

# NEWS Release

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

100 Oregon Street • Vale, Oregon 97918 • <http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/vale>

**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT OR-030-2011-009**  
**For release: Immediate Release**

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## Caution Advised but Conditions Have Improved on the Owyhee River

**VALE, OREGON**-The BLM Vale District is advising the public and rafting community that the river conditions have improved on the Wild and Scenic portion of the Owyhee River in Oregon. Water flow has slowly dropped from Monday's 18,000 cubic feet per second. The river flow at the Rome Launch site is now at 9,500 cubic feet per second and appears to be returning to a more normal seasonal flow.

Several factors have helped: Temperatures have remained below normal in the higher elevations with night time temperatures have been below freezing with a slow warm up during the day into the 40s to 50s and the rain that was predicted was not as heavy.

There is still room for caution as the forecast for the weekend is for possible rain on Sunday and Monday. But in the short term river conditions are not expected to change significantly. The river is high but navigable for people with proper equipment and experience. Snowpack in the Owyhee drainage is at 135 percent, and it is highly likely that when the weather warms or we receive a warmer rain event, the river will rise to dangerously high levels again with little or no warning. Caution is advised and rafters should always check the long-range weather forecast prior to starting a float trip this spring.

The public should always be aware of the issues associated with boating in this area during the best of times; communications is spotty even with satellite phones, should a person be injured, access out of the canyon is difficult. There are only a few dirt roads, but it would require a person to first climb out of the canyon, a three thousand foot climb. Once out, ranches are scattered and there are few people in this area. The nearest paved road is thirty miles away.

The BLM Vale District will continue to inform the public as conditions change through posted information at the Rome launch site, through press releases, and the BLM Vale District website [www.blm.gov/or/districts/vale](http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/vale). The public can also call the BLM Vale District for additional information at (541) 473-3144 Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

-BLM-

**About the BLM:** The BLM manages more land – more than 245 million acres - than any other Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.

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Vale District Office

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