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Comments:

I am glad the Forest Service is addressing the need for improving Blue Mountains forest health and resilience from fire and diseases. The project will benefit our forests and our local communities. Specific comments: 1) Prescribed fire is a valuable element of dry forest restoration, 2) Use the ODFW Oregon Conservation Strategy to identify important animal, fish, and plant species and habitats of the Blue Mountains Province and consider those species and habitats in the planning process, 3) Use local people and businesses for field surveys and treatment implementation, including resource specialists like wildlife biologists, 4) Develop a pre and post treatment monitoring plan to assess the results and success of forest treatments on forest health; basal area increase; size of fires; status of key fish, wildlife, and sensitive plant populations; local economic effects and employment; community perceptions, and other criteria, 5) when moving forests to natural range of variation (i.e. altering dense stands of small/medium trees), enhance forest diversity on large (watershed) and small (stand) scales while maintaining habitat connectivity.