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For Immediate Release **Chris Strebig (503) 808-6003**
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OSU Complies with Forest Fire Science Study Agreement; BLM Lifts Suspension

PORTLAND – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Oregon State Office Branch of Procurement has lifted the payment suspension on the joint venture agreement with Oregon State University (OSU) Department of Fisheries and Wildlife to conduct fire science research in Southwestern Oregon. OSU has adequately addressed BLM concerns regarding administrative aspects of the agreement and task order.

According to Oregon/Washington BLM State Director, Elaine Brong, "It is important to understand this was solely about fulfilling the administrative terms of an agreement – not about controlling the outcome of research. We've had a long successful partnership with OSU, and we want that to continue."

Administration of the agreement and resulting Task Orders such as the one with OSU Department of Fisheries and Wildlife is a regular business practice for the BLM. Such a review of the agreement is part of the BLM's fiduciary responsibility.

In a letter to BLM, Congressmen Walden (R-OR) and Baird (D-WA) wrote, "We understand the position in which the BLM has been placed by recent events. However, it is important that post-catastrophic research continue to be carried out in an open, non-politicized manner."

Dean of OSU College of Forestry, Dr. Hal Salwasser said, "We are pleased that BLM has restored the funding. OSU has enjoyed a long and productive relationship with the Bureau and we look forward to working with them in the future to address important issues regarding forestry and other land management issues."

The Department of the Interior and the BLM continue to make significant contributions to research and development, and technology transfer. Over the last six years the Interior Department has provided $90 million for grants to the CESU program nationwide. Recipients of the funding can include universities, NGO's and other research institutions.

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The Pacific Northwest Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit (PNW CESU) is a cooperative venture between 15 leading academic institutions in the Pacific Northwest region, one state agency and 8 Federal land management and natural resource research organizations. The overriding goal of the CESU Network is to improve the scientific base for managing federal lands by providing resource managers with high-quality scientific research, technical assistance, and education. Since beginning in October 2000, more than 150 projects have been funded through the PNW CESU Cooperative Agreement.

The BLM manages more land – 261 million surface acres – than any other Federal agency. Most of this public land is located in 12 Western States, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about $1.8 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, and cultural resources on the public lands.

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