

Attention hunters! Know before you go...

Hunting seasons are upon us in Harney County. For the next few months, locals and visitors alike will navigate the area in search everything from freezer-fillers to trophy mounts. Since many sportsmen and women depend on public land for hunting, access is top priority.

How do you know where you can hunt, and what roads can you use to get there? Can you cross or hunt on private lands?

First things first: All Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-administered lands in the Burns District are open for hunting. But remember...southeast Oregon is a widely mixed area of public *and* private lands. It is your responsibility to know where you are, so traveling with a current map of the area is essential.

When accessing public lands, here are some important things to know:

- If a road is displayed across BLM-administered lands on a current BLM map, it is open for public use. Be aware – not all roads exist in the same form. Conditions vary from well-maintained gravel to overgrown, indistinguishable two-tracks.
- If a road crosses from public to private land, it may be closed to public use at the property boundary. This is completely legal and is done at the discretion of the landowner.
- Known BLM easements, where public access is permitted across private property, are shown on BLM District maps for Harney County. Easements are subject to change with ownership.
- Respect land owners – all other access across private lands should be discussed with the property owner beforehand. Know where you are going and what access permissions you may need.
- Motorized off-road travel is prohibited in most of the BLM's Burns District. Stay on designated open roads (those displayed on a current BLM map) and avoid any cross country travel.
- Fire restrictions may be in effect. As of August 1, the entire Burns District is in a full closure, limiting motorized travel to roads that are completely free of vegetation, berm to berm (this eliminates most two-tracks), and permitting campfires only in designated campgrounds.

In addition, did you know around 78,500 acres of private lands in Harney County are open to public hunting through the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Access and Habitat Program? This program is incentive-based and has been successful in developing relationships with private landowners who allow public hunting access free of charge on their property. When accessing these areas, remember that you are a guest on private land. Access to this private land is a privilege. Visit your local Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife office or website at www.odfw.com for maps and details regarding access and use in these areas.

As always, hunting is permitted as long as you hold a valid state license and comply with license requirements and regulations.

Do you need a current BLM map or have questions about public land access, road conditions, easements, off-road vehicle travel, fire restrictions, etc.? Are there public lands you want to access but can't due to private property restrictions? Please stop by your local BLM office or call (541) 573-4400 to let us know.

