

NATIONAL MONUMENT

SODA MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Medford District of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is currently developing a wilderness management plan for the recently-designated Soda Mountain Wilderness within the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument (CSNM).

BACKGROUND

The CSNM was reserved in June 2000 by presidential proclamation in recognition of its remarkable ecology and to protect a diverse range of biological, geological, aquatic, archeological and historic objects. The BLM manages the CSNM in accordance with the direction in the 2008 Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument Record of Decision (ROD) and Resource Management Plan (RMP).

The Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009, Public Law No. 111-011, Section 1405 (March 30, 2009), designated 24,100 acres of the CSNM as wilderness. Wilderness is an area designated by Congress and defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964 as a place “where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man is himself a visitor who does not remain.” Designation is aimed at ensuring that these lands are preserved and protected in their natural condition.

The designation of the Soda Mountain Wilderness within the CSNM alters how some of the area has traditionally been used. Human activities are now generally restricted to non-motorized recreation (such as backpacking, hunting, fishing, horseback riding, etc.), scientific research, and other non-invasive activities.

WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT PLAN

BLM Manual 8561 requires that an interdisciplinary wilderness management plan be completed within two years of wilderness designation. The wilderness management plan will provide direction for managing the Soda Mountain Wilderness (SMW). Management direction will be guided by: the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976; the Wilderness Act of 1964; Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009;

Title 43, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 6300 (43 CFR 6300); and BLM Manual 8560.

The purpose of the wilderness management plan to provide guidance for preserving and enhancing wilderness values while also providing opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation, as well as managing other land uses and activities provided for by wilderness legislation. The plan is designed to respond to management issues identified for the area by BLM staff, other agencies and the public.

One of the essential components of wilderness designation is the general prohibition of motorized and mech-



Camp Creek in the Soda Mountain Wilderness.

anized activities. Road decommissioning and culvert removal will be a key consideration in the SMW planning effort. Removal of unused infrastructure (fences, range improvements, etc.) from relinquished grazing leases will also need to be addressed.

HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE?

We are now in the scoping phase of the environmental analysis under NEPA. This means that any comments you have and choose to submit will be used to develop issues, mitigation measures and alternatives for wilderness management.

We welcome ideas on potential methods for addressing restoration needs; providing for human use while preserving the wilderness character; controlling and reducing adverse impacts of human use in wilderness;



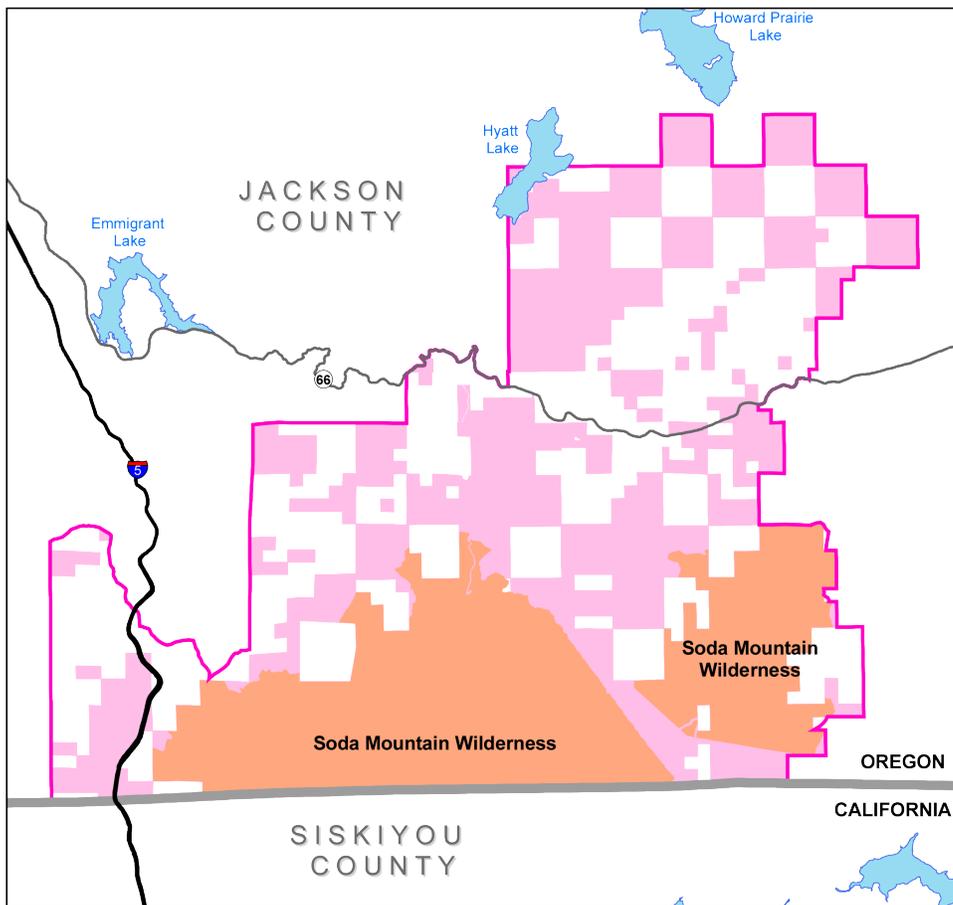
and managing nonconforming but accepted uses permitted by the Wilderness Act and subsequent laws in a manner that will prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the area's wilderness character. Comments that clearly articulate site-specific suggestions, issues or concerns are the most useful.

Comments, including names, street addresses, and other contact information of respondents, will be available for public review at the Medford District Office of the BLM. Before including your address, telephone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you are advised that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Although you will be provided with an additional opportunity to make further comments upon completion of the environmental assessment, we are requesting your input now so that it can be considered early in the planning process.

We look forward to working with you throughout the process to ensure preservation and protection of the Soda Mountain Wilderness. Please submit your comments by Friday, May 24, 2010. Your comments should be mailed to John Gerritsma at the following address.

**Bureau of Land Management
Medford District Office
Ashland Resource Area
3040 Biddle Road
Medford, OR 97504
Attention: John Gerritsma**



The BLM is also planning public meeting on May 13, 2010. The BLM interdisciplinary team will be available to accept comments, answer questions and discuss the SMW management plan. The meetings will be held at the Bellview Grange, 1050 Tolman Creek Road, Ashland, OR from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

WHO SHOULD YOU CONTACT FOR TECHNICAL INFORMATION ON THIS PROJECT?

Nick Schade is the Project Leader for the SMW Management Plan. Please feel free to contact Nick at 541.618.2281 for clarification or additional information.

HOW CAN YOU BE REMOVED FROM OUR MAILING LIST?

If you do not wish to continue to receive information related to the Soda Mountain Wilderness Management Plan, please contact Nick Schade at 541.618.2281 or email him at nschade@blm.gov.

