

12385

To: BLM planning
Regards: WOPR plan, review of OHV Emphasis Areas, Jackson County,
Area



January 2008

I respectfully request that the Lake Creek Area, in total, be removed as a prospect for a BLM OHV Emphasis Area.

While I understand the BLM directive to be inclusive of all recreational activities and while the Lake Creek area currently serves as host to casual OHV use on BLM property, the designation of this entire area, or any of it's parts, as an OHV Emphasis Area is an inappropriate choice of management priorities for the following reasons:

1 – The BLM managed areas are quite checker board with privately owned working ranches and timberland as well as areas of diverse recreational use such as hiking, hunting and birding. Though 'checker board' might be a description for the entire BLM properties, in this particular case the 'other' areas include a wide range of applications, all of which are threatened by increased OHV usage.

2 – The ecological parameters include volcanic clay soil, notorious for erosion and sliding, compounded by the often steep and rugged slopes. Some of the area is snowbound in the winter which only servers to increase the activity in the lower elevations which already have much more conflict over usage with the local population. And then there is the winter habitat issues for the black tailed deer population and the Butte Creek watershed issue, concerns for this we are sure have been expressed in scientific detail by many other residents and citizen groups as well as ODFW.

3 – This area already experiences conflicts with OHV use that have been difficult to patrol and/or mediate. The remote and often rugged nature of the landscape poses difficulty in patrol and enforcement. Existing and illegal trails only serve as temptation. With the designation of an Emphasis Area one can only imagine that use will increase dramatically, and while many of the OHV operators are respectful and responsible, an increase in total numbers also means an increase in unlawful use. The unlawful behavior of OHV'ers is NOT a victimless crime. Illegal OHV use is not equivalent to running a red light, it is equivalent to robbery.

In addition, particular sections proposed in the area should be excluded for the following reasons:

Section 37S-2E

Parcels in sections 9/10 have no public access. The road that currently exists through this parcel is privately maintained.

Section 15 which also has no clear public access, only convoluted public access, surrounds a swamp/pond, which is home to much wildlife. Besides observing the

common waterfowl of geese and ducks, I have observed both Great Blue Heron and Sandhill Crane in this area.

Parcels in sections 17, 20 and 21 currently see some of the most heavy OHV use. In this area OHV'ers have paid scant heed to property lines and in some cases have blatantly trespassed causing concern for the protection of private property and owner's safety. Through this area there is access to sections 22, 27 and 15 all of which are very checkerboard but contain infrastructure for the surrounding ranches including irrigation watersheds and diversion canals. The idea that BLM could operate and manage a series of trails through these BLM managed lands, while preventing misuse by some percentage of OHV'ers seems very unrealistic and a poor choice for BLM resources. In addition, these sections are currently used by local residents for hiking and bird watching and contain pockets of pristine watershed, old artifacts and unique microclimates.

Parcels in section 27 and 35 (though most of Section 35 is currently closed) are through a primary year-round watershed area. It is just not worth the risk to open up adjacent areas to OHV use, when such an area is isolated and hard to patrol, including both very steep territory and areas of unique ecology.

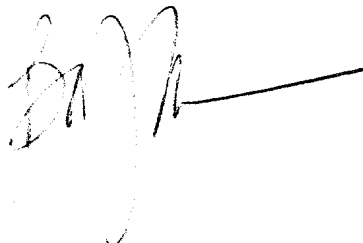
Section 23, besides being very inaccessible, contains obviously ancient man made monuments and has recently suffered from a major landslide. This area should be protected not opened up for further degradation.

Parcels in sections 29, 31, 32, 5, 33 and 3 not only are fairly checker board and have confusing access, they are remote and snowbound much of the winter which, if included in a larger area, would only serve to encourage heavier use in the lower and already abused areas (see above notes) and if made a standalone Emphasis Area, are too remote, hard to patrol, would require traveling through much more tempting ground.

Other minor sections in 13, 24, 25(both 37-1E and 37-2E) are isolated from other sections and either have no public access or are too small to be an Emphasis Area on their own.

We did try to enter comments through the 'pushpin' function of the interactive map on the WOPR website and in fact did enter several. However we have been unable to verify either the existence or the content of our comments. The experience has been frustrating.

Thank you for your consideration,
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Residential Property: 37S-2E Sections 15/16