



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Spokane District Office  
1103 N. Fancher  
Spokane Valley, Washington 99212-1275

IN REPLY REFER TO:

8300 (130) P

April 24, 2008

Dear Interested Party,

BLM has recently received a request to designate a motorized OHV route on public land in the Lakeview Ranch area near Odessa, WA. BLM is seeking comments on the proposal to help identify issues and concerns that should be considered in our analysis and decision. A full description of the proposal is attached to this letter. Information is also available on the Spokane District internet site at [www.blm.gov/or/districts/spokane/plans](http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/spokane/plans).

**BLM will accept scoping comments until May 23, 2008.** Email your written comments to [OR\\_Spokane\\_Mail@blm.gov](mailto:OR_Spokane_Mail@blm.gov), or mail them to the address in the letterhead above, attention: Steve Smith. Please include your first and last name when submitting comments by email.

Comments should identify values, land uses, or resources which could potentially be affected by the proposed action. These comments will help BLM to develop appropriate alternatives, focus our analysis on salient issues and concerns, and provide the necessary information for me to make an informed decision.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

For more information call Steve Smith at (509) 536-1219.

Sincerely,

FOR Scott Pavey  
Acting Field Manager  
Border Resource Area

Enclosures:

- 1) Scoping Notice for Lakeview Ranch Proposed OHV Route
- 2) Map

## **Scoping Notice for Lakeview Ranch Proposed OHV Route**

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### **Background:**

The Odessa Citizen's Action Committee (OCAC) has identified a route in the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered Lakeview Ranch public lands parcel, north of the town of Odessa, WA, which they would like the BLM to designate for motorized OHV use. OCAC is a non-profit motorized recreation advocacy group seeking to: 1) increase Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) recreational opportunities on the Lakeview Ranch parcel, and, 2) create an OHV-designated route in that parcel linking the town of Odessa to existing "limited" motorized use routes (no off-road travel allowed) in the north part of the Lakeview Ranch parcel.

OCAC states that a primary goal of their proposed action is to provide economic development for their town of Odessa (estimated population 900), by attracting responsible OHV enthusiast tourists. In line with this tourism development, the Town of Odessa has: 1) passed an ordinance allowing limited OHV travel within the city limits, 2) passed an ordinance dedicating a small tract of land for a new OHV trailhead, as described below, and 3) obtained Lincoln County approval to allow regulated OHV travel on Lakeview Ranch Road, a county road that would complete the link between Odessa and the north end of the BLM parcel, contingent on BLM's implementation of this proposed action. OCAC's efforts beyond this proposed action extend to trying to build a much larger OHV trails network, mostly on private land, linking a number of small rural communities within the region.

The Border Field Office, Spokane District of the Bureau of Land Management has worked with OCAC to ensure that their proposed action would comply with some Border management constraints. Those precursory guidelines included that the proposed action follow the shortest route using existing roads when possible, to complete the north-south linkage, in a manner that minimizes potential for natural resource damage and minimizes potential for conflicts between recreational OHV users and other uses (grazing and wildlife management) and other users (primarily non-motorized recreationists) within the parcel.

Currently, the Lakeview Ranch parcel is popular for a variety of recreational uses including hiking, horseback riding, picnicking and camping, upland game bird and big game hunting, OHV use in the north half of the parcel, and mountain biking. All bodies of water on this parcel, including Pacific Lake, have been dried up for a few years so fishing is no longer available. There is not sufficient data to accurately gauge how much of each type of recreational use occurs. The Spokane Resource Management Plan (RMP)(1987) limits motorized use to designated routes on BLM lands in the Lakeview Ranch area.

## **Purpose and Need:**

The purpose of this action would be to provide outdoor recreational opportunities and protect resources as required by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, BLM's National Management Strategy for Motorized Off-Highway Vehicle Use on Public Lands (National OHV Strategy) (2001), and the Spokane Resource Management Plan Record of Decision (RMP/ROD) (1987).

Section 102 of FLPMA states that it is national policy that "the public lands be managed in a manner that will protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archeological values; that, where appropriate, will preserve and protect certain public lands in their natural condition; that will provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals; and that will provide for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use."

The National OHV Strategy was designed to help BLM managers implement on-the-ground solutions to motorized OHV issues while protecting public lands and resources.

One of the general management objectives identified in the Spokane RMP/ROD is to manage public lands and keep access routes open for a variety of recreational opportunities/experiences, including both motorized and non-motorized recreation activities.

## **Description of the Proposed Action:**

The proposed action is to designate for certain types of Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use (motorcycles and four-wheelers) an approximately 8-mile route on the BLM Lakeview Ranch parcel, that creates a linear (non-loop) route linking the town of Odessa to Lakeview Ranch Road.

As detailed in the attached map, the route would combine:

- 1) approximately seven miles of existing two-track roads in the southern part of the parcel currently designated as non-motorized, plus
- 2) approximately ¼ mile of existing trail near Odessa, currently designated as non-motorized.

In addition,

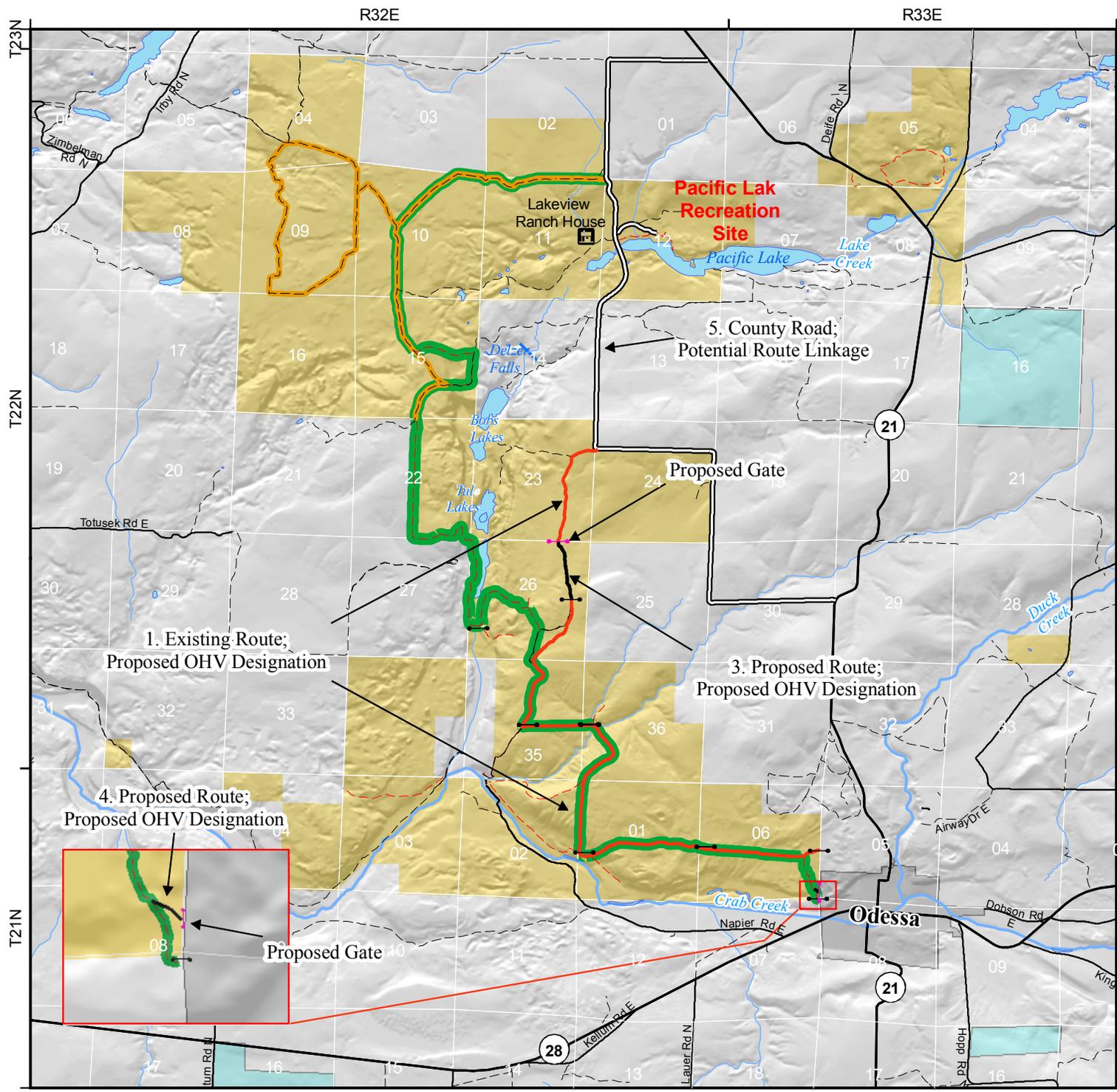
- 3) approximately ½ mile of two-track road would be created within section 26 to bridge the gap between the two existing two-track roads in that section, and
- 4) a new OHV recreation access trailhead/gate would be created slightly north of the existing (non-motorized use) recreation access trailhead/gate, and from it approximately 1/4 mile of new OHV trail would be created linking the new trailhead to the existing trail. This is proposed because there is insufficient clearance for four-wheelers to proceed via the existing recreational trail in the first approximately 1/4 mile from Odessa.

- 5) Lakeview Ranch Road (county road) provides linkage from the northern termination point of the proposed route, to approximately seven miles of existing “limited” motorized use (OHV and vehicles) two-track roads in the north part of the parcel.

### **Preliminary Issues:**

Through internal review and analysis of the proposed action, BLM has identified 11 preliminary issues that will be used to develop alternatives, focus environmental analysis, and be considered in decision rationale. BLM may refine or supplement these preliminary issues based on public scoping comments.

- 1) Because the route is not a loop, and the resulting total distance (including travel on the existing motorized-designated routes in the north half of the parcel) would still be less than a typical full day’s ride of 40 miles, some riders are likely to ignore the “limited” OHV use designation and venture off-trail, causing unacceptable impacts to the area.
- 2) Increased motorized use could threaten two federal/state listed special status species of plants that currently grow in the parcel.
- 3) Noise and traffic from motorized use in the southern part of the parcel could impact populations of a) white-tailed deer, b) a listed special status rodent species, and c) various species of Shrub-Steppe inhabiting birds.
- 4) Sage Grouse and Sharp-Tailed Grouse are being released nearby in Lincoln County by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and wildlife managers from both WDFW and BLM desire to maintain habitat for these species at the Lakeview Ranch parcel.
- 5) Cultural sites exist on, and adjacent to, the proposed route.
- 6) One of the current uses of the parcel is grazing. Grazing lessees have stated concerns about the potential for gates being left open, and livestock being harassed.
- 7) Private land owners with residences bordering the parcel have stated concerns about the potential for an increase in noise and trespass.
- 8) The potential exists for increased conflicts between OHV recreational users and non-motorized recreational users of the parcel, such as hikers, horseback riders, hunters, and mountain bikers.
- 9) The potential exists for increased soil erosion.
- 10) Additional law enforcement may be needed.
- 11) The danger of human-caused fires will increase.



# Propose OHV Route Lakeview Ranch Area

- Existing Gate
- Proposed Gate
- Existing Trail, Proposed OHV Designation
- Proposed Trail, Proposed OHV Designation
- Access Route
- State Highway
- Improved Road
- Other Road or Trail, Access as Designated
- OHV Use Limited to Designated Road
- Non-Motorized Trail
- Odessa to Pacific Lake Trail
- Lake
- Stream
- Urban Area
- WA Dept. of Natural Resources
- BLM Administered Land



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