

# NEWS Release BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

28910 Hwy 20 West • Hines, Oregon 97738 • <http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/burns>  
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## ROAD MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES TO BE REHABILITATED IN STEENS MOUNTAIN AREA

**HINES, Oregon** – The Burns District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) conducted road maintenance and improvement activities on Burnt Car, Tombstone, and other routes near the South Steens Loop Road. All roads are located within the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area. Road activities included road blading and shaping, moving large rocks off the road, and removal of junipers from the road area. The Oregon Natural Desert Association, along with other citizens, voiced significant concern that inadequate environmental review was conducted, a portion of the road was bladed and maintained into the Steens Mountain Wilderness, and that roads were actually realigned and greatly widened from their previous state. In general, it is felt the road maintenance performed was well beyond the scope of “routine.”

An internal fact-finding team reviewed the actions during the week of August 17 and developed a report, which is posted and available on the BLM website at [www.blm.gov/or](http://www.blm.gov/or). The Team’s final report concluded the work did not meet some of the BLM’s requirements and procedures. The Review Team included members from Washington, Oregon, Arizona and Idaho that are experts in planning, engineering, wilderness and cultural/heritage resources.

“An Environmental Assessment will be completed to look at alternatives to restore and rehabilitate portions of the roads,” said Kenny McDaniel, Burns District Manager. “We will be working closely with the local community and key stakeholders throughout the process. We are also reviewing our internal processes and will likely be recommending changes to ensure effective communication between key resource specialists and managers in the District.”

The Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA) filed a lawsuit regarding the actions. BLM and ONDA have reached a temporary settlement agreement which will require BLM to immediately close a portion of the roads.

**About the BLM:** The BLM manages more land – 256 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.

