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To: [BLM_OR_RMPs_WesternOregon](#)
Subject: RMPs for Western Oregon Comments - NEAL ANDERSON
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Comments:

I live south of Jacksonville, in the upper Applegate valley, across from Anderson Butte. BLM lands abut our property on three sides. I am directly affected by activities on BLM lands, including OHV riding, target practice, and logging. Please see my comments below on recreation and target practice. I believe you will find these comments substantive.

1. The BLM needs to better accommodate the use of lands for non-motorized recreation.

BLM lands near us are widely used, by hikers, equestrians, runners, and those on motorized vehicles. The Siskiyou Upland Trails Association (SUTA) has obtained grants and worked with BLM to re-open the historic Sterling Mine Ditch Trail (SMDT), and parking for equestrians has been created in two areas (sutaoregon.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/SMDT_selfguide_map_legal_20120526.pdf). My wife and I and our neighbors ride horses on trails through BLM lands, including the SMDT. The SMDT has become extremely popular and is enjoyed by more and more people; for instance, on May 26, 2012, 96 runners completed the Inaugural Run the Ditch 5-Miler, running a loop that included part of the SMDT (sorrners.org; sutaoregon.org). SUTA has hosted many hikes on the SMDT. Non-motorized recreation in western Oregon is expected to increase, and may also be a way to boost Oregon's economy.

The WOPR essentially ignored non-motorized recreation, initially proposing 13 OHV Emphasis Areas in the Medford District and later reducing that number to seven. OHV Emphasis Areas are basically incompatible with other forms of recreation. As the BLM stated about OHV Emphasis Areas in the WOPR: "Non-motorized travel is allowed on all access routes...but is not encouraged due to potential conflicts and safety hazards..." (WOPR DEIS p. J-1205). Some negative social impacts are due to the fact that most people who enjoy hiking and wildlife viewing don't appreciate the sounds of OHVs; furthermore, OHVs pose safety concerns on narrow trails used by equestrians, hikers, and runners. The physical scars left on the environment from OHV riding discourage wildflowers and animals from living there, and decreases enjoyment by those hiking and viewing nature. Creating OHV Emphasis Areas effectively removes those areas from use by people enjoying non-OHV recreation.

OHV riders are a small but vocal minority of those that use BLM lands.

It can be seen from the DEIS estimates that OHV riders were less than 6% of all those enjoying recreation on BLM lands in western Oregon, and the projected annual rate of growth for hiking, biking, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, interpretation, and nature study is more than triple that of growth for OHV usage (WOPR DEIS Vol. I, p. 413). The majority of citizens was outraged by BLM's proposal of OHV Emphasis Areas in the WOPR. Given the conflicts encountered in managing the Timber Mountain recreation area I question whether it is appropriate to create any OHV Emphasis Area. I trust the BLM will pay closer heed to what the majority wants in the next RMP, and dedicate considerable planning to non-motorized recreation.

Probably the best way for the BLM to satisfy the needs of various portions of the recreation community would be for the BLM to encourage a group of people representing factions of the recreation community to meet and propose a solution for suitably weighted use of the land. If the BLM basically implements that proposal perhaps the majority will be satisfied.

2. It is time for the BLM to direct and control target practice.

Target practice occurs routinely on BLM lands that are within the urban-wildlands interface. Often those doing target practice do not realize that they are shooting in the direction of homes. Sometimes they shoot across roads, which is dangerous and illegal. SUTA volunteers have heard shots whizzing overhead while working on the SMDT. Target practice occurs daily on Anderson Butte; at home we hear the sounds of semi-automatic weapons routinely, and perhaps once a month we hear explosions from what must be tannerite.

When the sounds of target practice are heard, most people stay away from that area, for fear of their own safety and from a desire to go to quieter places. Many people do not appreciate the shells and shot-up household articles that accumulate in areas used by shooters. (The build-up of perforated milk jugs, microwave ovens and couches also increases the burden of clean-up for BLM staff.) In effect a small number of people spoil the enjoyment of the outdoors for many others.

With the increasing concentration of people using the BLM lands, such as the Sterling Mine Ditch Trail, someone is going to be accidentally shot by those doing target practice. The risk is compounded by the fact that shooters often wear hearing protectors, so that they may not be able to hear the shouts of those approaching them.

Redirecting target practice would not be welcomed by all. The National Rifle Association is well-organized, vocal, and well-connected politically. Some people may feel entitled to shoot where they have gone for target practice since they were children. Nonetheless times have changed, and the population has grown and expanded from earlier urban boundaries. It is time for the BLM to direct and control target practice within the urban-wildlands interface before someone is accidentally shot, or killed.