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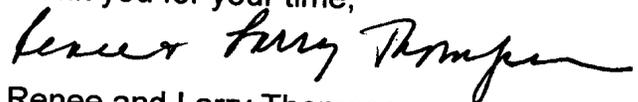
My husband and I would like to make our comments known to you in regards to the long range plan for off-road vehicles in the Medford District. We are totally opposed to allowing OHV on BLM property in fire prone, mountainous areas especially when it is checkered with private property. What are you thinking? We realize that the plan is calling for 'reduced trails'- but who is going to stop the off roaders from going where ever they want? Do you have enough people to patrol the 105,000 acres being considered for OHVs? We have neighbors who border BLM land, and they constantly have people trespassing and tearing up their land with OHV. It is a fire hazard in the summer and an erosion problem in the winter. I am enclosing a picture from our local newspaper (Grants Pass Daily Courier) that was part of a story about the BLM plan. This shows the damage caused by OHV in the wet season- especially if they leave the roads.

We are not advocating that the public shouldn't have access to BLM lands. But why can't it be restricted to just hiking? Goodness knows the majority of Americans could use the exercise. Other benefits- it's quiet, there isn't the fire risks, hiking doesn't cause erosion and usually hikers are not leaving piles of trash behind (which we have seen done where people can drive in, legally or not).

If you feel you have to give the OHV people somewhere to go, start with a small flat area and see how they take care of it. See how well they follow the rules and what impact it is having to the land. If it goes well, expand the area. if it doesn't take it away.

We don't understand how this amount of area can even be considered for OHV, with the problems they create, when it is doubtful that BLM has the manpower to oversee and mitigate the potential problems. We are not being alarmists. We have seen (and heard) first hand the problems that OHV create. If you let this go through and then decide it is a mistake, how are you going to fix it? Alot of these off-roaders have no regards for gates or private property signs. You will be opening a huge Pandora's box.

Thank you for your time,



Renee and Larry Thompson

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Riders, neighbors concerned over BLM's long-range off-roading plan

Special
Courier

The Bureau of Land Management's long-range plan for off-road vehicles in the Medford District shapes up as a classic land-use dilemma.

The off-roaders worry that creation of one to 13 emphasis areas will limit their riding opportunities to those areas only. Residents near those potential areas believe it's going to erode their peaceful way of life, with noise.

The BLM is taking comments through Jan. 10 on the plan for what it calls off-highway vehicles. The plan would eventually restrict off-road use to some degree in a district that's relatively open, with more signs, maps and closed areas in the works.

"Right now, it's generally open unless designated closed," said Jim Whittington, spokesman for the Medford District. "Eventually, the result will be closed unless designated open."

"You won't be able to take off across country like you can now. We clearly need to do more management of OHVs. More and more people are riding, and the resource impacts are evident."

Selma-area resident Roger Scheusner said about 70 people met this week at the Selma Community Center, concerned about two potential emphasis areas. One, Killbuck Creek, extends in a large swath of 3,931 acres between Wilderville and Selma. The other, Lewis Valley, covers 4,681 acres south of Lake Selmac, between Thompson Creek and Reeves Creek roads.

"If they create these emphasis areas, that will be in all the magazines and newspapers from L.A. to Seattle," Scheusner said. "On these parcels they're trying to designate, they all slope toward developed areas. This is like having a race track put next to your house."



Photo courtesy of BLM

A motorcyclist and a four-wheeler ride the trails at Quartz Creek northwest of Merlin, one of 13 potential off-road emphasis areas planned by the Bureau of Land Management.

Where can you ride?

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