

651 S. Obenchain Road
Eagle Point, OR 97524

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

December 30, 2007

Subject: Worthington-Obenchain Emphasis Area in WORP

We live contiguous to the Worthington-Obenchain Emphasis Area included in WOPR and near the current Obenchain Road access point. We are adamantly opposed to BLM's plans to open wide areas of public lands to off-road vehicle use. We have many reasons for our opposition:

Access/Safety

1. The access to the Worthington-Obenchain area is Obenchain Road, a narrow, variable-width, windy, full-of-blind-curves, unpaved country road. Neighborhood use of this road is heavy and has already resulted in accidents causing death of livestock, family pets, and wildlife. The road is NOT safe for increased use. It is certainly completely unsafe for access to a possibly nationally-advertised OHV usage site.
2. Additionally, the Highway 140/Obenchain Road intersection is on a curve, and many accidents and near-accidents have occurred there.

Environmental Damage

1. Current, seasonal OHV usage in the area has already caused significant environmental damage.
2. Illegal OHV/Mudbogging has damaged the area causing deep ruts and has negatively affected the quality of water runoff into Little Butte Creek, a salmon-spawning area. Existing roads have been damaged and many illegal trails have been created. This summer BLM spent much time and money in our area repairing OHV damage. How long should we expect that practice to last in this era of downsized budgets?
3. This geographic area is significant with the biodiversity of its mixed growth savannah character—ponderosa pine, black/red oak, madrone, and productive meadows. It should be preserved !!!
4. Creating additional OHV usage in this area would be extreme folly. BLM does NOT have the resources to currently enforce regulations, let alone provide enforcement for the proposed expansion plans.

Fire/Safety

1. Grass, brush, and thick timber contribute to make this area a prime candidate for a future catastrophic wild fire. Residents and their homes, property, and livestock are put at risk by a fire caused by careless OHVs.



2. Residents are observant of fire safety and regulations. It has been our observation that many OHR people are not responsible and are a danger to the area during fire season.

Wildlife Habitat

1. Elk habitat preservation in our area has historically been a serious focus by Oregon Department of Fish and Game and BLM. The noise and physically destructive influence of concentrated OHV use is a serious detriment to deer, elk, and other wildlife viability.
2. We, along with a great majority of other citizens, believe that our public lands should be preserved in their natural forms, unpolluted by man's machines.

Resident Conflicts

1. Physical confrontations between residents and OHV people are occurring now with existing use. Noise and refuse pollution with concentrated use would be intolerable. Neighbors have already had to deal with trespassers and cut fences.

Flawed BLM Planning

1. WOPR allocates entirely too much public land to OHV use. To quote a Section of WOPR:
An improvement in nonmotorized recreational experiences is based on the assumption that motorized and nonmotorized activities have limited compatibility. This is especially true when high levels of both types of use are confined to the same area. For example, motorcycle riders and horseback riders using a narrow, single-track trail would likely result in visitor conflicts and safety concerns. Spatial segregation of these activities would reduce encounters, thereby improving the overall experience for visitors. This is also true of areas that are managed specifically for off-highway vehicle opportunities (e.g., designated trail systems and off-highway vehicle emphasis areas), which would also result in fewer visitor conflicts by deemphasizing nonmotorized recreation activities in these are

As you can see from the above, WOPR clearly seems to be emphasizing OHV usage of public lands over nonmotorized usage of public lands. WOPR seems to be a give-away of our precious public lands to development and the OHV industry,. All this will be extremely detrimental to the environment and to wildlife.

This is What Should Be Done

1. WOPR should be revised to eliminate all OHV usage from all public lands.
2. If that is not possible, WOPR should allow OHV usage only in remote areas, far from residential areas.
3. BLM must provide an adequate budget for enforcement of

OHV usage rules.

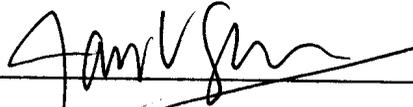
4. BLM must concentrate on preservation of our public lands.

Another real concern: Why is the Medford area receiving so much emphasis in WOPR's plans for OHV development?

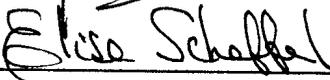
A concluding thought: It appears very clearly to us that BLM is acquiescing to evidently powerful OHV lobbying efforts and endeavoring to find a way to deal with OHV gasoline tax complaints at the expense of our public lands. The citizens of this country put their trust in BLM public servants to manage public lands for the benefit of current and future generations. The demonstrated destructive effects of OHV use are detrimental to that goal. It is an extremely disruptive, destructive recreational use for the environment, one that should not be expanded and should be isolated, effectively controlled, and secondary to low impact recreational uses.

Sincerely,

Jim Scheffel



Elise Scheffel



cc:

- ✓ Tim Reuwsaat, BLM Medford District Manager
- Ron Wyden, Oregon U.S. Senator
- Gordon Smith, Oregon U.S. Senator
- Greg Walden, Oregon U.S. Representative