operationally feasible, piles will be burned during the first wet season after they have cured or dried when the risk of fire spread (scorch or mortality) to nearby residual trees and shrubs is minimized.

Understory/broadcast Burning — Planned low to moderate intensity fire that consumes surface fuels, but not the forest canopy, applied within well-defined boundaries and when weather and fuel conditions support lower fire intensities (typically late fall through spring).

Native seeding and planting — Following treatments, BLM would restore native species to disturbed sites through seeding or planting, using appropriate site-specific species, including culturally significant native plants.

Oak Woodland and Savanna — (EA Appendix 1)

- Retain and promote healthy and vigorous oaks with the broadest crowns, oaks with cavities, and large oaks.
- Maintain multiple age classes of oaks of both single- and multi-stems and foster regeneration
- Remove shrubs, conifers, and competing hardwoods within up to two times the dripline of large or vigorous oaks (dominant and co-dominant oaks).
- Remove shrubs and smaller diameter conifers from the stand to mimic a low severity fire regime fuel profile.
- In areas where conifers are natural associates within oak woodlands, retain widely spaced conifers (<10 trees/acre) of recruitment age, with special consideration for pine species
- Treat multi-stemmed oak clusters as single stems when removing encroaching vegetation.

Example current condition

Example current condition

Example post-treatment condition

Example post-treatment condi-