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January 6, 2008

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Gentlemen, Ladies:

The Oregon and California Lands Act of 1937 directed that the public lands be managed for timber production with additional considerations—one of them recreational—be included in any management plans that were drawn up in response to the O&C directives. The Western Oregon Plans Revisions document—largely devoted to the question of how best to produce and harvest timber—includes a small section to address the recreational aspect of managing BLM administered public lands in Western Oregon. The section is devoted solely to the accommodation on these public lands of Off-Hiway Vehicles which generally include anything wheeled and motorized as well as snowmobiles.

Some of the owners of these lands question altogether the use-permitting of OHV's on lands that are environmentally and ecologically sensitive to the depredations that such machines can effect. Others of us realize that there will always be a segment of owners who would like to be able to exercise their motorized habits without restriction as to place or method.

Some OHV owners live in or adjacent to areas now open or being considered for OHV "Emphasis" status. Some live in urban areas and commute their OHV's to those public lands available for the exercise of their recreational habits. These latter cite the release of urban stresses as the reason for their need to ride thru non-urban spaces alit in or on a motorized vehicle; the former might also cite the need to release stress and tension as their purpose in using an OHV on public lands. It is a need that asks for consideration.

But, the individual who seeks a release of stress—whether that stress be urban-borne or thru a work situation not necessarily associated with a city—might choose other means of accomplishing the same end. This individual might see his public lands as an opportunity to distance himself from his fellows and immure his awareness in things not man-made. He might simply hike for a distance; he might try to spot a Western Tanager; he might try to find the elusive morel; he might gain the top of some peak to enjoy a wider view of the world than he normally has. The reduction of stress in this individual is not improved by the proximity of the OHV user; to the contrary, the whine of a minimally-muffled ATV on the ridge across from where he chooses to seek some serenity is sufficient to raise blood pressure and adrenaline excitation to levels higher than those with which he started.

The residents of areas in close proximity to the public lands under consideration can, themselves be noisy at times thru use of machinery used in the improvement of property, the harvest of timber or firewood and providing of fire protection. These noise activities are viewed as necessary for the profit, happiness and sustenance of the property owners as individuals. Noise generated by lumbering, thinning and clearing activities on the public lands adjacent to their holdings are understood and tolerated as necessary to maintain those lands in fire-safe and healthy condition as well as necessary for the harvest of timber and the making of roads to do so. The damage to public and adjacent private lands as well as the noise and polluted air associated with the operation of OHV's is not so well understood or tolerated, except by the resident owners of such vehicles.

The Western Oregon Plan Revisions designate a huge area of the publicly-owned lands in Jackson and Josephine Counties for consideration as "OHV Emphasis Areas." Minimal areas of the rest of the state—to include those parts of the state which have much larger populations—are scheduled for consideration. The WOPR singles out one area of the state to concentrate OHV use. To invite OHV users from other parts of the state as well as from all other states to the Southern Oregon OHV Park is not in concert with the stipulation of the O&C act to "consider" recreation in planning.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement states that "Non-motorized travel is allowed on all access routes (e.g. horseback riding, and mountain biking) **but is not encouraged...**" (emphasis added). The sense of this statement is that the managers of the land in an "Emphasis" area absolve themselves of any responsibility for conflicts between disparate users of the lands so designated. With knowledge that a warning has been issued as to his safety, then, the horseback and mountain bike rider will effectively have those "Emphasis" lands closed to his use as will the hiker, the bird watcher and the mushroom hunter. The public lands become, then, used only for the production and harvest of timber and the private recreational use of a small portion of the population.

The management of public lands for the enjoyment and recreation of the public at large for the most part involves very little regulation, monitoring, signage, enforcement. The same cannot be said for OHV use. While there is a population of OHV users that self-regulate, self-monitor, practice their recreation safely and non-destructively, there is another segment of OHV owners which seems bent on creating as much havoc, noise and damage as is possible. The managers of lands designated for OHV use will spend money and manpower in amounts far disproportionate to that needed for management of lands where non-traffic recreation occurs.

There is very little information available that would point to OHV use as detrimental to the well-being and proliferation of wildlife inhabiting areas of such use. A great deal of imagination is not required, however, to visualize that a deer startled into flight by the roar and rush of a passing motorcyclist might be disturbed by the event. If we the public value the existence of such wild beings, might we also be prone to ask that such activities as OHV use be relegated to areas of the public lands where evidence of living things is not quite so apparent? There are vast tracts of public lands that are home to little but sand, chaparral and ground squirrels. A study might show that such properties are less prone to dilatory effects of vehicles than those lands that harbor more diverse populations of fauna.

With the foregoing thots in mind it is suggested that decisions to designate "Emphasis" areas for OHV use on public lands should be based on:

- Allocation of such areas in the State responsive to population densities proximate to them.
- The area's being distant from residential areas.
- The ability of managers to control, regulate, monitor and enforce rules that will not harm the public lands and its denizens.
- The area's being compositionally appropriate for the use without being subject to degradation.
- The area's shown to support as few wildlife species as possible.
- The area's being located so as not to compromise other uses by other owners' interests.

In addition, while lands are considered for OHV use, similar consideration must be given to provide environments where the non-motorized traffic user can find his desired experience free from interference from the motored user.

Cordially,


Karl Krauskopf