

Owyhee County Public Lands Travel Management Plan February 2011 Newsletter



Why do We Need a Travel Management Plan?

The Omnibus Public Land Management Act (OPLMA) of 2009 requires that BLM complete a travel management plan (TMP) for public land in Owyhee County. The portion of OPLMA affecting Owyhee County resulted from a local grass roots initiative that included ranchers, recreationists, conservationists, and Tribal and local government.

The TMP will cover about 4,375 square miles of public land in Owyhee County. Through this process, BLM will provide responsible, sustainable access.

If BLM doesn't properly manage routes and access, valuable cultural and natural resources may be seriously impacted or lost.

Developing the TMP is not an exercise in closing access.

It's about finding out where you want to go and determining the most appropriate way to get there. Part of this process involves compiling an inventory of routes that will be used to develop alternatives for managing motorized transportation on public lands in Owyhee County. While we expect to maintain access to most existing destinations, some routes may be closed or restricted due to ongoing

resource degradation, route duplication, and other issues.

The Treasure Valley hosts a current population of almost 600,000 people (2009 Census) and between 2000 and 2009, the population of Boise grew 28%. As this growing population continues to use public lands for motorized off-highway travel, the Owyhee County public land resources will be impacted at a corresponding rate.

The TMP process will provide continued access to public lands, while at the same time, preventing or mitigating environmental damage from inappropriate use.

What Has Happened so Far in the Process?

In November 2010, the BLM Boise District began a Travel Management Planning process for Owyhee County.

In December 2010, BLM developed a set of maps for the website and updated them

BLM will provide responsible and sustainable access to the nearly 4400 square miles of public lands in Owyhee County.

based on feedback from local organizations. Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation then solicited comments from all OHV owners registered in Idaho (about 27,000 people).

Your Participation is Important to Us

BLM is grateful to everyone who has attended meetings and those who continue to correspond with us via letter, email, or phone. We have received over 250 emails, about 50 phone calls, over 20 letters, and more than 100 comments during public meetings as part of this process. Even if we haven't



replied to you specifically, we've captured your comments and will use them when we begin to develop alternatives. This effort would not be successful or effective without your participation.

We will continue to gather information about your access needs and resource concerns in Owyhee County. It is important that we know the specific locales (latitude/longitude, Township/Range, or specific place names) and points of interest that are of concern to you.

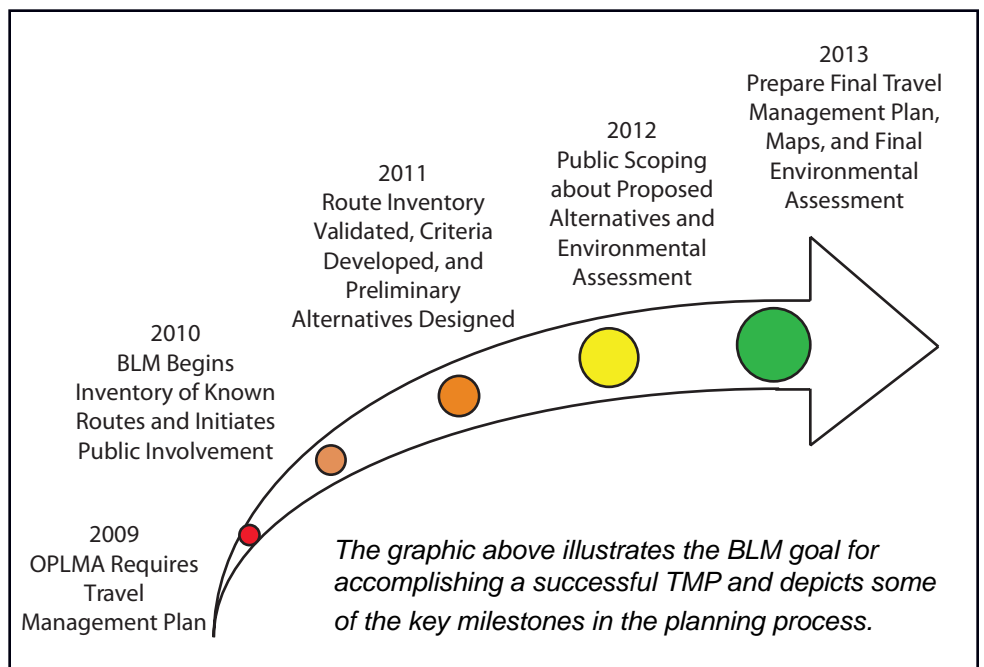
We look forward to your continued participation in this process. If you have not yet taken the opportunity to provide information, **please refer to our website** for downloadable planning maps, instructions on how to comment, and frequently asked questions about this process.

The Next Steps

The next step in this process is the development of draft criteria for evaluating the various routes. We will first coordinate with Owyhee

The TMP is not about closing access. It is a way to protect what you enjoy most in Owyhee County. BLM will compile an inventory of routes to develop alternatives for managing motorized transportation.

County, consult with appropriate Tribal governments and will solicit information from interest groups and individuals. We will then develop and review the draft criteria and determine whether it is appropriate in meeting local access needs, while protecting resource values. We expect to begin this process within the next couple of months.



On the Road Again...

An example of a stable route.



Use during wet conditions has negatively affected adjacent natural resources.

On the Horizon

Spring 2011

BLM, in partnership with local groups, to develop a set of criteria to evaluate importance of access routes and associated effects to resources.

BLM will continue gathering comments from interested groups to guide the development of alternatives. These alternatives will help BLM to manage motorized transportation on your public lands in Owyhee County.

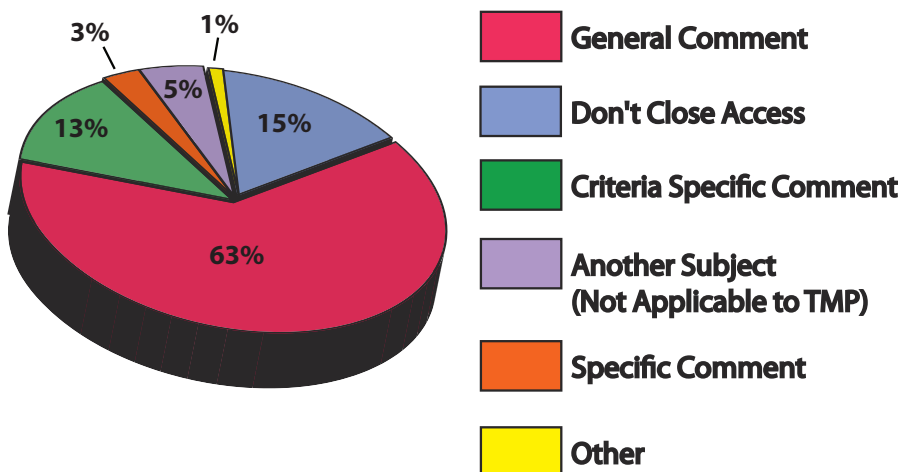
Summer 2011

BLM will validate specific routes (location and effects to resources) that have been identified by interested groups and individuals.

Comments should answer the following questions:

- What kind of OHV(s) do you ride? (ATV, motorcycle, UTV)
- Where in the county do you ride? (location description by latitude/longitude or township/range/ section)
- When do you ride in the area? (spring, summer, fall, winter, year-round)
- Why do you use the routes? Why are they important?
- How are routes used - recreation, competition, access?
- Are there other issues or opportunities?

Summary of Comments Received as of January 20, 2011



Red: Identifies type of use, but not specific route or destination

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