

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT OR-07-15
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Contact: Michael Campbell
(503) 808-6031

Juniper Dunes Cooperative Agreement Reached

SPOKANE – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has announced the completion of a cooperative use and lease agreement to provide the public with more consistent access to the Juniper Dunes Wilderness Area and Juniper Forest in Franklin County northeast of the Tri-Cities, Washington.

"I appreciate the work that Franklin County, Mr. DeRuyter and the BLM have put into developing a solution," said U.S. Congressman Doc Hastings. "This agreement will increase public access to Juniper Dunes, while respecting the rights of nearby property owners."

Since the early 1960s, Juniper Dunes has been a popular regional outdoor recreation area. Its amenities include large sand dunes, designated a wilderness by Congress in 1984, important nesting areas for several species of hawks, and a large area open to off-highway vehicles.

The agreement between the BLM and local landowner Mr. Steven DeRuyter allows for authorized users, including the public, to have the right to enter onto Peterson Road for purposes of accessing the Juniper Dunes Wilderness Area and Juniper Forest. The agreement also calls for unfettered and exclusive access and use of Peterson Road, by Mr. DeRuyter, for the purpose of planting and harvesting crops and for other agricultural uses.

"This agreement really allows us to move in the right direction and break through the gridlock. It will allow for much more consistent access for adjacent private landowners, wildlife groups, equestrian organizations, off-highway vehicle users, the BLM and Franklin County," said BLM Spokane District Manager Robert Towne.

The BLM will support and assist other Federal, State and County law enforcement agencies in the performance of their normal law enforcement responsibilities on this area involving Peterson road. The agreement will also allow the BLM and Mr. DeRuyter to cooperate on the development of a plan to educate and inform the public of the location of property lines through signage, interpretive kiosks, fences, and gates.

"I am very pleased with the effort that the BLM has put forth to get all parties to the table to help resolve this long standing issue. This cooperative agreement is a really positive development," said local landowner Mr. Steve DeRuyter.

The BLM will be solely responsible for maintaining Peterson Road in good repair and condition to allow for safe travel by motor vehicles and no widening of Peterson Road will be undertaken without the express written consent of Mr. DeRuyter.



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The BLM manages more land – 258 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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