



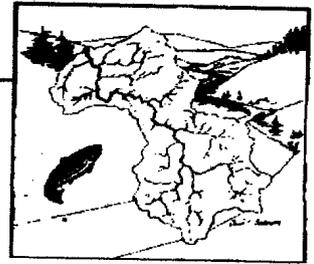
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JAN 11 2008

Illinois Valley Soil and Water Conservation District

Illinois Valley Watershed Council
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Illinois Valley Watershed Council

January 7, 2008

Bureau of Land Management
Western Oregon Plan Revisions
P.O. Box 2965
Portland, Oregon 97208

Re: Western Oregon Plan Revisions
Draft Environmental Impact Statement
Off-Highway Vehicle Use

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments regarding proposed revisions to the DEIS/WOPR. The Illinois Valley Soil & Water Conservation District is a unit of local government consisting of seven publicly elected directors and six appointed associate directors. The Illinois Valley Watershed Council is comprised of all thirteen directors of the Illinois Valley Soil & Water Conservation District. Together the organizations represent a broad scope of interests regarding natural resource issues in the Illinois Valley area of southwest Josephine County, Oregon.

Of particular interest to the District and Council is the proposed off-highway vehicle use on BLM managed land adjacent to a 171 acre parcel of land managed by the District. The parcel managed by the District is undeveloped timberland located southeast of Selma, Oregon (see attached map). The District and the Council do not support establishment of the proposed off-highway vehicle emphasis area adjacent to District lands for the following reasons:

- Establishing an off-highway vehicle use area will result in increasing trespass occurrences already being experienced on District land;
- Increased trespass will result in damage and adverse effects to natural resources, such as:
 - Soil erosion and compaction;
 - Damage to plant and wildlife habitat;
 - Increased fire hazard;
 - Introduction of noxious weeds;
 - Introduction of soil pathogens and disease; and
 - Conflicts with other recreation activities.
- Increased liabilities to the District are a primary concern;
- Despite signs, fences and other safeguards, many land managers in the Illinois Valley, including the District, have found that off-highway vehicle trespass from public lands onto private lands is a common occurrence; and
- Adverse effects and damage can occur in a very short period of time, with little or no opportunity for mitigation or prevention.

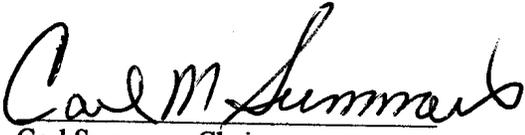
If the BLM does establish an off-highway vehicle emphasis area adjacent to District land we believe it is a reasonable expectation that BLM will work with the District to fence, sign, and provide other safeguards along the boundaries in a manner that does not restrict existing historical low-impact uses, such as, hiking and horse-back riding. We also believe it is a reasonable expectation that the BLM provide sufficient law enforcement to enforce the rules if the recommended plan is adopted.

The District recognizes and appreciates the effort and dedication that the BLM has put into this planning process. The District does not wish to imply that all recreational off-highway vehicle use is inappropriate or that all recreational off-highway users are irresponsible, however, in this specific location and this specific time, we do not think adopting an off-road vehicle emphasis area is in the best interests of the District and the public we serve.

The District has a long-standing and mutually beneficial working relationship with the BLM that continues to benefit the many natural resource values within the Illinois Valley. Please support our position by removing the off-highway vehicle recreation area adjacent to District land from the Western Oregon Plan Revision.

Please feel free to contact our District Manager, Kevin O'Brien at (541) 441-8801 or me at (541) 592-3731.

Most Sincerely,


Carl Summers, Chair

1/7/08
date

