

throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

### How Do We Determine Whether a Species Is Endangered or Threatened?

Section 4(a)(1) of the Act establishes that we determine whether a species is endangered or threatened based on one or more of the five following factors:

- A. The present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range;
- B. Overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes;
- C. Disease or predation;
- D. The inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; or
- E. Other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence.

Section 4(a)(1) of the Act requires that our determination be made on the basis of the best scientific and commercial data available.

### What Could Happen as a Result of This Review?

If we find that there is new information concerning the delta smelt indicating a change in classification may be warranted, we may propose a new rule that could do one of the following: (a) Reclassify the species from threatened to endangered; or (b) remove the species from the List. If we determine that a change in classification is not warranted, the delta smelt will remain on the List under its current status.

### What Will Happen if No New Information Is Submitted for the Species Under Review?

If there is no new information no changes will be made to the classification of the delta smelt under this review. However, we are not limited to reviewing listed species only during a 5-year review. We may review a species at any time, and may initiate reclassification or delisting whenever the best available scientific and commercial information indicates that such action is warranted.

### Public Solicitation of New Information

We request any new information concerning the status of the delta smelt. New information is considered to be scientific and commercial data that has become available since the time of the species' current listing determination. In particular, we are seeking information such as:

- A. Species biology including, but not limited to, population trends, distribution, abundance, demographics, and genetics;

- B. Habitat conditions including, but not limited to, amount, distribution, and suitability;

- C. Conservation measures that have been implemented that benefit the species;

- D. Threat status and trends (see five factors under heading "How do we determine whether a species is endangered or threatened?"); and

- E. Other new information, data, or corrections including, but not limited to, taxonomic or nomenclatural changes, identification of erroneous information contained in the List, and improved analytical methods.

Information submitted should be supported by documentation such as maps, bibliographic references, methods used to gather and analyze the data, and/or copies of any pertinent publications, reports, or letters by knowledgeable sources.

**Authority:** This document is published under the authority of the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: July 16, 2003.

**Matt Hogan,**

*Deputy Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[ID-075-03-1330-EO]

### Notice of Availability of Supplemental Mine and Reclamation Plan, North Rasmussen Ridge Mine, Final Environmental Impact Statement, Caribou County, ID

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to Council on Environmental Quality regulations and Bureau of Land Management policy, this notice announces the publication of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Supplemental Mine and Reclamation Plan for the North Rasmussen Ridge phosphate mine, Caribou County, Idaho.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act 102(2)(C) of 1969, the environmental impact statement was prepared to assess the impacts of implementing the Supplemental Mine and Reclamation Plan, and to disclose those impacts to the public and the lead agency decision-maker.

The environmental impact statement analyzes the potential impacts related to

the expansion of mining at Agrium's North Rasmussen Ridge Mine in southeast Idaho. The Proposed Action includes developing two mine pits and a haul road. Use of existing support and transportation systems would continue. Existing operations at the Central Rasmussen Ridge Mine were approved in a 1997 Record of Decision. This environmental analysis reviews potential impacts from selenium and updates the previous impact analyses for other resources. Alternatives to the Proposed Action are also analyzed and site-specific mitigation measures developed. The agency Preferred Alternative is the Proposed Action because it disturbs the least acreage of the action alternatives and all waste material is backfilled to the pits.

**DATES:** A 30-day availability period will start when the Environmental Protection Agency publishes its notice of availability and filing of the FEIS in the **Federal Register**. The public can comment on the FEIS during that 30-day period. Upon completion of the 30-day availability period, the BLM will consider the comments received on the FEIS and then will issue a Record of Decision (ROD).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** To request a copy of the document, please call (208) 478-6353, or write or e-mail Mr. Wendell Johnson, BLM Pocatello Field Office, 1111 North 8th Avenue, Pocatello, Idaho 83201, or e-mail [ID\\_NRasmussen\\_EIS@blm.gov](mailto:ID_NRasmussen_EIS@blm.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** A Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement was published in the **Federal Register** on May 18, 2001. A Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was published in the **Federal Register** on March 7, 2003. In addition to the Proposed Action (the Agencies Preferred Alternative) of continuing mining along the strike of the ore while backfilling previously mined-out pits, two additional alternatives are being considered—Alternative 1 is similar to the proposed alternative, but includes impermeable capped backfilled wastes—Alternative 2 is described as the No-Action Alternative and would not allow mineral extraction to occur on the approved leases. Two additional alternatives were identified and considered in comments received on the DEIS—the first additional alternative suggested in the comments included a redesign of the partially backfilled pit bottom to allow water to drain to one end of an impermeable layer lined pit. The water collected within the pit could then be pumped to adjacent wetlands. The second alternative identified from

comments in the DEIS was to mine and transport ore from Utah to supply Agrium's fertilizer plant in Idaho. The FEIS is published in an abbreviated format that responds to comments received on the DEIS.

**Phil Damon,**

*Field Office Manager.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[OR-115-2824-DB; HAG 3-0167]

#### Notice of Availability of the Timbered Rock Fire Salvage and Elk Creek Watershed Restoration Draft Environmental Impact Statement

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of the Timbered Rock Fire Salvage and Elk Creek Watershed Restoration Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with section 202 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, a DEIS has been prepared by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Medford District, to analyze possible salvage opportunities resulting from the Timbered Rock Fire and proposed restoration projects designed to move resource conditions closer to the desired future conditions identified in the Northwest Forest Plan, Elk Creek Watershed Analysis, and the South Cascades Late-Successional Reserve Assessment. The subject lands were designated Late-Successional Reserve in the Northwest Forest Plan. Restoration projects are designed to accelerate establishment or protection of late-successional forest conditions. The DEIS addresses whether to pursue salvage, levels of snags and coarse wood debris to be retained, and restoration projects on BLM-administered lands within and adjacent to the Late-Successional Reserve and Elk Creek Watershed.

**DATES:** Written comments on the DEIS will be accepted for 60 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes its Notice of Availability of the DEIS in the **Federal Register**. Oral and/or written comments may also be presented at public meetings/open houses. These public meetings/open houses will be announced at least 15 days in advance through public notices, media news releases, the Medford District Web site, and/or mailings.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments on the document should be addressed to Timbered Rock EIS, 3040 Biddle Road, Medford, Oregon, 97504; or e-mail [or110treis@or.blm.gov](mailto:or110treis@or.blm.gov). Copies will be available at the Jackson and Josephine County libraries, and on the Timbered Rock Fire Salvage and Elk Creek Watershed Restoration Web site at <http://www.or.blm.gov/Medford/TimbrokeEIS/index.htm>. Copies of the DEIS will be mailed to individuals, agencies, or companies who previously requested copies. A limited number of copies of the document will be available at the Medford District Office, 3040 Biddle Road, Medford, Oregon, 97504. If you wish to withhold your name or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety. Comment letters may be reprinted in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Jean Williams at (541) 944-6620 or John Bergin at (541) 840-9989.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The DEIS addresses alternatives for possible salvage opportunities and proposed restoration projects designed to move resource conditions closer to the desired future conditions identified in the Northwest Forest Plan, Elk Creek Watershed Analysis, and the South Cascades Late-Successional Reserve Assessment (LSRA). Two types of salvage, area and roadside, are discussed in Alternatives C through G. Alternatives A and B propose no salvage. Alternatives C through G were designed using specific guidance relating to post-fire salvage and/or Late-Successional Reserve guidelines. Research could be incorporated within each of the salvage alternatives. Included in the design of Alternative G is a study of the effects of various snag retention levels on wildlife species. Roadside salvage is designed to reduce existing or potential public safety concerns while recovering economic value of these dead trees.

Four levels of restoration projects are proposed in the six action alternatives: Focused, moderate, extensive, and focused within the fire perimeter only. The restoration varies by the scope of the projects (acres, miles of roads, etc.),

intensity of the treatments, and location of the treatments. Restoration projects are located both within the Timbered Rock Fire perimeter and outside the fire area. Most projects are located within the Elk Creek Watershed; however, a proposed eagle nest project and some fuel management zone projects are located on ridge tops within adjacent watersheds. Projects are based on recommendations presented in the Late-Successional Reserve Assessment and/or Elk Creek Watershed Analysis, or were developed to address specific issues.

Projects proposed within the fire area focus on road projects to reduce existing and potential sedimentation from the road network, fish improvement projects, development of Fuel Management Zones, and reducing future hazardous fuel conditions within existing Northern Spotted Owl activity centers. Reforestation of the burned area was assessed in the Emergency Stabilization/Rehabilitation Plan Environmental Assessment. Alternatives A and E follow these recommendations. Other approaches to reforestation are presented in Alternatives B, C, D, F, and G. A reforestation study is included which would evaluate a variety of planting densities, species, and follow-up treatments in both salvage and unsalvaged areas. This reforestation research could be incorporated into any alternative.

Alternative A (No Action, Continuation of current management) follows the Emergency Stabilization/Rehabilitation Plan as planned for the Timbered Rock Fire. No restoration projects are proposed, but rehabilitation and stabilization projects proposed in the Timbered Rock Fire Rehabilitation/Stabilization Project Environmental Assessment would be implemented.

Emphasis of Alternative B (No Salvage and Focused Restoration Emphasis) is placed on reducing non-commercial size vegetative competition in over-stocked stands with density management treatments, fuels reduction treatments, and pine habitat restoration. Areas proposed for treatment are generally those in most need of reducing competing vegetation. Within the fire perimeter, restoration would focus on high priority road work. Restoration actions would focus on non-commercial projects, designed to accelerate the growth of trees in stands to promote late-successional conditions with a variety of size classes. Species diversity would be maintained to promote connectivity between owl activity sites and develop late-successional forest characteristics.