

2458

Western Oregon Plan Revisions
P.O. Box 2965
Portland, OR 97208.



Sirs:

This letter addresses the OHV Emphasis Areas being proposed as part of Bureau of Land Management's Western Oregon Plan Revisions (WOPR). We live in an area which will be directly affected by an OHV emphasis area decision, and are gravely concerned about the impact on us personally. We live on property off of Crooks Creek Road in Selma, Oregon, which will be affected by the proposed emphasis areas.

The following information has been taken from the Minnesota Division of the Izaak Walton League of America, in their annual convention April 29, 2006.

“Off-highway vehicle travel has multiple effects on the landscape, and each effect is felt over a large area. OHVs require and by their use, create 3-to-8-foot wide de-vegetated trails. An OHV “footprint” on the land and its influence on the surrounding area can be large. So while other forms of recreation share some of the types of effects on the land, the magnitude and combination of these effects is generally greater with OHV usage.

OHVs operating near or in wet areas, streams and forest environments churn and stir up earth and vegetation causing the erosion of sediment. OHVs may inadvertently transport and introduce to new areas the seeds of invasive non-native weeds. Whereas hikers, cyclists, canoeists, anglers, hunters, birdwatchers, and other non-motorized recreation lack the power to destroy wet areas of the forest, OHV riders have mechanized power to do such damage. Some OHV riders utilize these impressive capabilities in sensitive areas that cause damage to water quality, aquatic vegetation, and sediment structure. Rider advocates argue that a small percentage of OHV riders are responsible for such damage, yet this continues to be a long-term problem that is persistent, reoccurring, documented, and sometimes is promoted in advertising.

When OHVs ride over slopes or weak soils, they cause erosion. Depending on the relative weakness of the soil and local conditions, the area affected by an OHV's passage can spread and grow over time to cover an area much larger than the tracks initially left by any one OHV. ~~The effects of OHVs are inherently greater than those of similar numbers of~~ hikers, bicyclists, or skiers. A dirt bike weighs 100-200 pounds, whereas typical OHVs can weigh up to 900 lbs, or up to several tons for 4x4 Off Road Vehicles. Because these weights are coupled with powerful engines, aggressively treaded tires, and a tendency of many operators to gun the engines and spin wheels intentionally, vegetation and landscape is easily churned up.

OHVs cause mechanized noise pollution, interrupting the solitude of nearby residents, quiet users of public forests, and wildlife. When revved and running, OHVs can be heard at distances up to and over two miles. If a single OHV is heard within a radius of one mile, it has a “soundshed” – the area where people and wildlife are affected by its noise is approximately 3 or 4 square miles. When a single OHV travels 30 miles on a trail, in the course of a 2 or 3-hour ride, its sound is heard by people and wildlife within an area of almost 70 square miles. Hikers, bicyclists, canoeists, skiers, do not generate much in the way of sound as compared to the sustained high-volume motorized noise of OHVs. Scores of non-

motorized users could use the same area of forest in a given day without noise disturbance and possibly without ever knowing the others are present, while a single OHV operator intrudes upon all people and wildlife in the vicinity.

In summary, OHVs have inherent abilities to trample vegetation, cause erosion, travel long distances, and affect large areas resulting in disturbance to both people and wildlife. The planned and unplanned trails fragment habitat, degrading its value as feeding, breeding, sheltering, and rearing habitat for a wide variety of wildlife species.”

Because of the noise consideration alone which is stated above, we insist that you delete all OHV emphasis area sections adjacent to residences in the community of Selma. Even a single trail designated for OHV use adjacent to residents would be unacceptable.

Sincerely,



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Copy to: Tim Reuwsaat, Medford BLM Chief
Ted Kulongoski, Governor of Oregon
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Gordon Smith, U.S. Senator
Josephine County Board of Commissioners