



**ROCKY MOUNTAIN
ELK FOUNDATION**

January 28, 2021

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Lookout Mountain Ranger District
Ochoco National Forest
3160 NE 3rd Street
Prineville, Oregon 97754

E-mail: <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?Project=58081>

Subject: Scoping Comments – Mill Creek Dry Forest Restoration Project

The purpose of this letter is to state the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation's (RMEF) strong support for the Mill Creek Dry Forest Restoration Project. RMEF concurs with the stated Purpose and Need for the project and the proposed active forest management actions.

RMEF believes the Forest Service's project objective to restore the forest to its historical range of vegetation type and age classes will produce significant benefits to all early seral obligate native mammal and insect species, from big game and birds to butterflies. We are particularly pleased to note the project's intent to incorporate prescribed fire and to improve meadows and enhance hardwoods, aspen and streamside vegetation.

Comments:

1. In the silvicultural treatment prescriptions for the project, plan to provide for big game security cover and hiding cover.
2. Consider measures to mitigate against displacement of big game, particularly elk, on to adjacent private lands where their presence may be problematic.
3. Revegetate all soil disturbed in operations with a forage seed mix of native species, subsoil as necessary, e.g., landings, skid-trails, decommissioned roads.
4. Utilize the Blue Mountains Elk Nutrition and Utilization Models to analyze proposed alternative actions impact to elk and to craft action alternatives that optimize wildlife benefits to elk and the other wildlife. For information on the Models contact USDA-PNW Starkey Forest and Range Experiment Station in La Grande, Oregon, attention Mary Rowland or Mike Wisdom.
5. In all matters related to wildlife and fisheries please engage and collaborate with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife District Biologists in the agency's Prineville District Office.

Both Rocky Mountain elk and Mule deer are designated Management Indicator Species (MIS) in the Ochoco National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP)

Bill Richardson | Oregon and Washington Senior Lands Program Manager
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and the plan provides standards and guidelines for the management actions related to elk and mule deer habitat. RMEF assumes the LRMP standards and guides for elk and deer will be applied to this project.

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation is a non-profit conservation organization whose mission is to ensure the future of elk, other wildlife, their habitat, and our hunting heritage. The Elk Foundation also works to open, secure and improve public access for hunting, fishing and other recreation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide scoping comments on this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Richardson", with a stylized, flowing script.

Bill Richardson
Oregon & Washington Sr. Lands Program Manager
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation