

2519



Vicki
Green/MDFO/OR/BLM/DOI
01/07/2008 03:41 PM

To William Freeland/MDFO/OR/BLM/DOI@BLM
cc
bcc
Subject Fw: Comments on WOPR

----- Forwarded by Vicki Green/MDFO/OR/BLM/DOI on 01/07/2008 03:40 PM -----



"Laurence Kahn"
<lmkahn@msn.com>
01/07/2008 11:41 AM

To <Medford_Mail@blm.gov>
cc
Subject Comments on WOPR

Dear Medford WOPR Person:

Attached please find our comments on WOPR.

Please indicate by reply e-mail that you have received the comments timely and were able to open the attachment and print it out in good form.

Thank you,

Larry & Candy Kahn
7121 Griffin Lane
Jacksonville, OR 97530
541-899-0149



Attachment Kahn BLM Comments.pdf

LAURENCE M. KAHN
CANDACE L. KAHN
7121 GRIFFIN LANE
JACKSONVILLE, OREGON 97530
(541) 399-0149/0150

January 6, 2008

U.S. Bureau of Land Management
1040 Biddle Rd.
Medford, Oregon 97504

Re: WOPR

Dear Sir or Madam:

We live near the proposed Anderson Butte OHV area and strongly oppose BLM's turning this largely pristine area into a recreation ground for off-road vehicles for the following reasons:

1. The proposed area would be immediately above properties, including ours, along Griffin Lane. Even when an occasional off-road vehicle is used (and current use is frankly rare—perhaps once per month) along the BLM road above us, the sound reverberates through our valley below. There is no buffer for the sound here. Most properties in our valley along Griffin Lane are horse properties with numerous trails running up from our valley to the BLM roads and trails above. At present, these roads and trails are, and have been for the seven years we have lived here, far more commonly used by horseback riders, hunters, and hikers than off-road vehicles. Turning this BLM property into an off-road vehicle recreational area would make it incompatible with these current and prior usages. Particular danger would be posed to horseback riders from not only the presence of the off-road vehicles themselves but also from the noise and sounds they generate—a horse “spooked” on the steep terrain of Anderson

- Butte could create an immediate danger to the safety of its rider.
3. One of the benefits of living in the area in which we live is our proximity to wildlife. On many occasions when hiking or riding up to the BLM property above us, we have enjoyed seeing numerous types of birds and mammals that are part of the habitat there. While one cannot say with certainty precisely what will happen to these birds and mammals if the area were converted to a BLM off-road recreational area, we believe it safe to say that such a change will not have a beneficial effect on the wildlife that presently inhabit the area.
 4. While we have not investigated the other proposed sites, or indeed whether there might be still others that would have the buffer, not conflict with pre-existing uses, and have less effect on the existing land and wildlife habitat, we have to believe that, given the effects here, there must be sites better suited to the off-road vehicle enthusiasts—either among the currently proposed or upon further review for other potential sites.
 5. It would appear from the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan from 2003, which measured recreational use of state and federal lands for the fifteen years immediately preceding, that the increase in off-road vehicle use on a statewide basis was a small fraction of the increase in non-motorized uses of such lands (e.g. wildlife observation, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, bicycling, etc.). Moreover, those statistics show that there was an actual drop in usage of off-road vehicles in this area of the state as opposed to non-motorized use of public lands. These statistics simply do not justify BLM's carving out significant chunks of public lands for off-road vehicle use, particularly in Jackson County, as the present proposal does.
 6. While the economy of our area in southern Oregon has suffered for nearly a quarter of a century from the loss of industry here, a significant positive influence sustaining the economy in recent years, and certainly since our arrival here in 2001, has been the influx of people from other areas of the country who have gravitated to this area precisely because of its pristine nature and the peace,

proximity to nature, and natural beauty that go along with that. Rather than seizing and building upon that growing foundation to our local economy, the WOPR and OHV emphasis areas go counter to that trend and seemingly ignore the changing reality faced by this area. We urge reconsideration of the plans in view of this factor.

Along the same lines as 6. above, while BLM's economic analysis of WOPR takes into account timber revenues from the plan, it fails to take into account the adverse impact on property values from OHV emphasis areas and from no-green-tree-retention harvesting. While the timber revenues might provide a short-term "juicing" for the local economy, the effects of the plan could have far longer term depressing effects on property values by reducing the desirability and appeal of our area as a prospective retirement area--thereby reducing property demand and prices. While this longer term effect might be harder to quantify, it should not be ignored as WOPR is considered.

From what we can ascertain of the planning process that went into the creation of the OHV emphasis areas, it would appear that there was no systematic and comprehensive process from the outset that created selection criteria. Consequently, and inexplicably as far as we can tell, there was a disproportionate emphasis on placing such areas in Jackson County as opposed to elsewhere in the state and region.

Finally, it would appear to us that both the OHV proposal and the revision of the forest plan for this area were both the results of special interest group and corporate lobbying in Washington or elsewhere as well as settlements of questionable lawsuits brought by the timber industry. We suspect and have some indication that those of you who are closer to the actual impact of these plans on the areas affected recognize, at some level, that these plans, or facets of them, are misguided--there are other, better solutions for the OHV issue, and there are means to increase timber revenues from BLM harvestings more wisely. Consequently, we would encourage those of you who work for BLM to assert your independent judgment on the adverse impact of these plans back "up the ladder" to your

January 6, 2008

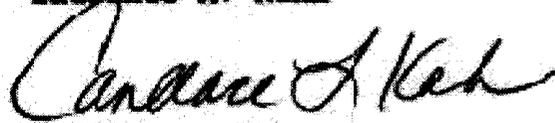
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superiors in this district and in Washington so that the entire plan might be revisited.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laurence M. Kahn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and "M".

Laurence M. Kahn

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Candace L. Kahn". The signature is cursive, with a large initial "C" and "K".

Candace L. Kahn