

**Preplan Analysis
Molalla River/Table Rock
Recreation Area Management Plan**

Purpose and Need

The purpose of this effort is to develop a public document that defines and guides management of the Molalla River/Table Rock Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) for the next 15 years. The plan will provide an adaptive framework for the conservation, preservation, and enhancement of recreation resources within the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered 11,875 acre planning area.

An increase in visitor use and the dispersed nature of recreation opportunities along the Molalla River have led to undesirable conditions and a decrease in quality recreation experiences within the SRMA. A comprehensive management strategy needs to be developed to deal with the impacts being experienced in the river corridor, Aquila Vista Environmental Education Site, and the Molalla River Shared Use Trail System. Additionally, an update to the existing 22 year old Table Rock Wilderness Area Management Plan is needed. An update will provide restructured objectives and a comprehensive set of actions that adequately address current management issues.

Summary

The preplan analysis outlines a road map for completing a recreation management plan for the Molalla River/Table Rock SRMA. This document outlines project objectives, project justification, preliminary issues, existing data, data needs, interdisciplinary planning team members, planning schedule, level of public involvement, and method of plan preparation.

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Introduction and Background

Molalla River Recreation Corridor

A March 1992 land exchange between the Bureau of Land Management and Cavanham Forest Industries brought nearly 6,000 acres along the Molalla River into public ownership. The exchange was the result of local residents' concerns over dumping, considerable recreational activity in the Molalla River area and concerns of liability from the private landowner in cases involving the public.



The BLM's acquisition led to the designation of 17 dispersed riverside campsites, a 24.6 mile shared use non-motorized trail system, development of the Aquila Vista Environmental Education Site and numerous other improvements. BLM outreach to the local community has led to many benefits derived from a collaborative management effort between the public and agency staff. The results have been beneficial, leading to approximately 1,000 hours of volunteer work performed within the Molalla River corridor each year during monthly trail work events, river clean-ups and other efforts.

The Molalla River watershed offers many recreation opportunities for fishing, mountain bike riding, horseback riding, hunting, day-hiking, dispersed camping, non-motorized boating, picnicking, recreational shooting and swimming. Few rivers in the state offer such ease of access and variety of recreational opportunities in a setting so close to a major urban area. Population growth continues to increase visitation to the area. Since acquisition, Oregon's population has increased by nearly 800,000; Clackamas County alone has added an additional 90,000 individuals. Years of heavy dispersed use have resulted in impacts including soil compaction, loss of vegetation, dumping and concerns over human waste.

Table Rock Wilderness

Designated in 1984, the Table Rock Wilderness area protects roughly 5700 acres that comprise the last contiguous stand of pristine forest in the Upper Molalla drainage. A 1987 Management Plan completed for the TRW outlined management goals, objectives and actions. The plan led to the formal designation of additional trail mileage and two new trailheads. Adjacent to the Molalla River Recreation Corridor, the TRW provides complimentary opportunities for day hiking, horseback riding, nature study and photography. Use of the Wilderness is relatively low, totaling roughly 1500 visits annually.

Purpose & Need

The Molalla River/Table Rock Wilderness is a designated Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) under the 2008 Salem District RMP. The SRMA boundary defines the planning area and determines how recreation use will be managed. This designation is for planning purposes only and represents a commitment from the BLM to provide a higher level of recreation related resources when compared with Extensive Recreation Management Areas (ERMA). A lack of comprehensive planning and increase in recreational use within the Molalla River/Table Rock SRMA has led to a handful of planning issues that need to be addressed.

The purpose of this effort is to develop a framework that will define recreation opportunities for the next 15 years. The decision factors regarding the choice of alternatives selected in the final plan will be based on a comprehensive outreach strategy to involve the public in key phases of the planning process. Consequently, the planning process will integrate public involvement in an iterative manner, including focus groups, stakeholder meetings, open houses, and outreach to relevant efforts related to the Molalla River.

The purpose of the Molalla River/Table Rock management plan is to:

- a) Guide the management of recreation use and recreation resources within the planning area. Guide the function and design of specific projects within the Molalla/Table Rock SRMA.
- b) Identify actions that the BLM would implement to resolve recreation management and resource related problems and issues.

Anticipated Planning Issues and Management Challenges

The BLM hosted a public open house on October 7th 2008 to identify planning issues. The issues that were identified as part of this outreach effort are summarized below and will guide the goals and objectives for this planning effort.

A planning issue is identified as a matter of controversy, dispute, or general concern over resource management activities, the environment, or land uses. Planning issues will act as a driver for the completion of this planning effort. The preliminary issues identified through early public scoping, to be addressed in the management plan are listed below. These issues will be further refined as new information becomes available, and when future public involvement occurs.

Major Issues

Recreation Management

- How will long term sustainable management be addressed?
- How will Benefits Based Management be applied? For instance, how many and what type of recreation management zones will be created under this plan?
- What level of recreational use is appropriate for the SRMA?
- What recreation benefits will be provided as part of this planning effort?
- What type of education, information, and interpretation will be provided to visitors?
- How will urban/rural interface issues be managed?
- How will visual resources be managed within the planning area?
- How will dumping and vandalism be addressed in the planning effort?
- How will recreational mining be addressed?

Recreation Development

- What level of recreational development will occur inside the planning area?
- Will overnight developed camping opportunities be developed within the planning area?
- Will the non-motorized trail system be enhanced as part of this plan?
- How will public access to the river be decided?
- How will Aquila Vista be managed in the future? What, if any, improvements will be made to the site?

Table Rock Wilderness

- How will the Table Rock Wilderness Management Plan (1987) be updated?
- What changes, if any, will be made to the management of the TRW?
- What changes, if any, improvements or modifications will be made to the TRW trail system?

General Management Goals

At this Pre-Plan stage of the planning process, the preliminary goals of the plan are:

- Preserve, protect, and manage the Molalla River/Table Rock SRMA for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations while preserving and enhancing the ecological integrity of the region.
- Adaptively manage the SRMA to enhance the area's recreational opportunities and unique characteristics while recognizing that increased future use will trigger the need for increased levels of management.

- Provide the framework, goals, and objectives to effectively manage Aquila Vista Environmental Education Area.
- Update the recreation components of the Table Rock Wilderness Management Plan.

Preliminary Planning Criteria

The management plan will address BLM administered lands and will be consistent with other efforts in the region. To address the identified issues the plan will:

- Use a multi-disciplinary approach.
- Facilitate public outreach throughout the planning process iteratively, with appropriate benchmarks.

The Plan will:

- Clearly articulate at least 3 separate and distinct recreation experience zones (River corridor, Wilderness, Trail), to address the respective goals, needs and objectives of each. This approach will increase flexibility and be more responsive to the diversity of recreational opportunities, experiences, and associated benefits in each zone while maintaining a comprehensive management plan for the region.
- Adhere to all existing land use planning laws and regulations.
- Use a Benefits Based Management (BBM) approach for the development of recreation management objectives.

Participants in the Planning Process



It is envisioned that the planning process will be an open collaborative process whereby the BLM will write the plan with direct involvement and/or input from the following groups and organizations.

- Molalla River Alliance
- Molalla Riverwatch
- Clackamas County
- Oregon Department of Forestry
- Landowners & local community

The public's participation in the planning process will be conducted in an iterative manner, including focus groups, stakeholder meetings, open houses, and outreach on relevant efforts related to the Sandy River. At key juncture points in the process, the public will have an opportunity to provide comments and be given the chance to provide input into the final plan.

Interdisciplinary Team

CORE PLANNING TEAM (BLM, Cascades Resource Area)

<i>Team Lead</i>	Zach Jarrett
<i>Recreation Resources</i>	Zach Jarrett/Adam Milnor/Wade Judy Traci Meredith/Debra Drake
<i>Wilderness</i>	Zach Jarrett/Adam Milnor/Wade Judy Traci Meredith/Debra Drake

PLAN REVIEW TEAM (BLM, Cascades Resource Area)

<i>ACEC/Ecology/Fuels/Soils</i>	Barbara Raible
<i>Botany</i>	Terry Fennell
<i>Fisheries</i>	Brue Zoellick
<i>Hydrology</i>	Patrick Hawe
<i>Wildlife</i>	Jim England
<i>Silviculture</i>	Alisa Tanner
<i>Engineer</i>	Dan Nevin
<i>GIS</i>	Bruce Ahrendt

Format and Process for the Plan

The planning process to be used to create the Molalla River/Table Rock Recreation Area Management Plan involves the following eight steps.

Step 1: Determine Issues and Concerns to be addressed in the Planning Process

Step 2: Determine Goals and Objectives

Step 3: Collect Inventory Data and Information of Existing Resource and Social Conditions

Step 4: Develop Proposed and Alternative Management Actions

Step 5: Estimate Effects of Alternatives

Step 6: Select Preferred Alternative

Step 7: Establish a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan to Determine the Effectiveness of Management Actions in Meeting Objectives of the Selected Alternatives

Step 8: Implement the Management Plan



Project Timeline

The following action items will serve as a timeline for completion of the Molalla River/Table Rock Recreation Area Management Plan. It is expected that the Environmental Assessment will be released by fall/winter 2009 and the Decision Record will be completed by the spring of 2010. This project will use the following plan preparation schedule:

ACTION ITEM	TARGET COMPLETION
Public Outreach Phase 1 - Public Open Houses identify “Key issues & Concerns”	<i>October 2008 (COMPLETED)</i>
Interdisciplinary Team meeting to discuss data needs/ Draft Project Initiation Letter	<i>February 2009</i>
Project Initiation Letter Completed	<i>March 2009</i>
Agency approval of Pre-Plan Analysis & signature	<i>March/April 2009</i>
Collect inventory data and Information of existing resource and social conditions	<i>May 2009 – July 2009</i>
Develop Proposed and Alternative management actions	<i>July/August 2009</i>
Write Draft Plan*	<i>July –October 2009</i>
Complete Draft Plan and Environmental Assessment (EA)*	<i>November 2009</i>
30-day public comments period on Draft Plan EA	<i>November 15th-December 15th 2009</i>
Review and summarize public comments	<i>January 2010</i>
Revise Draft Plan and write Decision Record*	<i>April 2010</i>
Complete final Management Plan and complete Decision Record*	<i>May 2010</i>

**Timeline subject to change based on public scoping outreach strategy.*

Data Needs

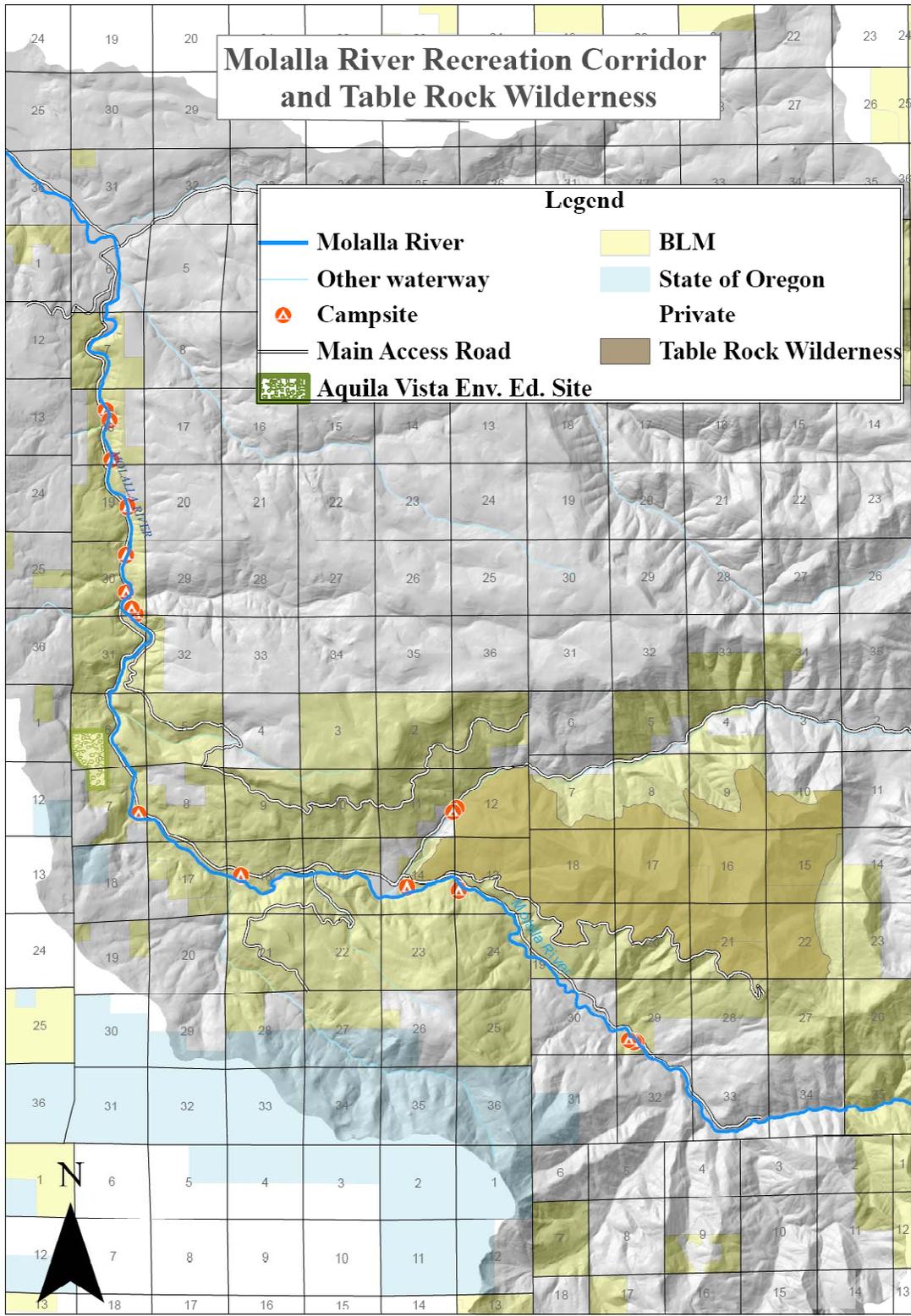
Molalla River Corridor

- Campsite Inventory
- Facility Inventory
- Trail Inventory
- Potential Development Inventory
 - Campground locations
 - Day Use area locations
 - Trailhead access points

Table Rock Wilderness

- Update Resource assessment
 - Access and Trailheads
 - Commercial use
- Horse use
 - Problem areas
- LAC framework
 - Visitor use info
 - Trail monitoring plan
 - Campsite inventory
- Meadow management
- Revegetation plan

Molalla River Recreation Corridor and Table Rock Wilderness



Legend

- Molalla River
- Other waterway
- ▲ Campsite
- Main Access Road
- Aquila Vista Env. Ed. Site
- BLM
- State of Oregon
- Private
- Table Rock Wilderness



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