

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Wenatchee Field Office  
915 Walla Walla Avenue  
Wenatchee, WA 98801

SCOPING/INFORMATION PACKAGE

SADDLE MOUNTAINS OHV BOUNDARY FENCE

**Introduction**

This information package summarizes a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposal to build 1.75 miles of fence on the east end of the Saddle Mountains Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) open riding area. The proposed fence would delineate the boundary between the BLM-managed OHV open (off-road) riding area and adjacent private lands (not open for public use) as well as adjacent BLM-managed lands where motorized vehicles are limited to use of designated roads and trails. The BLM's 1997 Recreation Management/Implementation Plan for the Saddle Mountains Management Area called for the construction of a permanent fenceline delineating the eastern boundary of the OHV open area. The installation of the fence would also create a 150-acre enclosure to reduce safety hazards to humans and livestock and to protect sensitive resources.

Federal actions must be analyzed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant Federal and state laws and regulations to determine potential environmental consequences.

The purpose of this information package is to inform interested and affected parties of the proposal and to solicit comments to assist with the environmental review of the proposal. Public comments received in response to this scoping package will be used to identify potential environmental issues related to the proposed action and may be used to identify alternatives to the proposed action that also fulfill the purpose of and need for the project.

**Project Area Description**

The Saddle Mountains Management Area is located in Grant County in central Washington, approximately 10 miles south of Interstate 90 and 40-50 miles north of the Tri-Cities area. The Management Area extends for approximately 26 miles along the crest of the Saddle Mountains, from the Columbia River east to the Adams County line. The proposed project area consists of BLM-administered public lands inside the Saddle Mountains Management Area. The legal description of the area is: T.15 N., R. 24 E., Sections 6, 7, and 8.

The BLM administers 45 parcels totaling more than 23,000 acres of public land in the Saddle Mountains Management Area. These parcels are intermingled with other ownerships including

private land in more than one-third of the Management Area. The isolation of some public land parcels and lack of legal access has resulted in public trespass on private lands.

## **Background**

The primary uses in the Saddle Mountains Management Area are hiking, OHV riding, hang gliding, paragliding, and rock hounding. Additionally, three active grazing allotments are located within the project area. Approximately 4,300 acres at the west end of the Saddle Mountains, including Section 7 (see attached map), are designated as “Open” to off-road OHV travel. On the remaining 18,700 acres, including Section 8, OHV use is “Limited” to “designated roads and trails”. Currently, unauthorized OHV use is occurring on adjacent private lands as well as off-road use on public lands located in Section 8. This has resulted in excessive noise, livestock disturbance, and damage to both government and private property.

In spring 2009, the adjacent private landowner constructed permanent fences on private lands paralleling the BLM boundaries between Sections 5 and 6 and Sections 17 and 18 (located immediately south of Sections 7 and 8, respectively), in an effort to prevent trespass on private lands.

In spring 2010, the BLM and the adjacent private landowner installed a temporary “non-ground disturbing” fence generally parallel to the public land boundary between Sections 7 and 8; this temporary fence forms a continuous fenceline with the permanent fence located on private lands. The temporary fence has one gate; the gate opens onto an existing road open to OHV travel in Section 8. The temporary fence was intended to delineate the boundary between the open riding area and the area where travel is limited to designated routes (Section 8) while the BLM completed the clearances necessary for a permanent fence.

## **Preliminary Proposed Action**

The attached maps depict how the new fence would establish an eastern boundary for the open OHV area and illustrates where an enclosure would be constructed to mitigate safety hazards and protect resources. As part of the enclosure, a small portion of the temporary fence would also be relocated further to the east and converted into a permanent fence to completely encompass open mineral collecting pits. This last portion of fence would complete the open riding area boundary and promote awareness by riders that land to the east of the fence is more restricted than the open area.

The proposed action includes the following components:

### ***Make the temporary fence permanent, adjusting portion to enclose safety hazards***

The BLM would reinforce the temporary “non-ground disturbing” fence in Section 8 with T-posts located every 16 feet; the T-posts would be attached to the current wires with metal clips (see attached map). The construction would consist of four strands of woven steel wire; the top and bottom wires would be smooth wire and the middle wires would be barbed. New fence corners would be constructed using Easy-Panel braces secured with T-posts. A small portion (approximately 0.25 mile) would be shifted to the east to create a permanent 150-acre enclosure. The enclosure would tie into the fence line between Sections 5 & 6 and 7 & 8 (see attached

map). The enclosure would encompass large open mineral collecting pits in bedrock thereby reducing potential safety hazards to humans and livestock. Additionally, this enclosure would protect sensitive resources. The BLM would begin construction in late spring 2011.

***Flag the fence and update signing around area of new boundary fence***

Recently, the BLM has started flagging all new fence construction to deter sage grouse collisions during flight. This flagging also makes fences more visible to OHV riders thereby helping to prevent injury from collisions. Two flags would be hung between each T-post along the entire fenceline. The flags are designed to move in the wind and warn wildlife and humans of the presence of a wire barrier.

Because of the OHV travel restrictions (Limited to designated roads and trails) in Section 8, the BLM proposes to update signage in the area reminding visitors that they are leaving the “Open” riding area and must follow the rules and regulations associated with the more restricted riding area. Signs will also be placed along the public land boundary, where appropriate, to warn users that they are leaving public lands.

**Preliminary Purpose and Need**

The proposed action is needed to immediately address the following problems:

- 1) Frequent uncontrolled crossing and illegal trespass by OHVs onto private lands located east of the OHV “open” riding area.
- 2) Unclear boundaries between OHV Open area and OHV Limited area, resulting in OHVs creating unauthorized new roads and trails on public lands in Section 8.
- 3) OHV disturbance to sensitive resources that borders the east end of open riding area.
- 4) Health and safety hazards in the vicinity of open mineral collection pits.
- 5) The temporary fence was not built to withstand livestock, weather, or other elements in the long-term.

The purpose of the proposed project is to:

- 1) Resolve ongoing OHV trespass issues on private lands adjacent to the BLM-managed open OHV area.
- 2) Protect or prevent degradation to resource values in Sections 5-8.
- 3) Mitigate potential safety hazards to humans and livestock.
- 4) Improve or provide information on permissible uses/restrictions on OHV riding outside of the “open” area.
- 5) Fulfill the direction of the 1997 Recreation Management/Implementation Plan for the Saddle Mountains Management Area.

## Preliminary Issues

The following issues or factors have been identified preliminarily for further analysis or consideration:

- Potential effect on recreational access to the area
- Potential effect of closing 120 acres of OHV open riding area
- Potential effect of the 150-acre enclosure on the active grazing allotment
- Potential effect on sage grouse
- Potential effect on cultural resources

## Public Input Needed

Please submit your comments on the proposed action and other issues to be considered to the address noted below by **April 22, 2011**.

Public comments may be submitted electronically or by U.S. Mail to the addresses noted below.

Please send electronic comments to:

[OR\\_Wenatchee\\_Mail@blm.gov](mailto:OR_Wenatchee_Mail@blm.gov) with “**Saddle Mountains OHV Boundary Fence**” in the subject line.

Please send U.S. Mail comments to:

Attn: **Saddle Mountains OHV Boundary Fence**  
BLM–Wenatchee Field Office  
915 Walla Walla Ave.  
Wenatchee, WA 98801

For all comments submitted, please identify whether you are submitting comments as an individual or as the designated spokesperson on behalf of an organization.

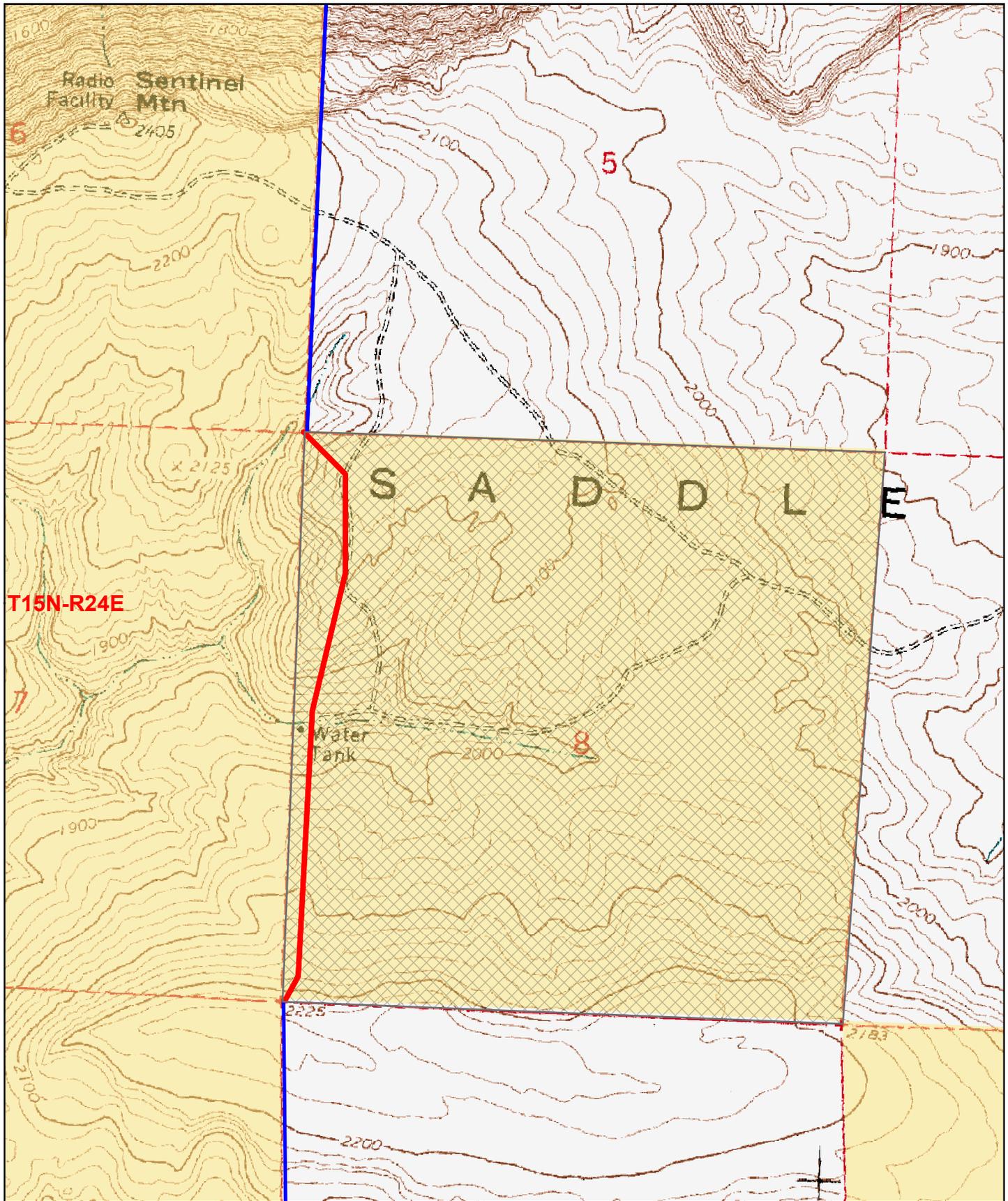
*Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.*

If you have questions, please contact Nick Stanton, Wenatchee Range Technician, at 509-665-2100.

Enclosures:

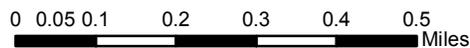
Current OHV Boundary Fence Map  
Proposed OHV Boundary Fence Map

# Saddle Mountains Current OHV Boundary Fence



## Legend

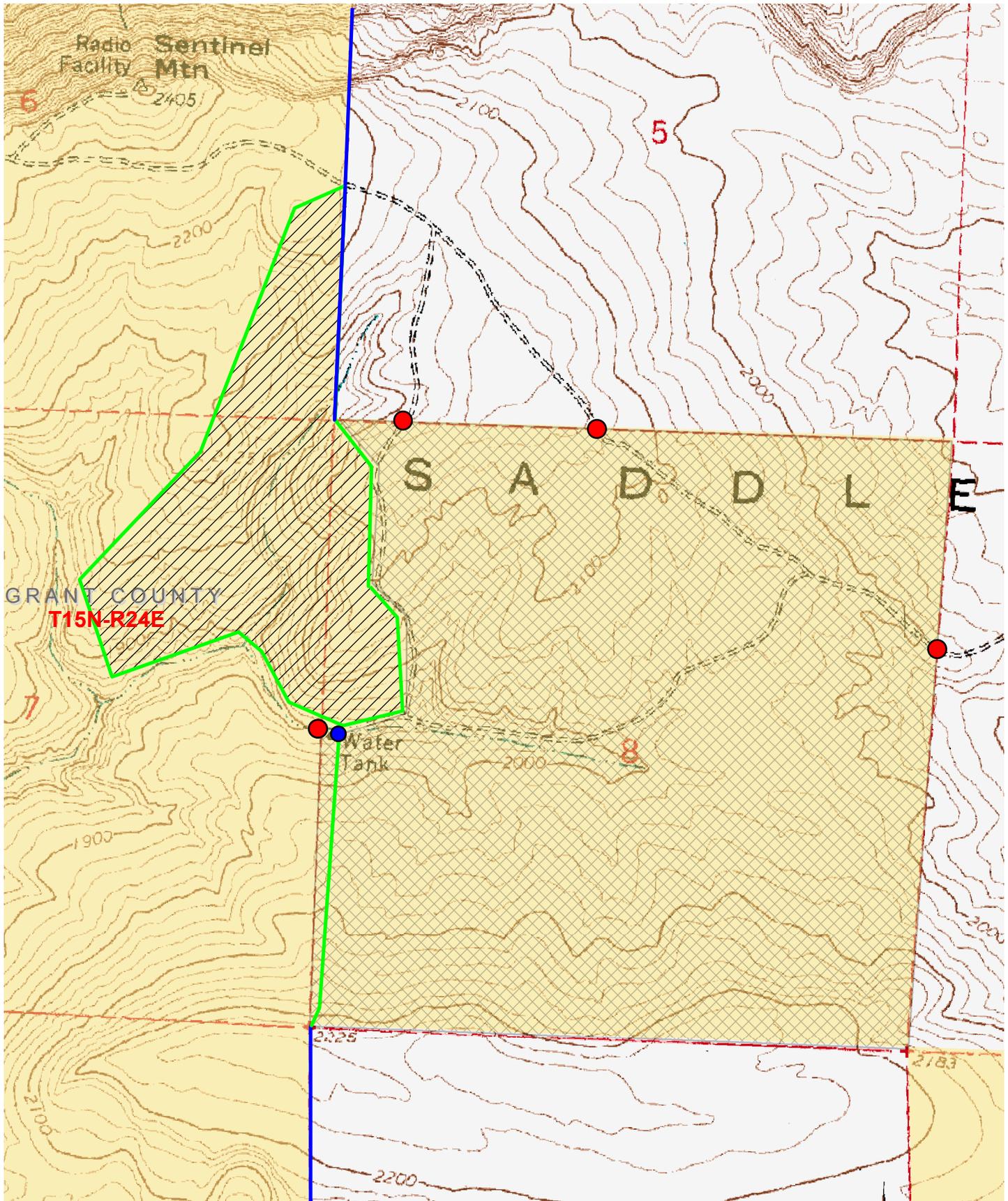
- Permanent Boundary Fence on Private
- Current Temporary Boundary Fence
- Limited Use Area
- Bureau of Land Management



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources and may be updated without notification.

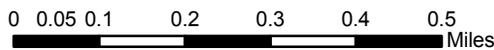


# Saddle Mountains Proposed OHV Boundary Fence



**Legend**

-  Gate
-  Proposed Signing Areas
-  Permanent Fence on Private Land
-  Proposed Permanent Fence
-  Proposed Enclosure (150 acres)
-  Limited Use Area
-  Bureau of Land Management



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