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Comment on the proposal to designate 13 areas for OHV use

I believe any proposal to extend OHV designated areas before addressing and correcting the problems existing in the current OHV areas would be bad land management – a violation of the mission that both the Bureau of Land Management and the US Forest Service were created to serve.

The problems that BLM and/or USDF law enforcement staff face in Southern Oregon would be almost overwhelming with the best of budgets and cooperation - and nobody has that today. It is without dispute that neither the BLM nor USDF has enough staff to do adequate law enforcement on the vast amount of federal land in our area. People routinely dump large loads of trash in sensitive areas with the knowledge that they will not get caught. Even worse, if another resident finds evidence in the trash pile leading to the offender, there is no staff to follow up the offense and punish the wrongdoer. The increasing damage done to the lands by various offenders are indicative of the lack of ability that both of the offices have in responding to enforcement issues.

In general OHV users are cooperative and polite. In any group, however, there is a percentage that flout the rules and ignore the rights of others. If the "ten percent" rule is applied; then 90 percent of OHV users are polite and 10 percent are rule breakers. That means if 50 OHV riders use an area there will probably be 5 out of the 50 that will climb hills, speed off trail, do spin outs, and make rooster tails around corners where it is muddy or wet. Unfortunately for the 45 conscientious riders, the damage that can be done by these 5 of outlaw users in a very short time can be catastrophic to the ecology of an area and to the safety of others. A one-hour session of mud whomping in a meadow can create such deep mud and grooves that the whole area will take years and years to recover. A small mountain creek can be wiped out as wildlife habitat with only a few minutes of determined wreckage by enthusiastic OHV vehicles. And there seems to be no way to curb this destruction.

With the lack of manpower and budget BLM and USDF officials I have spoken to readily admit they cannot contain or police the current problems created by OHV rule breakers. Nobody has spoken of a plan to create a policing force with the manpower and enforcement muscle that could do so. How then can we consider opening more area to destruction? How can we set aside more area for OHV concentrations when we are unable to patrol or control the current areas?

Because of the tremendous ecological destruction that an out of control OHV user can deliver is a very short amount of time it is absolutely imperative that an effective law enforcement policy and practice be in place and successful on the current situation before extending the area needing to be policed. Persons from the BLM, USDF, and user groups must unite to create a workable education and enforcement plan for OHV use areas. That plan should be tested on current OHV areas and then, and only then, would it be responsible land management policy to consider extending OHV territory.

Thank you

Terry Canavello


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PS I have attached a dvd of a U-Tube video posted by OHV users of their "fun" on John's Peak, There are other videos by the same "makers" of fun trips to other local areas. Please consider what you see in this video.

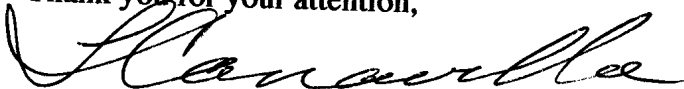
p22 I also found an article in the Jacksonville newspaper that may be pertinent.
p53 - I included some pictures I took after Christmas in the Spencer Cr. area.

Comment on the proposal to open Ferris Gulch to OHV use.

I would like to protest the opening of Ferris Gulch to OHV use for the following reasons:

- A. The topography of the area is steep. That means 1. it will be a "challenge" for motorcycles to try to run up the hills, motocross style; 2. The soil is mostly decomposed granite – when it is wet it "scoops" into ruts; 3. the ruts wash out with the amount of rain that falls. The results are impassable washouts on trails and huge rutted washouts on the mountainsides where the motorcycles have made trails.
- B. The type of soil in the area is soft and washes out easily in our wet winters. Once a rut begins washing out it continues, whether the washout begins as a man made event or a natural creek washout.
- C. There are several small creeks and springs/bogs in the area that could be irreparably harmed by OHV traffic over the top and through the middle.
- D. Based on my horseback observation of the "scat" left in the area, the Ferris Gulch area is home to a large population of bear, coyote, deer and cougar. (The cougar presence is based on the number of fresh deer legs my dog pulls from the road side.) These animals (except the coyote) do not thrive in an atmosphere of loud noise and habitat disturbance.
- E. Setting aside the currently designated area for OHV use and discouraging use by other users – hikers and horses would greatly impact the ability of local hikers and horsepeople to enjoy that entire side of the valley. The area is extremely popular with hikers and riders. There are people out to enjoy that area almost every day of the week when the weather permits.
- F. Separating mountain user groups in the Ferris Gulch area is not possible:
 1. The roads of the area chosen for OHV use interconnect at least two more popular areas for hikers and horses: the China Basin Area and the Munger Gulch Area. Both these areas are heavily used by the people of Williams, OR – the small community below Ferris Gulch. Further the roads and trails appropriate for OHV use connect by single track trails through the forest to other roads in areas not designated for use. Use by motorized vehicles on these trails could create a major safety hazard.
 2. Because of the interconnectivity of that area it will be equally impossible to contain OHV use to the area designated, motorized riders will follow the visible connecting trails into the whole surrounding area – endangering other users, eroding the single track trails into ruts and moving their noise into sensitive areas.

Thank you for your attention,



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Comment on the use of Spencer Creek for an OHV designated area.

After an effective law enforcement policy is created, and despite the fact that I live near and use Spencer Creek area for horseback activities, I must reluctantly recommend Spencer Creek as an OHV area.

The area suggested on the BLM map is relatively close to restaurants and food, yet removed from residences.

The area offers safe roads with good climbs; wonderful views of the surrounding valleys; long mileage loops; long out and back drives with great curves and several dirt roads for rutting and ruining. Many of the longer roads could be connected into loops with very little effort or destruction of the ecology. There is one 20-mile loop around the entire area; two different out and back roads with gravel pads at the ends of the roads for people to spin out on. It would offer a beautiful outdoor experience to anyone stopping long enough to look at the views – it would be a fun place to race around in if that were your treat.

This area would also be relatively easy to police. The roads and loops that circle the ridges do not loop over to any other sensitive areas used by quieter users, thus there is a chance the OHV use would be contained to the area it has been given.

Although I hate to “give away” an area where I enjoy riding my horse and walking with my children I believe that of all the areas you have marked for consideration Spencer Creek would be the safest and least sensitive for OHV use.

Thank you,



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Public Comment Form

Revising the BLM's Resource Management Plans in Western Oregon



I have segmented my comment to match the way the issues and areas were presented at the Grants Pass office. I feel this will keep my concerns clearer. Thank you

Continue on reverse

Submit Form to: Western Oregon Plan Revisions P O Box 2965 Portland OR 97208	Name: <i>Larry Canaville</i>
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	City: <i>Grants Pass</i> State: <i>OR</i> Zip: <i>97527</i>