

BLM News Bites – September 2016

Did you know?

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will have staff and information available at the September 1 “First Thursdays” get-together on Broadway in Burns (5:30 – 7 p.m.), and September 8 through 11 at the Harney County Fair (11 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day). Stop by, ask questions, buy maps, give suggestions, etc. We look forward to talking with you!

This summer, there have been 27 wildfires on public land within Harney County. Twelve of those were human-caused, the other fifteen were from lightning. In total, those 27 fires burned only 1,368 acres. The largest three were located on BLM-administered lands in the Steens Mountain/Diamond area: Orejana fire, 897 acres; Antelope fire, 172 acres; and the Aspen fire, 250 acres. Fire danger is extreme! Hunters and other public land users should be careful with fire this fall. Campfires are permitted only in BLM-administered campgrounds and motorized travel is limited to roads completely free of vegetation, berm to berm.

The next Steens Mountain Advisory Council (SMAC) meeting is set for September 29 and 30 at the BLM office in Hines. The SMAC plans to discuss fencing in the No Livestock Grazing Area within the Steens Mountain Wilderness, access across public land to private inholdings on Steens Mountain, public access in Pike Creek Canyon, and the Steens Mountain Running Camp Special Recreation Use permit. These topics will be covered, and additional material may be added to the meeting agenda, as time allows. You are encouraged to attend!

Speaking of Pike Creek Canyon, on August 24, the BLM completed a public parking area along the East Steens Road at the base of the canyon. This parking area gives visitors a fee-free place to leave vehicles while hiking, backpacking or camping in the vicinity. The project was completed in partnership with the Harney County Road Department. Private, fee-use parking and camping are also available in the area.

A National Public Lands Day event is set for Saturday, September 17 at Page Springs Campground near Frenchglen. Those interested should meet at the campground at 9 a.m. for a short morning of trail and site maintenance, followed by a free appreciation barbeque. Tools, gloves, food and drinks are provided. Bring your family, friends, students or coworkers to spend the day outdoors giving back to your community.

Reminder: The BLM is in the middle of implementing approximately 40,000 acres of aerial spray treatments for Medusahead rye and cheatgrass in Harney County. Work started August 2, is complete for the Riley area and is now underway near Crane and Riverside. Help reduce the spread of these invasive plants! Wash your vehicles and equipment before venturing into new areas, and report to the BLM office weed sightings on public lands.

What are your thoughts on this information? Is there anything specific you would like to read about or discuss? Groups or organizations, would you like to hear from or meet with the BLM on certain issues? Please let us know! Call (541) 573-4519 or stop by.

