Grasshopper Draft Briefing

Project Location

The Grasshopper Integrated Restoration planning area is located at the center of Barlow Ranger District. It is bordered to the north by the Badger Creek Wilderness; on the east by Forest Road 4880; and to the west and south by the Rocky planning area. Threemile and Boulder Creeks are the primary subwatersheds included within the planning area, and as a whole the entire planning area lies with the White River Watershed.

The planning area is approximately 7,660 acres located within the following:

Township 3 North, Range 10 East, Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, and 10;

Township 3 North, Range 11 East, Section 30, 31, 32, 33, and 34;

Township 4 North, Range 10 East, Section 25, 26, 27, 28, 33, 34, 35, and 36; and

Township 4 North, Range 11 East, Section 2, 3, 4, 5, and 38.

Mt. Hood National Forest Plan and Northwest Forest Plan

The Grasshopper planning area is made up of several Management Areas (land use allocations) which are described in detail in the Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) as amended. Also present within the planning area are Region 6 Inventoried Roadless areas

Table 1. Mt. Hood National Forest Plan Land Use Allocations in the Grasshopper planning area.

Land Use Allocation	Approximate Acres in Planning Area (Percent)
A5 Unroaded Area	981 (13%)
A6 Semi Primitive Roaded Recreation	132 (2%)
A9 Key Site Riparian	677 (9%)
B4 Pine-Oak Habitat	180 (2%)
B5 Pileated Woodpecker/Pine Marten Habitat Area*	1250 (16%)
C1 Wood Product Emphasis	5690 (74%)
R6 Inventoried Roadless Area*	600 (8%)
Total Planning Area Acres	7,660

*Secondary land allocation that go along with other dominate land use allocation. Acreage for secondary land allocation is calculated through the dominate land allocations they are associated with.

Additionally, the Northwest Forest Plan Land Use Allocations for the planning area are Matrix, Riparian Reserves, Late Successional Reserves (LSR), Congressional Reserved, and Administratively Withdrawn. Most treatments would be proposed within Matrix areas and some may occur within riparian areas and possibly LSR. The majority of the planning area consists of Matrix lands as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Northwest Forest Plan Land Use Allocations and Region 6 Inventoried Roadless acres in the Grasshopper planning area.

Land Use Allocation	Approximate Acres in Planning Area (Percent)
Riparian Reserves	1021 (13%)
Matrix	4253 (56%)
Late Successional Reserve (LSR)	2366 (31%)
Administratively Withdrawn	20 (<1%)

Background

The eastside of the Mt. Hood National Forest falls within the Eastern Oregon Cascades physiographic province. Plant communities transition from dry ponderosa pine/oak in lower elevations to moist mixed conifer at higher elevations from east to west across the planning area.

The Forest Ecosystem Management Assessment Team (FEMAT) report recognizes that conditions in the Eastern Oregon Cascades Province differ from western provinces as fire has played a significant role in shaping the forest in the past.

Needs for Planning Area Assessment and Action (White River Watershed Analysis)

Prior to the more modern era of fire suppression, multi-scale low and mixed severity wildfires, as well as insect infestations, have regularly occurred across the Eastern Oregon Cascades Province, creating a multi-age/structured landscape of forest, underbrush and openings. Large scale, stand replacing disturbances were for less common.

As humans settled the area, large trees were removed for wood products and small fires were suppressed for public safety and management objectives. This human impact created an uncharacteristically dense and uniform forest of even-aged trees and undergrowth, which are typically vulnerable to large-scale disturbances.

Human impacts may have significantly reduced large down woody debris (LWD) and riparian cottonwood communities, and increased runoff rates and peakflows. These impacts place aquatic/riparian and infrastructure at risk of damage from erosion, instream sedimentation, and flooding throughout the subbasins.

Any plan to protect late-successional/old growth forests must include considerable attention to fire management and to the stability of forest stands (White River Watershed Analysis, G-1). Local communities are at risk of being impacted by uncontrollable fires and disturbances.

The resulting overgrown forests are:

- At increased risk of large-scale wildfire where dense undergrowth and small trees act as a ladder to carry fire to large, mature trees
- At increased risk of unnaturally severe insect and disease outbreaks
- At a loss of diversity in plant species and wildlife habitat
- Competing for limited soil nutrients and water, which causes stress and lowers resistance to insects and diseases

Objectives

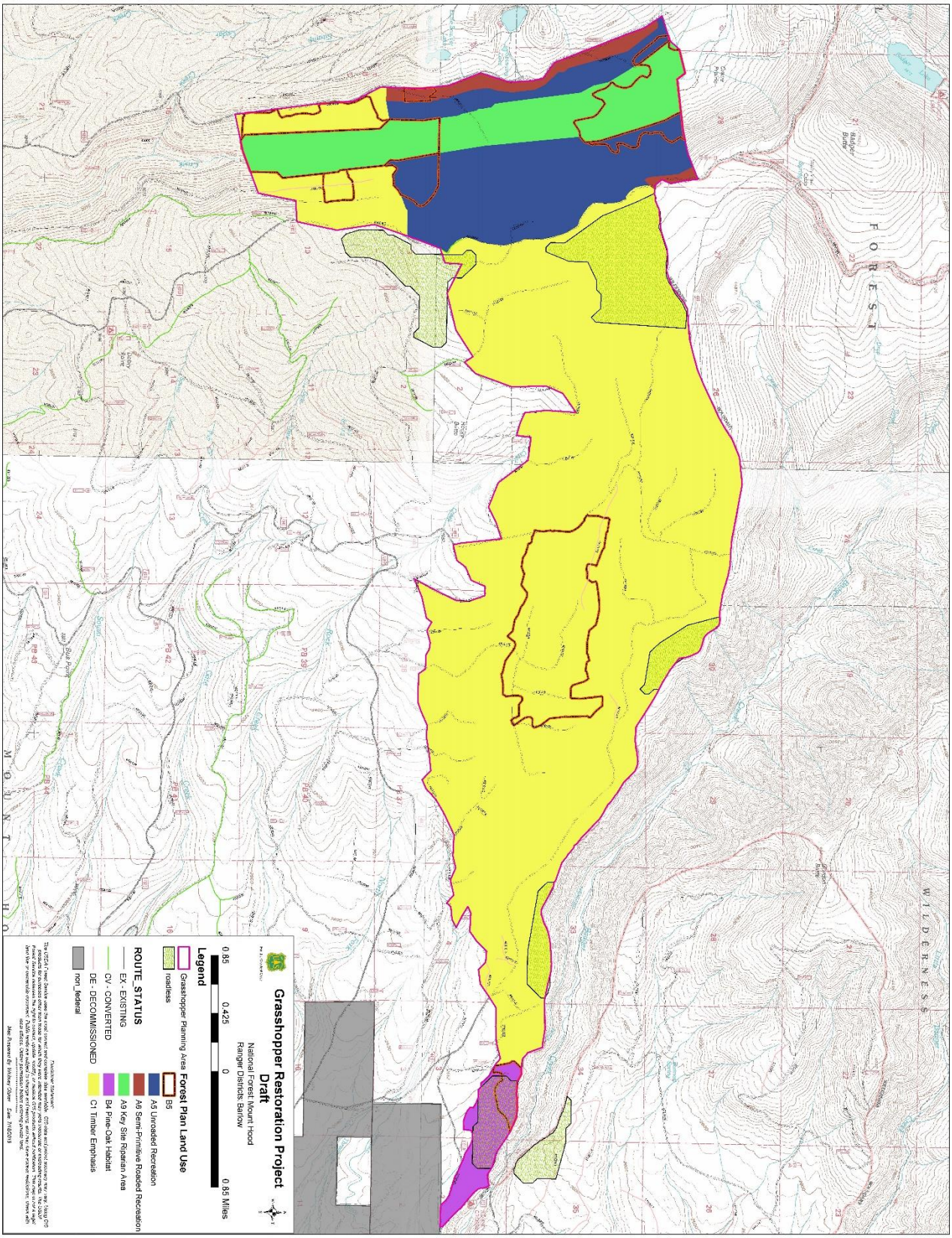
The goal of the Grasshopper Project is to implement vegetation treatments through a variety of methods across approximately 7,660 acres of the Mt. Hood National Forest, restoring the landscape to conditions more consistent with natural disturbance regimes and species compositions. Treatment types could be, but would not be limited to, sapling thinning; commercial plantation thinning; variable density thinning from above and below; and shelterwood cutting. Treatment would occur across a variety of stand types and stand ages to meet stated objectives below.

Furthermore, recommendations set forth in the White River Watershed Analysis, Mt. Hood Strategic Fuel Treatment Plan, Barlow Historic District Integrated Resource Analysis and Implementation Guide, Wasco County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, and other applicable plans and analyses will be

incorporated into the Grasshopper planning area. From a landscape perspective, the Grasshopper Project looks to:

- Reduce the fuel density of the planning area on approximately 5,000 acres to historic levels to minimize the wildfire risks to adjacent communities, firefighters and the public.
- Promote a change in tree species composition, stand densities, and structure to develop a trend toward more resilient historic vegetative conditions in upland forested stands
- Thin the forest to provide diversity and complexity of forest structure and associated wildlife habitats that are reflective of the forest's historic structure
- Take advantage of opportunities resulting from the restorative thinning treatments to offset management costs and provide products to the economy. Estimated provided product need range for between 15-20 MMBF
- Expand the variety of early seral habitat across the landscape
- Use prescribed fire to create habitat conditions that allow fire to perform its natural ecological function and more closely mimic natural processes that maintain desired forest structure and habitat
- Evaluate the current transportations system and impacts, and assess future needs for natural resource access and fire protection.

Mt. Hood National Forest Plan Land Use Allocations



Northwest Forest Plan Land Use Allocations