



United States Department of Agriculture

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**Kahler Dry Forest Restoration Project  
Draft Environmental Impact Statement**



**Forest Service**

**Umatilla  
National Forest**

**Heppner  
Ranger District**

**Project No.  
40712  
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**Kahler Dry Forest Restoration Project  
Draft Environmental Impact Statement  
Grant and Wheeler Counties, Oregon**

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**Abstract:** This analysis addresses the impacts from implementing the Kahler Dry Forest Restoration Project (Kahler Project). Action alternatives considered were the Proposed Action alternative of harvesting approximately 12,000 acres of vegetation to restore the stand to a more natural condition, reduce wildfire intensity, and provide income to the local economy, and one alternative to respond to issues related to wildlife, transportation system and treatment within Class 4 RHCA's.

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## Summary

The Umatilla National Forest proposes to restore dry upland forest conditions throughout the Alder Creek, Lower Kahler Creek, Upper Kahler Creek, Haystack Creek, and Bologna Canyon sub-watersheds through a combination of commercial thinning, non-commercial thinning, and prescribed burning within approximately 31,000 acres. The area affected by the proposal includes a dry forest ecosystem that has been converted from historic (pre-European settlement) characteristics.

Upland forests in the Kahler area need to be restored. Relatively recent damage from defoliating insects (spruce budworm and tussock moth), uncharacteristic wildfire effects associated with the 1996 Wheeler Point fire, and dense forests containing low vigor trees are symptoms of impaired forest health and deteriorating ecosystem integrity. The causes of these symptoms are related to historical changes in species composition, forest structure, and stand density. If composition, structure, and density are not moved back within their historical ranges of variation, then insect and fire problems will continue into the future. In turn, this shift has altered the availability and distribution of habitat for terrestrial wildlife species, including Forest Plan Management Indicator Species and Region 6 Sensitive Wildlife Species.

These issues led the agency to develop alternatives to the proposed action including:

▪ Alternative 1 - No Action

Major conclusions include:

- No vegetation would be treated, no roads closed, and no near-term impacts to wildlife.

▪ Alternative 2 - Preferred Alternative

Major conclusions include:

- Timber harvest affecting approximately 12,000 acres of vegetation to restore the forest to a more natural condition, reduce wildfire intensity, and provide income to the local economy.

▪ Alternative 3

Major conclusions include:

- Timber harvest affecting approximately 11,000 acres of vegetation to restore the forest to a more natural condition, and reduce wildfire intensity. This alternative was developed to respond to issues related to wildlife, management of the transportation system, and silvicultural treatment within Class 4 RHCA's.

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## Acronyms

AQI - Air Quality Index  
ATV – All Terrain Vehicle  
BA – Biological Assessment  
BE – Biological Evaluation  
BECA - Bald Eagle Consideration Area  
BEMA - Bald Eagle Management Area  
BMP – Best Management Practice  
BO – Biological Opinion  
CEQ – Council on Environmental Quality  
CFLRA - Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Act  
CFR – Code of Federal Regulations  
CVS - Current Vegetation Survey  
CWPP - County Wildfire Protection Plan  
DSC – Detrimental Soil Conditions  
DBH – diameter breast height  
DCH – Designated Critical Habitat  
DecAID - Decayed Wood Advisor  
DEIS – Draft Environmental Impact Statement  
DOG – Dedicated Old Growth  
DPS - Distinct Population Segment  
DSC – Detrimental Soil Conditions  
EFH - Essential Fish Habitat  
EIS – Environmental Impact Statement  
EGC – Effective Ground Cover  
EPA – Environmental Protection Agency  
ERU - Ecological Reporting Units  
ESA – Endangered Species Act  
FEIS – Final Environmental Impact Statement  
FMO – Fuels Management Officer  
FRCC – Fire Regime Condition Class  
FSH – Forest Service Handbook  
GHG – Green House Gas  
GIS – Geographic Information System  
GTR - Green Tree Replacement  
HEI – Habitat Effectiveness Index  
HRV – Historic Range Of Variability  
ICBEMP –Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project  
IPCC - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change  
IRA – Inventoried Roadless Area  
LOS - Late-Old Structural Stages  
LRMP – Land and Resources Management Plan  
LWD – Large Woody Debris  
MA – Management Area  
MCR - Middle Columbia River  
MIS – Management Indicator Species  
MPG - Major Population Group  
MSA - Magnuson-Stevens Act

MVUM – Motor Vehicle Use Map  
NAAQS - National Ambient Air Quality Standards  
NCT – Non-Commercial Thinning  
NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act  
NHPA - National Historic Preservation Act  
NFJD – North Fork John Day  
NFMA – National Forest Management Act  
NOI – Notice of Intent  
NFS – National Forest System  
NRM - Northern Rocky Mountain  
OFMS - Old Forest Multi-Strata  
OFSS - Old Forest Single Stratum  
OHV – Off-Highway Vehicle  
PCE - Primary Cavity Excavators  
PVG – Potential Vegetation Group  
PWA - Potential Wilderness Area  
RACR - Roadless Area Conservation Rule  
RHCA – Riparian Habitat Conservation Area  
RIM - Resource Indicator and Measure  
RMO - Riparian Management Objectives  
RNA – Research Natural Area  
ROD – Record of Decision  
ROS – Recreational Opportunity Spectrum  
SOPA – Schedule of Proposed Actions  
TES – threatened or endangered species  
UNF - Umatilla National Forest  
USDA – United States Department Of Agriculture  
USFWS – US Fish and Wildlife Service  
WEPP - Water Erosion Prediction Project  
WUI - Wildland Urban Interface



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