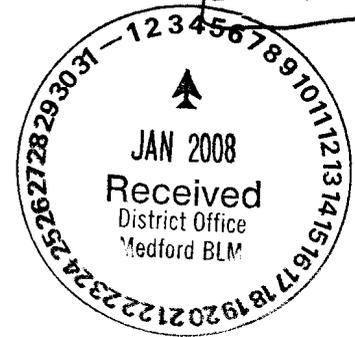


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WOPR Planning Team
Western Oregon Plan Revisions
P. O. Box 2965
Portland, OR 97208



RE: POTENTIAL OHV EMPHASIS AREAS

Team Members:

With regard to the BLM's desire to evaluate OHV use in the Medford District, I would like to make the following comments and suggestions:

I have lived on Elliott Creek Road for eighteen years. We have about ten other families on this part of the road, many of whom have lived here for that long or longer, and we have a "neighborhood" of folks who live here because of their love of the forest and our peace and privacy. My property is surrounded by land owned by a private timber company that has done considerable logging over the last four or five years, effecting me and others close by as well. The logging is complete for the time being, but we now have a huge number of OHV-ers who have been using the logging roads, as well as Elliott Creek Road, for their riding with considerable consequences. Many of the effects of this use are common to OHV emphasis areas as well, and will become even more invasive and intrusive if the proposed Elliott Creek Emphasis Area is opened, or even limited to designated roads and/or trails.

We have seen wildlife poaching (turkeys, deer and bear), littering, trespassing on private property, target shooting (causing a huge danger to pets and livestock to say nothing of human life), degradation of our access road (Elliott Creek Road is not a county-maintained road - our neighborhood must do this), and destruction of the forest and erosion onto private land, to say nothing of the noise and harassment. Unfortunately, we have been unable to get any law enforcement agency involved in helping with the problems. The Forest Service office with jurisdiction is approximately an hour away, OSP game officer has not been available, and there is virtually no Sheriff. I know first-hand (family members) that a large number of OHV-ers DO NOT stay in designated areas, disregard signing and, in fact, take great "pride" in riding and exploring off the designated trails, which will certainly cause conflict in an area where private property is adjacent to OHV designated areas. How will law enforcement be done in these areas and how will the BLM "control and direct OHV use to protect resources, promote safety, and minimize user conflicts"? How effective will signs actually be? What does "concentrated law enforcement attention" consist of? What can we do, if anything, to protect ourselves and assist with this?

I would like to suggest that rather than opening or even limiting use in areas such as Elliott Creek, the Illinois Valley and other less used areas, these areas be closed, and instead the areas that have been used for many years (i.e. Quartz Creek and Johns Peak, etc.) be intensely managed for that single purpose. It would be difficult and more controversial to

try to close or limit activity in the areas that are known as long-standing OHV riding sites. Also, it's an illusion to think that an OHV emphasis area would be a multi-use area. Besides the fact that hiking, bicycling and horses are not compatible with OHV's (for obvious safety and aesthetic reasons), OHV use areas are often, or eventually become, rather eroded, desolate areas with limited vegetation surviving, no wildlife, and trails (as well as off-trails) reduced to bare compacted earth that is deeply rutted, fine dust in dry weather and quagmires in winter...not an environment anyone but a motorized vehicle rider would love.

Oregon is a beautiful place to live and those of us that have lived here a long time have a close association with and love for our forest homes. Designation of the areas from Elliott Creek south to Selma as Off Highway Vehicle Emphasis Areas would profoundly effect many, many of us that own property adjacent to these areas. It would be an infringement of property owners' rights in that the value of our land would be lowered by the noise and associated activities of large numbers of OHV's, as well as disruption of peoples' lives by many of the above mentioned problems. Please consider closing, or at the very least, limiting OHV use and promoting true multiple use in these areas.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my thoughts and concerns which are shared by many property owners in the proposed OHV Emphasis Areas. Your efforts on our behalf and on behalf of our Oregon forests are appreciated.

Sincerely,



Virginia Burns
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