

**MONUMENT FIRE RECOVERY Project
and Proposed Non Significant Forest Plan Amendments
Final Environmental Impact Statement
Grant and Baker Counties, Oregon**

Lead Agency: USDA Forest Service

Responsible Official:

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Abstract: This Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) describes the effects of implementing five alternatives for recovery of National Forest System land and forest that burned in 2002 on the Malheur National Forest. The project is south of the Monument Rock Wilderness, east of the John Day valley, in northeastern Oregon. The preferred alternative (Alternative 4) would: 1.) reduce upland fuels available to future wildland fires by removing fire-killed trees through harvest on approximately 3,344 acres, 2.) increase resiliency of residual timber stands, 3.) retain trees and coarse woody debris for site protection, wildlife and soil 4.) replace a dedicated old growth and replacement old growth areas damaged by the fire, 5.) improve watershed conditions and reduce road-related impacts, and 6.) salvage economic value of dead and dying trees. Watershed improvements in the form of road maintenance, decommissioning and old skid trail rehabilitation would also take place. Trees would be planted on about 5,322 acres. Two Forest Plan amendments are proposed to re-delineate old growth area and implement the strategy to retain snags. Alternative 2 would capture greater economic value by harvesting dead/dying trees and accomplish more fuel reduction across the landscape (including riparian areas). Alternative 3 would accomplish less salvage of the economic value and fuels reduction, but offers no increase in resiliency of the live trees, and provide another strategy to retain snags for wildlife habitat. Alternative 5 would include only watershed improvement projects and tree planting. Alternative 5 would not salvage any economic value, would not increase green tree resiliency, and would not reduce fuels.

Key issues identified during scoping included, reduction of wildlife snags, effects on water quality, harvest of green trees, economic salvage opportunities, fuels reduction, and detrimental soil impacts.

Emergency Situation Determination: The Forest Supervisor is in the process of seeking a determination from the Regional Forester that an emergency situation exists in the Monument Fire Recovery Project pursuant to 36 CFR 215.10 (b). This emergency situation exists because substantial loss of economic value to the Federal Government would occur if implementation of the decision were delayed through another summer of checking. The final determination by the Regional Forester will be published in the Record of Decision, 36 CFR 215.10(d).

