

The Rogue Basin Cohesive Forest Restoration Strategy

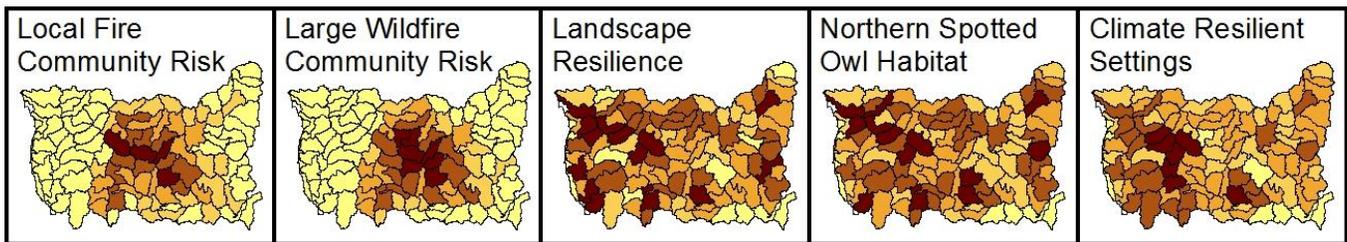


The Strategy Partners have collaboratively developed a Rogue Basin Cohesive Forest Restoration Strategy (RBS). Patterned after the Ashland Forest All-lands Restoration project, the RBS addresses wildfire risk and restoration needs to design treatment with benefits for people and nature. The RBS follows the recommendations in the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy, and promotes **diverse habitats, ecosystem services, and adaptation to climate change**.

Forests in Jeopardy Increasingly large and severe fires threaten dry forests and the security and well-being of communities. The RBS evaluates 4.2 million ac of forestland in the Rogue River Basin, all of the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest, and the Bureau of Land Management Medford District (FS/BLM). A key regional assessment¹ shows the need for thinning or low-severity fire to restore open forest on 2.1 million acres. Climate change, predicted to increase forest mortality, wildfire risk, fire size and severity, magnifies the urgency for action. Collaboration on this “all lands/all hands” program of work builds **public resolve** and **capacity** to manage risks and achieve desired outcomes at a pace and scale matched to the need.



Return on Investment The RBS strategically places diverse treatments to 1) **protect communities from local fire**, 2) **protect communities from large wildfires**, 3) **re-establish balance between open and closed forest**, 4) **protect and promote complex habitat** for Northern Spotted Owl and other species, and 5) **promote climate resilient landscapes**. The RBS provides managers and stakeholders with an **interactive model** to highlight project areas by objective and maps them (below, ranked higher [darker] to lower).

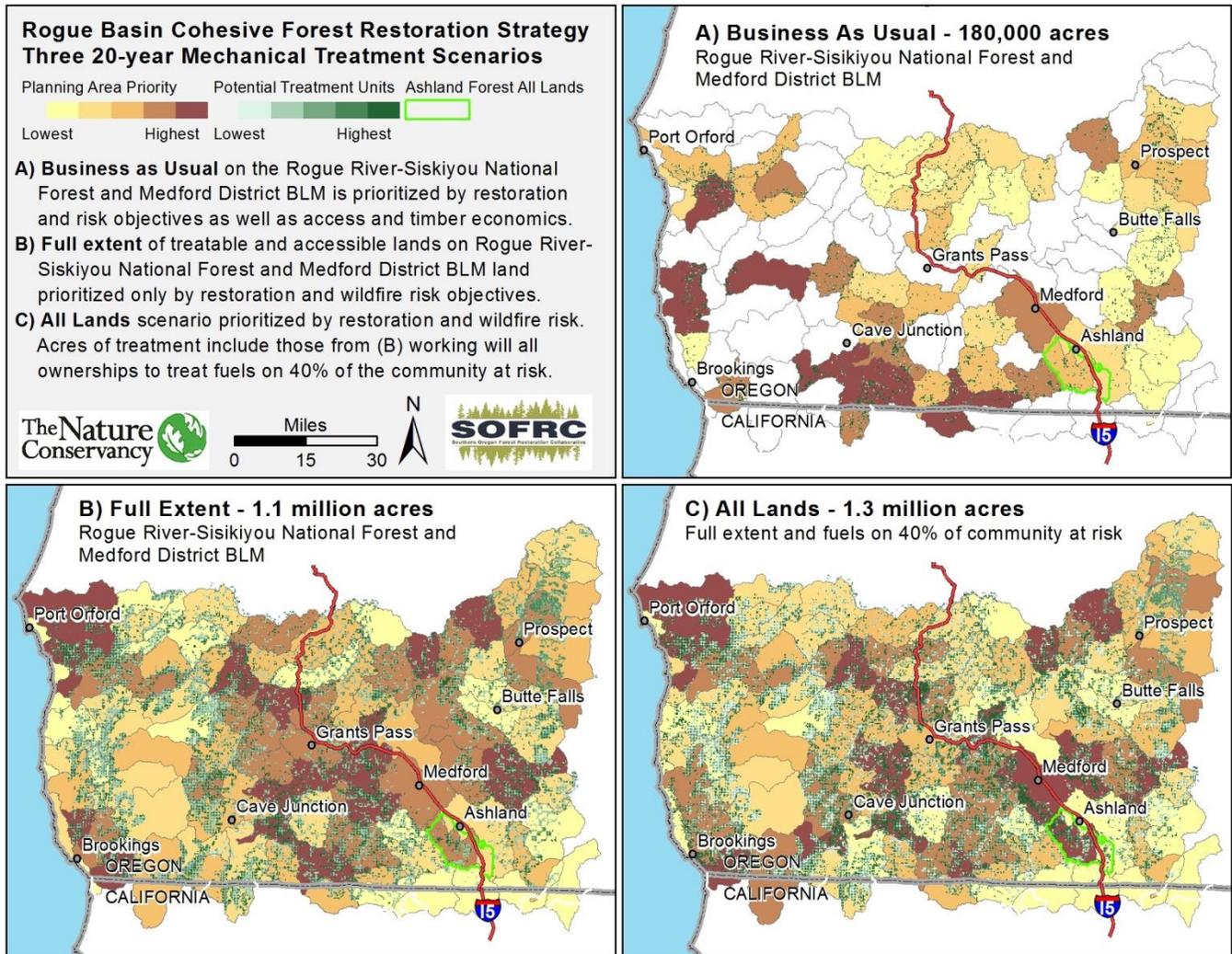


Tools The strategy predicts the acreage and economics of fuels work and restoration thinning. Sub-economical restoration thinning is needed on most of the acres but could produce byproduct timber to offset treatment costs. Additional acres of strictly non-commercial fuels reduction would also be completed. Economically viable restoration thinning on some acres could produce enough timber revenue to defray costs on some of the other acres.

¹ Haugo, R., C. Zanger, T. DeMeo, C. Ringo, K. Blankenship, M. Simpson, K. Mellen-McLean, A. Shlisky, and J. Kertis, M. Stem. 2015. A new approach to evaluate forest structure restoration needs across Oregon and Washington, USA. *Forest Ecology and Management* 335:37-50.



Wildfire Risk Reduction and Restoration The RBS starts with collaborative wildfire risk assessment, setting the stage for more effective **fire management**. Local stakeholders in workshops validated and refined fuel data for fire modeling, identified high value resources and assets and their likely wildfire responses, and weighted each value by relative importance. The RBS highlights where risks are greatest and landscape objectives are most effectively met with treatments. The strategy also **protects riparian reserves, existing Northern Spotted Owl habitat, and wilderness**. Scenarios of varied long term treatment footprints (below) compare priority areas for **A) business as usual, B) full extent** of treatable and accessible FS/BLM lands treated, or **C) All-lands** approach.



Aligned Objectives, Community Resolve, and Resources Ongoing engagement will consider stakeholder measures of strategy performance to maximize **long term return on investment**, including risk reduction, economics and finance, and habitat protection. **Collaborative plans of work**, near- and long-term, can set in motion a new paradigm of forest landscape management which **promotes climate adaptation, returns landscape resilience, reduces wildfire risk, develops and protects complex habitat, and sustains regional economic and workforce viability**.

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