

John Day – Snake RAC Meeting Agenda

**Malheur National Forest – Juniper Conference Room
431 Patterson Bridge Road, John Day, OR 97845
September 20-21, 2018**

Meeting called to order at 3:15 after a field trip to the Malheur Lumber Co. in John Day. Planned field trip to the torrefaction and biomass site was cancelled at the last minute after tour leader was called to Georgia for hurricane response.

Introductions:

RAC Members: Randy Jones, Brian Sykes, Greg Jackle, Tim Unterwegner, Gus Gustafson, Jim Boethin, Art Waugh, Jerry Brummer, Steve Lent, Glenn Burleigh, Terry Drever-Gee, Jim Reiss.

Forest Service/BLM: Chuck Oliver (Wallowa Whitman), Paula Guenther (for Eric Watrud, Umatilla), Dennis Teitzel (Prineville BLM), Don Gonzalez (Vale BLM), Lisa Clark (Facilitator), Ed Guzman (Malheur, also NE Oregon Title 2 RAC), Dave Plummer (Wallowa Whitman)

Last minutes notice but there's a Blue Mtn Forest Partners Collaborative – Forest Partners Meeting tonight from 4-7 pm if anyone is interested in attending.

Future meeting: Prineville with tour of FB/Apple data centers, solar farms and Prineville wetlands

Review of RAC processes.

We want to make sure we're having a voice – all the way to Washington DC.

It would be good to be able to have subcommittee meetings in between RAC meetings to keep things going. Lisa will submit a Federal Register Notice to announce standing times for subcommittees with a teleconference line. Maybe two days a month, in the evenings.

Randy will continue with email voting form.

Minutes from the last meeting. No edits and moved to approve by Steve and Tim; minutes approved

Wallowa Whitman fee proposal (not Hells C. Rec Area):

Dan presented as a very general idea about a year ago. We're ready to give more details today about what we're working on.

In Forest Service process – we're working on developing sustainable recreation. What we're looking at is budget driven but taking us in the direction of analyzing how many people are using the forest, where are they using it, and maybe most importantly, why are they there? We were building a lot of facilities – like the NPS– visitor centers, overlooks, rest-stops, tennis courts, picnic facilities. But we didn't do it with any kind of identity, and it seemed like we had a lot more funding when we started. Some of that has reduced, and many of the facilities we built are maintained and many aren't being used. We've shrunk the geographic footprint of where we have facilities, and become more centralized, and overall we are a smaller force. But we still have this legacy of facilities... campgrounds, trailheads, etc.

We're trying to adapt – and all of this infrastructure is aging. Funds aren't there to do maintain everything. To adapt to some of this, Congress let us do the concessionaire contracts. We had to pass off sites that were winners and losers so that the concessionaires could make things work overall. Time went on and with different regulations in place, the concessionaires were able to give the “losers” back to the Forests. With budgets still going down, and with centralization, the fewer staff have to drive further to reach these sites for maintenances, making them fiscally even less viable.

On the Wallowa Whitman, we haven't hired seasonals in recreation in 2 years, and we are now starting to go through a more formal sustainable recreation process now. This is more than about money and just closing things. We need to look at what the public WANTS and how we can provide it. The FS has become the agency that says no just because we can't afford it. I want to be able to say yes, if it's what the public is asking for. So the point of this exercise is to find out what people want, what we can afford and how can we get into the position of saying yes. What is the most important, what do people want and prioritizing the budget to meeting this need.

So - How does this actually work? What does recreation on the National Forests mean? It's Campgrounds! So people fight a campground closure. How can we afford to keep them?

The FS did a nationwide look at the cost of facilities. We measure campgrounds by payoffs. Which essentially means the number of campers. The cost per payout, for a person in a campground, divided by the number of people. To manage a site, that can mean we'd need \$180/campsite per night. But we charge \$4-14 – we can't pass on all of the costs obviously.

We DO need to modernize our fees. The last time they were adjusted in 2005.

But before we look at that, we need to loop back to current demand and service.

Once piece is raising fees. But there's still a huge gap. How do we bridge this gap in a sustainable way? I don't want to just shut down campgrounds until I can afford what's left. This doesn't account for public values.

FS has another role now and what we hear when we ask Primary thing that people want is...access. To drive. To sightsee. To hunt. To hike. To harvest. Get cultural resources (huckleberries, firewood, etc.). Campgrounds are just a small piece of this.

Demand is changing. Can't believe we're flagging traffic on forest roads. And we're flagging 50' motor homes! People are camping in pullouts on the side of the road, while campgrounds aren't even full.

So beyond maintaining facilities – how do we maintain access?

The whole piece of sustainable recreation now is rather than saying how do we make a campground affordable, we need to say, how do we provide the same service as the campground in a way that people want? Maybe we look at dispersed service with no cost instead of having a campground with service and a fee. One is free, one loses money. We don't want to compete with private industry and underprice them so we need to be different.

Demand is up, but it's different. Are people using pullouts because they don't want to pay? Could be, but since we're not a for-profit business – we're managing the public land- and we're not trying to make money, then maybe we give them access via free dispersed sites and we don't need to have fee sites.

Describe more the effects of centralization: When you're centralized you don't meet as many of the public because they're way out there and you're at FS headquarters. But the GS -6 who should be out there is the one losing his job. *Question:* Does this leave more room to find partnerships? Are there opportunities for organizations like REI, power companies, etc. to invest in communities/forest?

Yes – there is. A big piece of what we're doing is looking at the opportunities within our authorities. Can we say yes, and is there an authority that lets us do that? Idaho Power for example, is a requirement from the FERC license.

Reds Horse Ranch – could REI come in and partner to fix it and keep it open? Caretakers cost money and you're not getting anything for it. Yes – we're open to ideas like that but we still need to work within policy, authorities.

The predominant authority is the Granger-Thigh authority. We get receipts to put back into maintaining facilities, BUT those facilities MUST be profitable. All of the campgrounds that are already profitable are in the concessionaire system. Some others are in volunteer systems. So the Wallowa Whitman is still doing maintenance, and there are costs that exceed the fees that we collect, so....WW is at the breaking point.

We need to:

1. Shrink our facilities. Do it holistically and make it geographically represented. Look at what the public most wants, what's competing with private.
2. Fee proposal – look at making a rate adjustment for what we chose to keep and maintain.
3. Keep some sites as dispersed sites without amenities with less or no service
4. Commit to making a maintenance standard and keeping it. By developed sites, by dispersed sites; and design fee collection routes to make sense.
5. Fees would not be used to generate money. Fees would be used to make a site economical and then move that site into a concessionaire and they'll take it over. That lowers the level of government on that, and maintains access, etc.

At dispersed sites, with no fees, do you analyze the true cost of those sites? For example, the amount of human waste that needs to be cleaned up? WE always talk toilets. Simply the most expensive cost, especially if you have to drive in to pump at remote area. Some of our toilets cost thousands per year. This eats up a lot of our recreation budget. So that gets us to offer a range of experience: no toilets for self-contained sites for RVs etc., and toilets in other areas for tents, etc. So yes, we do weigh out enviro costs with dispersed sites.

Access is a big issue right now, and a lot of people would rather just find a spot to get away from other people. So dispersed sites are more desirable than a campground now.

We do have people who want a campground, and some who want an even more developed campground. And FS is not good at the high-end, high-service campgrounds. We don't want to do that. We want private folks to take that on. We also compete with day-users who want to go run, ride, fish, etc. for a day and then go home. We can have more guides/outfitters provide some new services (rides to the top of a mountain for bikes, etc.).

Back to demand – for the idea of sustainable – are you tracking changes in demographics? Yes, but tracked more at regional/national level. We have National Visitor Use Monitoring going on right now that looks at why they're out on the FS, and tracks it by forest. We also take anecdotal info.

With excessive empty buildings – can a company fix a building as a bunkhouse, etc.? Yes – that has been looked at. I turned in proposal to convert lookouts and cabins to rentals. We have a few authorities that we can use; and, we have to offer competitive concession contract to do this. We can't just let someone take a building and let someone else rent it out. A lot of the buildings are old too – we can't turn over an unsafe building, and for the most part, we can't afford to fix it. So we need partners to invest to bring it to a standard. But it would have to happen under a permit. This could happen – but it's not easy.

For Special Recreation Permits and Guides and Outfitters - are you able to meet the demand? Are there more needs than permits?

Yes and no. There is some capacity limit on the river, but underutilization with people who already have a permit. Wilderness areas – packers – we've exceeded capacity of trail maintenance. *Can a guide/outfitter be reimbursed for clearing trails?* Not yet but that's in the process and the Wallowa might be a test for this. We could look at doing trail work to offset fees. BUT – if an outfitter gets lower fees to do work, then we don't get as much in fees, which goes to other trail work. So this can work, but it doesn't necessarily add to our capacity – but it gets back to the need to look for a way to say yes.

Other forests – like the Tongass. Sometimes Forests are renting shacks. Yes – we can rent at that same primitive standard but a lot of our facilities are actually way below that standard.

What about retired LEOs to help? Would that save money vs. paid LEOs? FS LEOs are almost non-existent and those are paid outside FS budget so again, no change to capacity.

Is the Wallowa an "open" forest? How does that play? Yes, we are an open forest because our travel management analysis conflicted with our Forest Plan. So the decision is on hold while we finish a new plan – and this is in the final stages. ONCE that's done, then we'll take back up travel management. We are mandated to go to a "closed unless designated open" forest. But, there won't be a lot of change – small change because we want to provide as much access.

What local efforts are you doing to identify what the public wants? We're pretty short staffed, so we're a bit stalled – just got new Rec program manager this week. We'd also like to look at what we're doing with counties and partners, bring info to the RAC, and get as much feedback as we can. We have some people monitoring. We have fee sites to tell us use at fee sites by season.

Next step for RAC? – Maybe nothing yet. We're still gathering info. We have a fee proposal tool, and we're entering info into this tool and we'll see where we go.

What about Snake River Proposal? This will be separate. The campgrounds and sustainable recreation will be its own process.

There's a lot of work and planning that goes on in restoration, e.g. Crescent Lake cabin. It would be good to know about rental pool on Wallowa. You see demand and values by the public. We will be looking at 2-8 cabins to bring into rental program.

Are other facilities beyond guard stations on the books and on the table to be protected and restored? Not just FS buildings, but the old cultural sites. Everything is on the book – it will take the evaluation to come up with a comprehensive plan to find ways to keep ones important to the public. Will have to pick and choose battles.

Agency Updates:

Shane Jeffries/Ochoco NF: see handout.

Ochoco Summit Trail: part of the end result of an examination of where the Deschutes and Ochoco would find motorized use opportunities. One of these opportunities became the Ochoco Summit Trail – put together by community input. It ended up being controversial and polarizing. The Forest made a decision and it was litigated. One of the partners even litigated, and other partners supported this. The Magistrate heard the arguments, and made recommendations to the district judge for decision. We've made arguments and she's rendered findings and recommendations. Plaintiffs and FS are responding to this, and then whole package will go to district judge. Wherever we go, we'll go with ODFW and Oregon Hunters Association. Won't be a "we win, you lose" scenario – we'll work together on the next best steps. We'll deal with user-created system and try to provide opportunities to users who want that. Will we end up with another supplemental? We'll have to see what the judge says.

Ranger questions: Will decommissioning mean getting rid of access? Yes – but these are mainly driveways, etc. There is one building that was built by CCC – that's pretty important. What is the intent for this one? Don't know off the top of my head – we'll get back with that answer.

What's happening on the highway corridor and up Marks Creek, and along Hwy 26? We have State HWY Rights-of-way and they have responsibility for safety. So this is what they requested for safety? We have danger tree guidelines – those are easy trees to take. The "maybes" are trickier. FS staff went out and validated what should be taken. I have no idea why they left such high stumps. Some of the trees taken down are big, nice pine – is there going to be salvage? Yes – we're going to put out a contract. Next time we need to have contract side lined up better with ODOT so the person purchasing material can fall everything the right way and in a timely manner. Will they be taking slash too? Yes – part of the contract will be to pile the slash and the FS will burn later.

Paula Guenther – Umatilla National Forest

Speaking of old ranger stations....Olive Lake and Dale Compound.

Dale – during downsizing and centralizing in mid-late 90s – many of the Forest staff moved to Ukiah. A few stayed for 5 more years and the Forest needed to either invest in water and sewage upgrades or figure out something else. When there was no resolution, the Forest put the buildings up for bid – and got nothing. With vandalism, trespass and packrats, the buildings are failing even more. So a contractor has started to remove hazardous waste from the area and from where there was fuel/underground tanks. This is the first step to decommission a building. Fourteen buildings will be removed and a few will remain (Warehouse, H2O treatment building, will stay, and the gas house may be moved as interpretive site). This spot is near and dear to many people, and the Dale family came and took the old gate. The contract shouldn't include road removal, just the removal of structures. The place will have access and is flat – maybe blank slate for future use. We can figure out what we can do there, find use that people want, and one that we can sustain. We're still looking for that answer.

Olive Lake – the Umatilla is pretty dry. We only have 4 lake recreation sites and Olive is one of them. It has a powerhouse facility from around 1900s, and the logs are decomposing. We're facing a levee that's failing – to mitigate risk we need to lower lake level and permanently or temporarily stabilize the dam – at a cost of about \$5 million to build a new one. Regardless if the dam is removed or repaired, Olive Lake may be different going forward – maybe back to a natural level, or it may look much the same. There's also an historic district with 12 miles of aqueduct. We're going to have to get creative to find a solution...

Eric Watrud was able to do a Tour de Blues –an 11 county tour and get a feel for the landscape. Key message is that whether we're talking about incidents and issues, objective is to come out with better relationships.

Chuck Oliver – Wallowa Whitman.

Forest Plan Revision – Draft is out, and the objection period ended in August. There is a lot of angst. There is an opportunity for objections from the interested parties section. There is an additional 10 days to file beyond objection period. Requirements are the same as objectors, but you're just tying into an existing objection.

Still working out what makes a valid objector? You'd think it'd be clear, but the planning process took so long they're figuring out who still had standing. There were 300+ objections. To have standing, you have to have previously submitted substantive comments. General topics for objections: violation of NEPA due to addition of alternatives, violation of NFMA because there is one EIS but 3 decisions, public participation de-emphasized, new aquatic conservation strategy, veg mgmt./sale/diameter limits had concerns on both too much and not enough, wildlife regarding indicator mgmt. species, watershed health and restoration too strict, diminishing access, closure and lack of access, claim the Forest Plan is a travel management plan, the plan is too restrictive, too much wilderness/too little wilderness, not enough fuel reduction, climate change shouldn't be addressed, economic and social justice not used, four county objections. Some county objections, some tribe objections over wildlife, states had similar to tribes, timber – not enough, not fast enough. Not using best available science, not addressing grazing concerns...

Watersheds and fire concerns: many becoming concerned. Some limitations are due to mix of private public land, which can limit access and/or make it really costly to do anything. Inventoried Roadless Areas and rules, and material not that valuable. So everything comes off at a high cost. We're doing work on the forest where we can but we are also worried about fires starting on private land. We recognize there are a lot of concerns and we're working within our authorities to manage vegetation.

Losteen Project – lots of harvest, fuels work and firewood. Did get litigated but upheld. Still in appeal though. Going to 9th circuit.

Remember to do the roads first. That'll be the first line of defense in the event of a fire. Do the fuel breaks first. Don't get a project lost in units. Just do the breaks. Paula – this is a critical part of the eastside fuels implementation plan. We need to make them economically viable and to prioritize roadsides.

Ed Guzman – Malheur NF

Accelerated restoration: we're doing lots of NEPA projects that are about 40 - 70K acres. And we're up in the air a bit depending on how the Blue Mtn. Forest Plan goes. We'll move forward but we have to see what it all means.

Timber prices coming in high and this is good to see. Summit project went in 3 sales, why? – maybe CA fires mean lots of homes rebuilt. Whatever the reason, right now timber sales are good – and we're hoping for one more sale. *Who are the buyers?* Both local and longer away – none of these are fire salvage; they're all green timber sales. We will meet the target for 100 million board feet. The Malheur is down about 56 employees – we're hoping to catch up – until then, we're a bit overburdened.

Malheur River large wood placement project: We're tipping trees and using a Type 1 helicopter to lift into river corridor in Wild and Scenic River.

Prescribed burning – going strong right now on all 3 districts. Good fall weather to keep doing that.

Large pit project in Galena area, ties in with Kam Wa Chung museum. Go visit it!

Our Recreation Planner who covers the Prairie City and Blue Mountain Ranger Districts is going great guns and getting good volunteer support on trail maintenance in the Strawberries. We're getting a mountain bike contingency here as well and seeing more recreation use as Central Oregon folks push this way and as people are passing through. We still have the capacity to take more and are needing more partnerships to keep things going.

With timber sales – conventional or stewardship? 70% is stewardship, and 30% convention. In year 6 of 10 year agreements.

Meeting adjourn: 4:58 p.m.

Friday, Sept. 21

Convene at 8:05

Same attendees.

Don Gonzalez - Vale BLM – see handout

Next Student Congress – identity for BLM in a few years.

Terry – BLM is working closely with mining community and Forest Service. There is an Agency mining round table and we meet each quarter with county as well. We go over problems, look for solutions, air out everything before it gets bad. Happy to report it works really well.

Don will check on any recording or documentation of tribal elder stories of history of river from youth trip.

Randy – I'm still working on having a student as part of the RAC. Can we have a member slot for a student? How could that work? Gus may have an option as well. Will keep on with idea – honorary student.

Dennis Teitzel - Prineville BLM – see handout

30-mile – did you see an increase in use? Anecdotally we'd say yes. Still trying to get an idea.

With funds – can you buy another piece of land? No – not in the regulations.

Teaters Rd – will the new road be able to be used as a haul road? Still getting that figured out. *What if it can't?* Then we'll look at the option of retaining our ROW on old Teaters as a haul road. Ochoco – already hard to haul because of distance. Ochoco needs the old road at this point because of turn radius and slope. So if the Ochoco can't use old Teaters, then it goes to the north and makes a longer haul and makes it even less viable.

Cottonwood Canyon State Park has been hosting an institute for high school students and they do field work for college credit. They're getting a lot of acreage. This institute should begin the process of training up new students to enter natural resource roll. BLM should participate.

Presentation: Murderers Creek JMA – Marion Mahaffey, Gerald Dixon, Ryan Faulk, Martha Cruz, Monet Murphy (last 2 interns)

PPT – shows the timeline from 1922-2006.

Lineage – these horses are most likely descendants of horses turned out and lost by settlers. They've been rounded up as saddle stock and military horses. Some ranchers turned out their own stallions to add characteristics to the herd. You can see the traits. Not a native species.

Trapping History -

Hard to keep up with due to staffing. We found some old files and worked up critical timelines and tasks. We found a rough map of old bait trap sites and we went to these old locations, and found structures. Map from 1950s, and they found what the old mustangers were using. Managing them on horseback with actual wood corrals. They found traps and a holding facility where they were running them in on horseback.

These are the "Timber Horses" – they're dark colored, and they blend in. They live in the high elevation of the forest most of the year; even in winter when snow is 2-4 feet deep. But they're used to it and they stay high. They paw the snow away to graze. Some move down to BLM in winter – or down by the highway. Some people even throw out hay to feed them.

These are smaller horses that stand at 13-14 hands. They're very sure-footed. They are not named like the Pryors or the Keigers. Some have wandered across the south fork John Day to the Ochoco herd.

BLM and the Forest are working together now on an EIS. The Malheur is leading the planning effort and BLM has put more staff out on the ground to gather data. The goal is to come up with a plan for managing these horses going forward.

Appropriate Management Level (AML) document – coming up with what we think is the appropriate mgmt. level. It has been 50-140 but not decided going forward.

Have a draft Notice of Intent that is working up through leadership, and we're waiting on Region 6 Leader's Intent. Once this is going – it should take about 2 years to complete the entire process. First step is to start scoping – hopefully next spring 2019.

This is a joint herd. BLM – Herd Management Area, and FS has their own process for Wild Horse Territories – Joint Management Areas are unique.

The goal is to set AML – with a number that keeps a genetically viable population, manages other wildlife like elk, deer, manages threatened and endangered species, manages habitat and keeps utilization (grazing) from all uses at a sustainable level, meets rangeland health standards, ecological health balance and avoids deterioration of range.

Proposed action is consistent with the BLM's Resource Management Plan, and similar to the Forest Plan.

If the herd is gathered once to get to that lower limit of 50, then it would take 4-5 years to reach 140. So you'd have time to reach that and not have to gather or disturb the horses.

After AML analysis, then we'll get to the when, where, and what tools we'll use to manage the herd. Once you get the herd to AML, that's when you start the management.

Are you sharing AML calculations with Ochoco? Yes, they called and got the process that the FS used to get to AML on the Murderers Creek herd.

Are you going to do collar studies to get patterns? Not at this time, but we are setting up cameras to check out use and patterns. We're watching some hot spots, watering holes, etc. Back in the day, they had 8-9 bands of horses, and knew where they went. But we don't have that knowledge now.

Is there predation? Do you know what happens? Is there any relationship between cougar, elk and horses? We don't know that answer. Bears and cougars may get younger foals. But once the horses are big, we don't think that predation is a major factor. We know growth rate is 20% a year on herd.

We need to get the Leaders Intent – so we get the sideboards for the EIS, to keep it focused, help us identify what we want to discuss in EIS, what needs to be put in later documents, etc. To ensure that between the different authorities that say what each agency can/cannot do with horses, that we clearly outline both and each of the agencies know the range of available decisions. BLM can dispose with limitation (component of Congressional funding bill) and FS can dispose without limitation (can do sale), how do we define balance between BLM and FS re: 68-32 percent mgmt.? We don't want to bog down EIS with some of this. The intent is to handle joint issues, and then later address agency specific issues.

Will grazing AUMs change if horses eat too much? So far those changes have been voluntary by the permittees. We'll do the EIS first, then come back with livestock allotment plans. Need to get herd to AML and see what the range looks like with AML? Need to do enough that we set AML AND give us the tools to manage within that level. Would rather do as much work up from to get us to this point.

It costs the taxpayer about \$1,000/year to keep a horse in captivity. The BLM budget on Wild Horse and Burro is \$75 million a year and about \$50 million of that goes to pay to hold them in perpetuity.

I would like to see the RAC get involved in Wild Horse discussion/subcommittee again. Can help with BLM and FS (Ochoco and Malheur). There are a lot of groups with common energy to get horses into good homes and to find different solutions.

It's important to get emotion out of this plan to be successful. One of the challenges is that these horses are moving onto private land. Then they become "Feral" ...not sure how this works. How many horses are on private? What about groups that are outside the boundaries?

Adoption efforts changing. Social media, breaking, Mustang Makeover, sending to Germany and east coast.

We have a good environment right now because we have feed and water. Better than NV. But we need to get a handle on this now.

Public Comment Period

Shay – Hells Canyon Recreation Collaborative. Work collaboratively to maintain and improve river recreation access and infrastructure by making recommendations to the FS to promote sustainable recreation experience from a broad group. Really open to everyone who uses the canyon.

Asking the question – would the RAC consider having someone from ID on this RAC? According to regulations, members must have state residency.

We cover the WW portion of the Hells that crosses into Idaho. Would like the RAC to consider accepting an application from an Idaho resident who covers the Hells Canyon area. At the very least, looking at someone who would represent the river.

Bill Ables – HCRC. Works on the aviation side of the collaborative. The collaborative is really a cross based user group. Can talk to horse packer, hiker, and jet-boat user – and come to answers. It's a national recreation area. That's what it's all about. Covers it all. Private and public.

Kathleen Cathey – Sen. Wyden. Appreciate the info and collaboration. Senator supports people working together on solutions to public land.

Susie – appreciate RAC meetings. She's a recreational Rockhound and geology enthusiast; works with youth/OMSI, on access to public lands and activities. The Rockhound Club has claims for thunder eggs. One of their projects is helping vets come in to rockhound. This helps the group stay connected with the government and public. They are also working to reach other disabled people.

End of public comment period

RAC Charter 2018 –

Seeing a bit of change – with the addition of Secretarial priorities.

Would like to have a discussion about these and how we can address these 4 main issues that are now in the charter.

Like NEPA, we can look at how issues/topic affects/impacts priorities such as jobs, access, tribal relationships. We need to make an effort to document that we've looked these and show how we considered them.

With each administration, you get diff areas of focus. While these topics change, the overarching acts like NEPA, FLPMA, ESA, etc. are still in place. So we can be sensitive to the topics and still stay within the law/policy.

We can educate about the orders, send things out to get an advance look and then at the next meeting we can really address it. We can send out the orders. Let's create a checklist. Can share Sec. Memo on wildfires as well.

State Leadership Team (BLM) RAC discussions – leadership at the OR/WA state level would like to take steps to make the RAC more engaged and productive, address membership lengths, come up with solutions for how to handle gaps, etc. We need to reinitiate staggered terms. Delays can also affect secure rural schools. *Keep Wyden staff in loop over process changes.*

MT and WY would like to push “carryover” option. If RACs support and send a letter, this will be supported by the OR/WA director. In this situation, RAC members would stay in their position until a new member was appointed, or that member is reappointed. This would ensure RACs stay functional during times when the Department isn't moving quickly through applications.

Steve – motion to support allowing

~~Motion to recommend that: Section 12.3 of the John Day – Snake RAC charter be amended to read that Except under circumstances of resignation, membership ends at the terminal date of the 3-year date of appointment or when the member is replaced, whichever is later.~~

Add to 12.3 of the charter - Provided that an appointment will continue until a Member resigns, is terminated or is replaced.

Steve moves as amended, Terry second. **Unanimously approved.**

Jana Johnson – Acting as Rec Staff Office for Lisa Machnik

Fee Extension Proposal. Lower elevation sites on the Deschutes National Forest are getting increased use. In order to provide higher level of service at these sites, (staffing and supplies), we are looking at extending fee season to cover current use, which is dictated by snow levels. This is not a new fee, just an extension of the season.

We've been implementing this for a year, and Regional Office first said we didn't need to get RAC approval...but the Washington Office said they would like to see more public involvement in fee decisions, so even though it's not a requirement, they would like the Deschutes to bring the information before the RAC. I've brought the news release and in general, public comments were favorable and public appreciates the added service that they are now getting with the extension of the season.

How would this affect jobs? We could extend seasonal staff if they have time left in their appointment. Last year hired 1.5 new seasonals to address this extra need and we would like to hire a couple extra folks next season.

There was a Bend Bulletin article about changes to NW Forest Pass because people were sharing, etc. Some criticism that didn't go through the RAC?

Concern that this would affect hunters and anglers with addition of a late season fee.

We are seeing increased use, and a lot of these areas are winter range. So ODFW isn't necessarily encouraging added use...

We still have 104 non-fee sites. The sites with the fee extension are already the most highly used sites so it's highly unlikely that hunters would choose to hunt in these areas. These are part of the baseline that already exists as a use pattern. We're not adding any new sites. The public is coming anyway and we're dealing with the impacts of this use.

What were the fees? We have the same daily fee, we just extended the season. SO if you purchase an annual pass there won't be a change. Would only affect day use passes for sites the rest of the season.

Art moves approve extending the fee season; Jim R. – move and second.

Members expressed frustration that this didn't come to the RAC *before* making the change. Asked especially for decisions that materials come in advance. They could have read through them and been better prepared to discuss.

How will this be enforced at first? We'll continue to use education, and we posted at all the sites, did media release. People can pay a fine for not having a pass – but this is the same that it has been.

What was day use fee? It's \$5; and in the first year from Oct – January we took in \$29,700 in revenue from people using these sites outside of the traditional "season." This was 21,000 in fee tubes, and 7200 through vendor sales.

(Glenn – on an aside for the Deschutes, regarding the Camp Sherman Rx Burn – the forest didn't address large ponderosa cat faces so large trees burned.

Move to vote: Motion carries, one abstention.

Lower Deschutes All User Fee Proposal – Jeff Kitchens and Jim Reiss, chair of LDR subcommittee

This is a proposal to go out for public comment on this issue – not to make a decision to implement. See handout and PPT

Jim R – since it's been awhile since we met, here's a little history of Lower Deschutes River Committee: we were tasked with reviewing fees and figuring out use on all segments. The issue is boaters are paying for the maintenance, use that occurs through their boater pass; however, other users are not paying anything unless they're staying at a fee campsite. So, the committee looked at options such as day use fees, parking stickers, bike fees, etc. But how would you control or implement? So we looked at a fee increase, and the camping fee (seg 1, 4). Everything means more questions, such as then how do you "know" who's staying overnight, etc.

The Committee wanted to keep it simple. We have had RAC public comments – a lot of people came to the RAC to comment a year ago. Segment 2 – is the splash and giggle section. Lots of non-profits use this section – they come during the week so the fee is only \$2/day. A change in fee could hurt them. Also – the tribal fee of \$1 at Harpham and Sandy – this adds in more there too. More fees come from the invasive species permit – and the State Marine Board is proposing an increase to \$17, and a per foot price on power boats. And there's the Rec.gov fee. It all adds up. But the BLM needs more funding too – use is increasing and it's being loved to death. BLM needs \$ to keep up with this.

Non-profits have asked for waiver from Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs for the \$1 – no response.

The Lower Deschutes Management group has given approval to move this forward. This is the first proposal that they've allowed to go forward from several proposals. The motions you see come from the Managers group means they're interested in seeing what the public says about this; and they want to see what the campers and other users have to say.

As a reminder - this is only a proposal to go out for public comment. There are two issues:

1. Change the fee allocation
2. Add a fee for non-boaters

On fee effectiveness. What happens to the money that's collected? On the BLM side, the fees have to stay where they're collected – so they go back to the river. We can use up to 15% to pay for administrative costs, but even that's usually for something that's related to the river.

For a commercial outfitter, how do customers get permits? Varies by outfitter. Some buy the permits for their client, some make the client buy the permit.

As a commercial outfitter, I say that commercial outfitters – recognize need for fees. We like well-maintained facilities, law enforcement, boat ramps, etc. We want guests to have a good experience. But this is a significant fee increase. That increase is going to be paid by people who boat on the weekdays. These are midweek boaters are commercial outfitters and non-profits. In 2016 – 70% of user days were on weekdays. Overall – the rate of fee increases – have outfitters concerned. It's not all on the BLM. In 2014, we paid 4700 in fees. Add tribal fee – another \$1800, then Rec.gov – at first \$6, so another \$600... We're seeing a 55% increase since 2014. If we go with \$5 flat rate, those fees go up to (along with Rec.gov, and tribal fee), to over \$9,000 – this is a lot to pass on. We have fee weariness.

In draft business plan – we try to compare the Lower Deschutes to other rivers, but it's not a great match. Fees on Owyhee and Grand Ronde are zero; the John Day is per launch/per trip, and the Rogue charges a \$10/person launch fee but you don't have to pay for the guides.

Unfortunately, Rec.gov and tribal fees don't come back to the river. I don't know about State Park fees. *Really, without the other fees, the BLM increase would be palatable. But the other fees are already there.*

How will you get ahead? Will this make you whole, or let you save up to do more? We knew it wouldn't make the BLM solvent but it would get them more and allow them to do more on the river.

It's more than just BLM wants more fees. It costs the BLM what it costs – so they spend the money taken in fees and the taxpayer pays what isn't taken in fees. So the question is how far to do you go? At the end of the day, the taxpayer is paying for the cost of other people who are going out to use the river. What's intriguing is how we then start getting fees from other users, so more of the cost is paid by the users. Is this a place to start to get more feedback?

Need to answer the question - Would it cost more to collect from all the other users than you'd get in revenue.

Moved and second to approve Motion #1 – go out for public comment on changing the fee allocation.

Discussion: *The RAC doesn't advise or recommend to the tribes or Parks and Rec, but can we find out how these agencies use the funds from the river?* Jeff will ask for them to come to RAC or provide a summary.

We would like to get updated business plan.

If the motion carries, then BLM would put out a Federal Register Notice and would use public outreach to get as much input as possible.

Move to Vote: Motion passes with one nay vote.

Moved and second to approve Motion #2 – go out for public comment on adding a fee for non-boaters.

Process just like motion 1.

Discussion - *Would like to see river group really look into a day-use fee besides the campers. Would like to see this fee or some fee go to everyone.*

Move to vote: All in favor.

Member Roundtable:

Jerry – The Crook County Natural Resource Plan, was originally rejected 2 times; then adopted as a policy not a plan. Now we will have the County Extension agent leading a group to help make recommendations on planning issues etc. to the court and to bring forward. There will be 9 main members, including a member of another collaborative. Looking forward to this going forward.

Steve- thank Jerry. Feels Crook County is addressing this plan well. Prineville 150 years old and the City of Prineville Railroad is 100!! The Railroad donated a caboose to the Bowman Museum.

Terry – Thanks everyone for RAC meetings! We get a lot done. The issue in Baker is the new Forest Plan. It's hard to deal with regarding access, but we're hoping we can continue to work together and see things moving forward.

Glenn – thx Shane to meet with him on additional issues.

Randy – subcommittee on Forest Plan will remain interested on the resolution of public comments/appeals/the plan. Welcome and thanks to new members – their presence is already additive. Committees are made richer by the members and we're going to miss Tim.

Brian – learn so much every time. I was in Scotland last Nov. - Oregon pine is used in the distilleries!

Greg – echo thx to Tim! ODFW had proposed a fee structure for hunting, and when we went to drop it, the public said no, you've already got it so do it. Going to electronic licensing next year – tag will go on phone. This will be a learning curve.

Tim – last meeting we had presentation from South Fork John Day Watershed Council on the coordinated resource management plan. Happy to report the CRMP is up and running – so grateful for all the support.

Jim R – I'm going to miss Tim too! From the Central Access and Habitat Board – there's a new director from ODFW. There should be a conference call on 240K acres – using \$ to reseed some of this. Approved

198K to rehab 4400 acres of private upland ground on fire burned areas. Also some grant money going to private land owners. This is a good outcome.

Gus – pleasure to meet everyone! Look forward to working with everyone.

Jim B- found it very interesting, looking forward to serving.

Art – NOHV council and open house listening session. See handout. Held 5 meetings in OR/WA

Subcommittee – add one for 30 mile? Yes. And continue to work on teleconference meeting opportunities. Will bring more info on 30 mile to the next meeting – should fit into the timeline to participate and provide input to the process.

Next meeting dates and Locations:

Feb. 21-22 - in Prineville (Jerry is going to be looking at adding a tour of Facebook, solar plants, etc. to this one so possibly a day and half). BLM/FS agency admins - get me agenda items as soon as you have them. I'll put in the Fed. Reg. Notice by Oct. 30.

June 20-21 in Condon, Oregon. Looking to have one day as a float trip on the John Day River.

October 17-18 - in Pendleton.

Meeting adjourned: 12:38



John Day Snake River Resource Advisory Committee

INFORMATION UPDATE New Information Only

Vale District Office

BLM

Baker Resource Area

Mining:

The Baker Field Office completed the field surveys necessary to finish the NEPA analysis process for the Don J Mining Plan of Operations (PoO). The PoO is for a proposed placer gold mining operation located on the Burnt River. This PoO was formerly referred to as the Cox PoO, but ownership of the claim has changed. The new owner has decided to proceed with the original plan.

The analysis for the True PoO, located on Clark's Creek, was completed in March of this year and the PoO will receive final approval once the operator submits the required reclamation bond.

The Patawa Pit Mineral Materials operation, located on Indian Trust Lands near Pendleton, has been brought into compliance. The operator had been issued a non-compliance order due to several issues that were outside the scope of the PoO.

Three reclamation bonds secured for Notice level operations have been forfeited by the claimants for failure to complete reclamation. The Baker Field Office will complete the required work through contractors and any remaining funds will be returned to the claimants.

Three abandoned mine land (AML) features have been remediated this year. The most recent was the filling of an old shaft with waste rock from the Don J site. The work was completed through a cooperative effort between the claimant and BLM's crew.

Lands and Realty:

The Decision Record was signed on August 30 for an EA prepared for a ROW to Wallowa County for the maintenance of Wallupa Creek Road. Wallupa Road often sustains damage from seasonal storms and requires yearly maintenance as a result. The road is one of few access routes to the Lower Grande Ronde River and its residents. It is an important route for EMS, recreation and commerce.

The Decision Record for the Baker City Line pipeline replacement project was signed on July 10. This is the City's primary water supply from the watershed and the line crosses BLM, USFS and private lands.

In July a ROW was issued to Pacific Corp for the construction and maintenance of the Wallula to McNary Power line. This ROW permits the portion of the line that crosses BLM administered lands.

A cadastral survey was completed for the lands associated with the Virtue Mine. This was a very complex survey and now the Baker Field Office will be able to address some long-standing land ownership and trespass issues.

September 2018





John Day Snake River Resource Advisory Committee

INFORMATION UPDATE New Information Only

Range Management:

The final decisions for the Keating Geographic Unit (GU) grazing permit EA were issued and sixteen permits were renewed. An additional thirteen permits will be renewed in the first quarter of fiscal year 2019. The grazing decisions authorize: the construction of four range improvements that will protect approximately 1.5 miles of riparian area, increased flexibility of grazing on and off dates, increase animal unit months (AUMs) during years of high winter and spring precipitation in order to reduce the threat of wildfire within allotments dominated by non-native vegetation, and removal of juniper and Russian olive trees within riparian areas.

The interdisciplinary team has finished the Pritchard Creek GU grazing permit renewal EA and this document will be posted to e-planning for a 30 day comment period early first quarter of the fiscal year. The EA analyzes the impacts to rangeland health standards from a full range of alternatives, which include; no grazing, current management, three percent increase in AUMs, eight percent increase in AUMs, and a permittee submitted alternative that analyzes a twenty-seven percent increase in AUMs. All action alternatives analyze the impact that domestic sheep grazing has on bighorn sheep.

The Baker Resource Area is looking into the feasibility of initiating two small grazing permit projects, one in the Keating Valley and the other in the Cow Valley sage-grouse priority area of conservation.

A decision was issued to develop three springs in the East Iron Mountain Allotment to provide off-stream water for livestock and wildlife, improve riparian condition and improve water quality.

The Baker Resource Area has coordinated with Baker County Weed Department, Tri-county Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA), Wallowa Resources CWMA, Oregon Department of Agriculture and local landowners to better utilize BLM assistance agreements and staff to treat noxious weeds and invasive plant species on a landscape scale. Multiple coordination meetings have occurred to identify potential treatment areas regardless of land ownership. In addition, the BLM extended both Tri-county and Wallowa Resources CWMA assistance agreements by one year so that long-term and wildfire related projects could continue, and Baker County Weed Department was awarded an assistance agreement to treat noxious weeds along road right of ways.

Forestry and Fuels:

Work continues on preparing the Mormon-Pedro stewardship project. This landscape scale project will treat approximately 2,000 acres of forested land, with the goal of reducing stocking density to improve the health of the residual stands and make them more resilient to the effects of wildfire. The volume of wood products to be harvested from this project will be in excess of three million board feet (3 MMBF).





John Day Snake River Resource Advisory Committee

INFORMATION UPDATE

New Information Only

Outdoor Recreation:

The Baker Field Office recently hosted the 2018 Student Congress, which consists of 29 future natural resource managers. The Student Congress is associated with the Public Lands Foundation. Participants spent time at NHOTIC and the Sunridge Motel attending seminars and presentations. Students spent a day at the Minam Boat Launch constructing fencing and picnic tables. The theme for this year's congress was the 50th Anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and The National Trails System.

Cultural Program and Tribal Relations:

Baker Field Office staff guided and outfitted a three-day float trip for youth members of the Nez Perce Tribe. The Nez Perce are assembling an ethnographic study of the Grande Ronde River area and the float trip provided an introduction for these young folks to cultural site monitoring, the river and many places of importance to their cultural history.



Prineville District – Bureau of Land Management

John Day – Snake RAC Update, September 2018

2018 Fire Season Summary

It was a busy fire season for Central Oregon and the Prineville BLM. The BLM started with the Rainbow Fire near Warm Springs in mid-June and did not go too long without a major incident. In late June, following a lightning storm, over 100,000 acres burned in both the Box Car and Jack Knife fires. Since then the Solitude, Substation, Long Hollow and South Valley Fires impacted our Deschutes River corridor and the Cemetery Fire made a run from private land into the Maury Mtns east of Prineville. After that, we experienced several large fires on or near the John Day River, including Stubblefield, Seale, Lone Rock and Jennie's Peak. All in all, the fires in Wasco and Sherman County have consumed about 350,000 acres of public and private land. There were also numerous additional fires managed by the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, Oregon Department of Forestry (Graham and Allen Springs), Forest Service, and numerous municipal and Rural Fire Protection Associations.

The Prineville BLM hosted five Incident Management Teams: On the Lower Deschutes the Box Car, South Valley and Long Hollow Fires had Type 2 Incident Management Teams (Long Hollow was an ODF fire). On the John Day River, a Type 2 Team took over the Stubblefield, Seale, Jennie's Peak and Lone Rock Fires. The Cemetery Fire on the northeast side of the Maury Mountains east of Prineville also hosted a Type 2 Team. The Substation Fire required a Type 1 Incident Management Team due to the complexity of the land ownership, the value of the wheat/agricultural fields, and the fatality that occurred. Many of our fires also used Type 3 Incident Management Teams prior to larger teams arriving.

2018 Fire Rehabilitation Summary

Fire Restoration falls into two categories: repairing the damage that the actual suppression work caused, and rehabilitating some of the damage that the fire caused.

The last days in fire suppression also include time for crews to repair damage caused by suppression such as mending fences cut to let engines pass through, putting water bars on handlines to prevent erosion, and pulling in the berm created by the dozer as it was building line.

At the same time, resource specialists who manage botany, weeds, cultural resources, grazing allotments, recreation and wildlife are assessing the damage caused by both the fire and the suppression efforts taken to contain the fire. Once a fire is fully contained, BLM districts have a small window of time to submit requests for special fire rehabilitation dollars, called Emergency Site Stabilization and Rehabilitation, and Burned Area Rehabilitation funding.

The primary goals of Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation include stabilizing soils, controlling or mitigating erosion, and preventing weeds from establishing in newly disturbed soils. Emergency Stabilization is defined as "planned actions to stabilize and prevent unacceptable degradation to natural and cultural resources, to minimize threats to life and property resulting from the effects of a fire, or to repair/replace/construct physical improvements necessary to prevent degradation of land or resources. Emergency Stabilization actions must be taken within one year following containment of a wildland fire." Burned Area Rehabilitation is defined as "efforts undertaken within three years of containment of a wildland fire to repair or improve fire-damaged lands unlikely to recover naturally to management approved conditions, or to repair or replace minor facilities damaged by fire."

With so many fires this year, we know we can't fix everything, so we'll focus on finding some of worst effects of the fire. Fires burn with varying intensities, and the majority of public lands will recover naturally. Weeds are a large issue and we will spend a lot of time and effort controlling these in areas more severely burned. And there are some things we can't fix such as the historic Ferry Canyon house on the Lower Deschutes River, which will not be rebuilt.



Thirtymile (Ratray & Campbell) Property Acquisition

In January 2018, BLM completed the environmental analysis for acquisition of approximately 11,500 acres adjacent to the John Day River, Thirtymile Creek and upland areas in neighboring Gilliam County. The properties consist of lands purchased by Western Rivers from the Ratray and the Campbell estates. The BLM would acquire lands at the appraised fair market value using Land and Water Conservation Funds (Sportsmen Access) as funding becomes available. The EA also considered realty actions necessary to ensure public access to the acquired parcels across adjacent private land through BLM securing public easements from two separate landowners.

As of March 28, 2018, the BLM completed Phase I of the acquisition, adding part of the Ratray property (4,083 acres) into the public land system. The BLM now has funding for Phase II of the Ratray property, which will add the remainder of the Ratray property (4,127 acres) and the Campbell Tract (approximately 2,939 acres.)

Acquired lands would be managed per the direction in the John Day Basin Resource Management Plan (RMP) (2015). Site-specific project implementation and management direction beyond that would be deferred until the BLM prepares a subsequent National Environmental Policy Act analysis for any proposed actions.

Interim management steps have included:

- Managing new public access to the John Day River while balancing Mid-Columbia Steelhead spawning by offering a temporary boat launch on the south side of Armstrong Road while to avoid vehicles crossing through spawning beds.
- Informing the public about access, available travel routes, fire restrictions, fire suppression, hunting, road conditions, etc.
- Responding this fall to damage from fire traffic on Armstrong Canyon and Thirtymile Rds. by planning an emergency maintenance schedule that allows hunting/boating access by rotating road closures. Informing the public and hunters about deteriorated road conditions.

Next steps: Interdisciplinary Team will gather preliminary data and conduct site visits to these new public lands this fall, and begin the Environmental Assessment this December regarding management of this area. Management actions will look at access, roads and trails, cultural resource protection, recreation, fish habitat protection, grazing, etc.

***JDS RAC:** this would be a great opportunity to have RAC involvement in the plan for this area. If the RAC would like to develop a subcommittee, we can coordinate involvement, share our plan and outreach, share public input, and get RAC input, etc.*

John Day River 2017 Season Summary

2016 – 815 permits sold for 4,966 boaters. The total dollar amount collected was \$15,110.

2017 – 1,137 permits sold for 6,472 boaters. Total dollar amount collected was \$21,040.

2018 – 963 permits sold (still have about 75 to enter by hand so numbers aren't final) for 5,561 boaters. Total dollar amount collected is 18,020.

Due to a lower snowpack in 2017-18, the 2018 boating season was compressed into a shorter time period, with folks trying to get on the river before the water ran out. Boating permits for the John Day are still unlimited, meaning there is no limit on the number of groups allowed to launch per segment per day. As a result, launch ramps and boat-in campsites have been considerably over-capacity on weekends and we are hearing reports of crowding from customers.

Fees will continue to be put back onto the John Day River for maintenance and patrols. In 2018, fee revenue was used to provide four garbage dumpsters at Clarno during the boating season, for weed spraying at launch and take out sites, and to pay for the cleaning and pumping of toilets located at launch and take-out sites. In most years, some of the fee money helps pay for river ranger floats to clean boat-in campsites; however, this year we had trouble hiring seasonal staff, so we were unable to conduct river ranger floats.



Recreation.gov

We expect to move the John Day permit system to Recreation.gov some time in 2019. The national Recreation.gov system is able to handle a high customer demand, allowing the BLM to return to implementing the boating use limits directed by the management plan, which will help to better spread use throughout the boating season. The new contractor running Recreation.gov will charge a transaction fee of **\$6 per permit**, which will be added to the boating use fee of \$10 per group per one-day trip or \$20 per group per multi-day trip. Customers will obtain boating permits for the peak use season on Recreation.gov. Customers wishing to boat during the off season would continue to obtain permits on the BLM website, where permits would continue to be issued free of charge.

Glass Buttes

Communication Site and RMP Amendment

The BLM has issued a decision on Bonneville Power Administration's application to construct a new communication tower and associated infrastructure at the existing communication site on Glass Butte, southeast of Hampton. The project is in the far northeast corner of Lake County, but it would provide benefits throughout the region. The proposed new facilities would support cellular service for emergency 911 services in the area, including Highway 20, and would allow BPA to monitor/direct the electrical power grid in the region. A second application from AT&T is also in the works.

Lease Transfer

Prineville is working on the City of Prineville's application to take over a communication site lease on Glass Buttes. BLM had been working with a small amateur radio group (HiDarg) to acquire the lease; however, the organization was unable to provide the surety bond to cover the cost of rehabbing the site. As an alternative, the District worked with HiDarg to find a partner to take on the lease assignment. Under this new arrangement, the City of Prineville will hold the lease and will allow HiDarg to operate.

Traditional Cultural Property

You may remember from Ryan Griffin's presentation last year that Prineville is working on establishing Glass Buttes as a Traditional Cultural Property (TCP). This is still in process. TCPs are eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places based on associations with the cultural practices, traditions, beliefs, lifeways, arts, crafts, or social institutions of a living community. TCPs are rooted in a traditional community's history and are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community.

Glass Buttes has religious and cultural significance to the Burns Paiute Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, and the Klamath Tribes as part of their traditions and historic identity. Traditional practitioners from all three of these tribes have carried out obsidian gathering practices at this site including producing stone tools and other objects for religious purposes and/or ceremonies. This traditional use continues today and is a significant part of passing practices to the next generation. The importance of Glass Buttes includes the entire Glass Buttes landform as well as the view shed from the buttes. Inclusion as a TCP won't prevent uses like mining or public gathering of obsidian,

Lower Deschutes Wild & Scenic River

Boater Pass System Upgrade

The BLM is working with Booze-Allen-Hamilton, a new government contractor, on an upgrade to Lower Deschutes Wild and Scenic River Boater Pass System, managed through Recreation.gov. We are working toward a go-live date of the new system in Sept or October of 2018. Until that time the existing contractor is maintaining the Recreation.gov system. As part of their bridge contract, the transaction fee for Boater Pass System, increased from \$6.00 per transaction to \$10.00/transaction. Once the system goes live, Booze-Allen-Hamilton will lower the transaction fee to \$6/transaction.

Guide and Outfitter 2017-18 Applications

In December 2017, the BLM implemented a competitive prospectus process to solicit applications from interested outfitters and guides. Although the number of special recreation permits is not capped, the river management plan only allows for a 5% increase each year in total guide numbers. Eight applications were received for four available permits. Applications were rated on a point system with



criteria such as type and quality of customer service, commercial boating experience, business and operating plans, history of stewardship, first aid certification, and opportunities to increase access to youth. BLM notified the four companies of their acceptance in June. A new application period will open again at the end of the year. This was the second year of offering the competitive prospectus, with four applicants selected in 2017 as well.

Lower Deschutes Toilet Project

The Prineville District BLM is seeking public input on a proposal to remove and/or replace toilets at a number of recreation sites on the Lower Deschutes Wild & Scenic River (LDWSR). The purpose of the project is to ensure there are no BLM-managed toilet facilities that adversely affect water quality on the LDWSR.

In 2016 the District identified 19 toilets that were contributing to water-quality degradation and thus not in compliance with environmental quality standards. This included 15 "pit" toilets where the tank is a buried metal culvert placed on-end with no bottom, and 4 "Romtec" toilets with plastic (polyethylene) tanks showing signs of failure. These 19 toilets were at 15 recreation sites. The scoping period for this work just completed, and BLM will be taking a look at the public comments before making final decisions on which toilets to remove and which ones to replace.

Fuels Program

High-Desert Shrub Steppe

The High-Desert Shrub Steppe project goals include restoring and enhancing sage grouse habitat, reducing hazardous fuel loading, and improving rangeland health. Approximately 154,000 acres of BLM-managed lands have been identified as needing treatment in Crook County. Currently, treatments are being focused in key sage grouse habitat near the Paulina and Suplee area. In FY18, BLM completed 22,888 acres of juniper thinning and 17,389 of those acres were lopped. In FY19, BLM is planning to thin and lop 22,575 acres of juniper in the Paulina and 12-mile area, and burn at least 4,266 acres in the Brothers area to reduce fuel from cut junipers. More acres may get accomplished by prescribed fire if weather conditions are favorable.

Millican

The district completed a 491-acre juniper thinning project in the Williamson Creek area south of Prineville. The wood was available for personal use firewood. Crews will prescribed burn the remaining slash this winter.

Prineville Lake Acres

The Prineville Lake Acres Juniper Thinning and Fuels Reduction is an on-going project, located 12 miles south of Prineville, south of Upper Davis Loop Road and north of Prineville Reservoir. The goal of the project is to reduce hazardous fuel loading in the wildland urban interface to reduce wildfire intensities, reduce the potential for crown fire, and increase fire suppression effectiveness. For FY18, BLM will thin and handpile 131 acres and burn the acres in winter 2018-19. BLM will thin, pile and burn another 204 acres in FY19 through the winter of 2019-20. Once this is done, BLM will have completed 1000 acres in the PLA Hazardous Fuel Reduction Project.

Fryrear Trailhead

In February, a local contractor broke ground on relocation of the Fryrear Trailhead, located about 1.5 miles south of the old trailhead. The new trailhead location was identified in the 2005 Cline Buttes Recreation Area Plan and will provide access to equestrian, pedestrian, and mountain bike trails. Funds for the project are from a Recreation Trails Program grant and district funding. In addition, Prineville continues to add to the newly constructed Cascade View (non-motorized) and Buckhorn (motorized) trailheads and trail systems in the Cline Buttes area. These last two areas were the site of the 2017 National Public Lands Day event.

Teaters Road

Waibel Ranches, LLC. has asked BLM to consider relinquishing its public and timber access easement on Teater's Road; accepting a similar easement on a new County road in the vicinity; and,



disposing of 160 acres of isolated public land along Teater's Road in exchange for acquisition of 160 acres of private land a few miles to the southeast. The BLM will initiate public scoping on this proposal this fall or winter, then analyze the proposed action and alternatives to that action (including not relinquishing the current public access easement or participating in an exchange) in an EA before making a Decision.

Recent Decisions:

Millican and Williamson grazing lease renewal on BLM allotments south of Prineville. The decision allows implementation of various structural range improvements including construction, removal or maintenance of fences, cattle guards, pipelines, and water tanks.

Outback Forest Management Project that authorizes thinning 3,000 acres with a focus on fuels reduction and just over 2,000 acres with treatments focused on ponderosa pine restoration.

Cottonwood Canyon State Park Environmental Assessment Decision. The decision establishes a Cooperative Management Agreement with BLM and Oregon State Parks to manage BLM-administered lands within Cottonwood Canyon State Park. The park boundary includes 10,171 acres of BLM land, and 8,114 acres of State land. The agreement allows State Parks to restore up to 200 acres of disturbed areas to native vegetation, implement the area travel and transportation management plan, and manage recreation use in accordance with state rules for Cottonwood Canyon State Park, including issuing special use permits for off route use and overnight camping outside of designated camping areas. In the Decision, BLM will also limit boating use on the 30-mile segment 1 of the John Day Wild and Scenic River.



Briefing Paper

Ochoco National Forest & Crooked River National Grassland - Updates

John Day – Snake RAC, September 2018

Sustainable Trails User Group strategic planning effort— This is an effort involving the Crook County Chamber of Commerce, the Forest Service, and other stakeholders to bring together different recreation user groups with an interest in developing non-motorized trail systems in the Ochoco and Grassland. The Ochoco and Grassland are experiencing growing pressure from multiple user groups to develop recreation opportunities. The Forest and the communities would benefit from user groups taking the lead in developing a unified vision for multiple use trail systems. The group has been meeting monthly through the spring and summer, with facilitation by the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council. The group has produced a draft sustainable trails strategy and is hosting a community open house session to solicit feedback on September 20.

Riparian Restoration— Major riparian restoration projects are occurring on McKay and lower Deep Creeks. The McKay project is in the final phase of implementation after several years of work intended to reconnect floodplains, improve riparian vegetation, and slow high water flows. These functional improvements will help improve redband trout and steelhead habitat. Restoration work on a tributary to McKay and a culvert replacement on FS road 33 have recently been completed. Large wood placement throughout the project area is ongoing. McKay Creek flows into the Crooked River near Prineville, and the Forest Service is among a number of groups working on basin-wide strategies to improve in-stream flows and fish habitat across multiple ownerships, while improving infrastructure and water delivery to local farms and ranches. The Deep Creek restoration project will also reconnect floodplain and meadow habitats to stream flows, reactivate dormant side channels which help to slow and capture more water, and create pool and spawning habitat for redband trout. Heavy equipment is currently at work on the project, placing large trees and filling in the downcut main channel. The project area is near the confluence of Deep Creek and the North Fork Crooked River and is important as a cool water refuge for redband trout during the warm summer months of low flows.



Forest Hydrologist Jason Gritzner works with an equipment operator on the Deep Creek restoration project.



Timber Program Update— The Ochoco National Forest sustains an active timber program. The FY 2018-FY 2019 assigned timber target is 26,500 ccf, of which 3000 – 4000 ccf is from firewood permits. In FY 2018 we have awarded all offered sales with the exception of Pipe Timber Sale which is available to bid on 9/24. The Ochoco presently has accomplished approximately 96% of its assigned target. If Pipe is awarded we will exceed our target (107%). We utilize innovative approaches to accelerate restoration and increase the cost-effectiveness of timber sales. The Pipe Timber Sale is Designation by Prescription, in which trees are not marked individually as in a conventional timber sale, but selected by the purchaser based on criteria provided by the Forest Service. This method can save time and money by streamlining pre-sale preparation of harvest units.

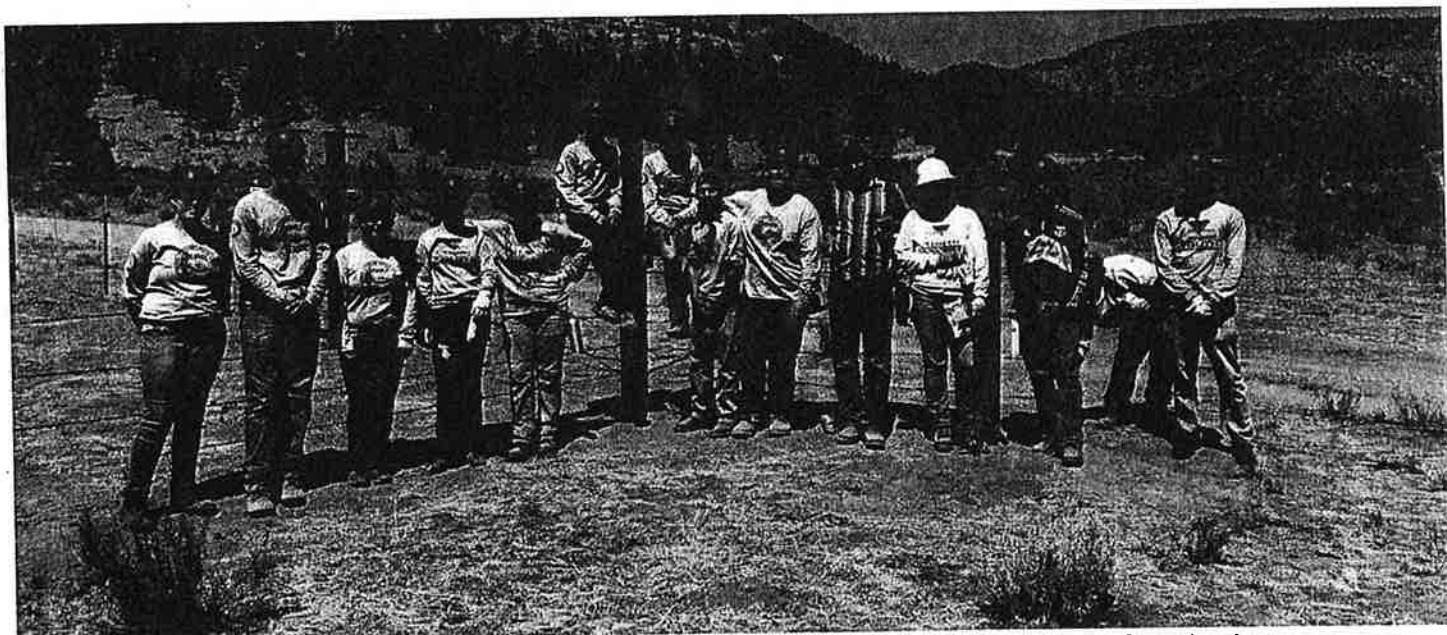
Fuels Program Update— The timber and fuels programs work hand in hand to restore more open, resilient forests. In FY 2018, we accomplished approximately 9,200 acres of prescribed burns across the Forest. These treatments were a mix of understory burns, jack-pot burning, and pile burning in both activity-created (slash left from harvest, non-commercial thinning, and juniper reduction treatments) and natural fuels. In addition to prescribed burning, we also awarded service contracts to complete approximately 3,000 acres of non-commercial thinning and juniper reduction treatments and over 2,200 acres of hand-piling activity-created slash. These areas will be treated in future prescribed burns over the next 2-5 years. In FY 2019, our goal is to accomplish approximately 15,000 acres of fuels reduction treatments through a combination of non-commercial thinning, hand-piling, juniper reduction treatments, and prescribed burning. The Fuels Management program is currently planning a 4,600 acre understory prescribed burn at the end of September or early October and continuing prescribed burning into the fall and winter with jackpot and pile burning. The objectives of these understory burns are to reduce accumulations of fuels, raise canopy base height, reduce ladder fuels, and re-introduce fire to the landscape under controlled conditions to reduce the potential for future high-intensity wildfires.

Invasive Plant Program Update— The Invasive Plant Program works across central Oregon to control invasive plants, prevent new infestations through outreach and monitoring efforts, and to restore ecosystems impacted by invasive plants. Earlier this spring the Forest worked with the Crooked River Weed Management Area, and Crook, Jefferson, Wheeler, and Grant County Soil and Water Conservation Districts to obtain funding from the Oregon Department of Agriculture. Over \$170,000 in funds is being used across private and public lands in the four counties to control high priority weeds and provide education and outreach for weed prevention. In FY 2018, the Forest Service has accomplished 4,066 acres of invasive plant treatments on the Forest and Crooked River National Grassland using a variety of methods including herbicide, hand pulling, and biocontrols. We partner with Heart of Oregon Americorps crews to train youth aged 18-24 to become herbicide applicators. FS staff work alongside the Americorps crews to accomplish the majority of the treatments. This successful and productive partnership provides mentoring, job skills, and career pathways to local youth.



Heart of Oregon Americorps members and Forest Service staff work together to treat invasive plants.

Youth Conservation Crew Programs— During summer 2018, the Forest and Grassland partnered with Heart of Oregon Corps (HOC) and Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC) to field 8 Central Oregon Youth Conservation Corps (COYCC) crews, including one crew comprised of youth with disabilities chosen from HOC's Camp Lead. During the 8 week session, COYCC crews accomplished a wide variety of projects such as fence construction, repair, and removal, invasive plant removal, trail maintenance, hazardous fuels reduction, fire line rehabilitation, riparian shrub protection, plantation maintenance, native seed collection, and campground and facility maintenance. The program employed 44 youth aged 15-18 and 8 adult crew leaders from the communities of Warm Springs, Culver, Madras, Prineville, and Powell Butte. Youth participants earn minimum wage and many also qualified for an AmeriCorps education award. Youth development and mentoring are built into the program. Crews work closely with Forest Service professionals who provide background on natural resources and project objectives, a Career Day event provides youth participants with a chance to learn about Forest Service careers, and a College Day at COCC's Bend campus gives youth a campus tour, and opportunities to learn about college life and financial aid.



A double COYCC crew poses after completing a fence project on the Crooked River National Grassland.

Wild Horse Management Plan Update— The Forest is in the process of updating the herd management plan for the Big Summit Wild Horse Territory. The current plan, created in 1975, no longer accounts for current conditions and management tools. A Draft EIS is planned for public release in the first half of next year. The Forest is working with a Sounding Board, made up of representative interests and facilitated by a third party, to test concepts and gather feedback as it builds an environmental analysis. This Sounding Board follows a two-year public working group in which the Forest Service participated with interested members of the public to explore public values around wild horse management. The EIS will inform the creation of an updated herd management plan, to include contemporary tools and protocols for management of the herd and territory.

Ochoco Summit OHV Project— This project to create a sustainable motorized trail system for the Ochoco National Forest has been ongoing for a number of years. A Supplemental FEIS was released in 2016, and a ROD in June 2017. Alternative 5 Modified creates a 137-mile trail system with a season of use from June 1 – September 30. The system is comprised of 107 miles of designated trails with 30 miles of existing, open connector roads. Of the 137 miles, about 84 miles (61 percent) are on existing roads. The 53 miles of new routes were located on existing disturbances as much as possible. The project is currently the subject of litigation with WildEarth Guardians, Oregon Wild, the Sierra Club, Central Oregon Landwatch, and Oregon Hunters Association as plaintiffs in the consolidated case. A U.S. Magistrate Judge issued Findings and Recommendations in August, which have been referred to a Federal District Court Judge for a final ruling. Regardless of the outcome of the pending litigation, the Forest is committed to working with stakeholder groups to

provide sustainable OHV recreation opportunities and to address unauthorized routes and the resource damage they can cause.

Rager Ranger Station— The future of Rager Ranger Station has been a topic of discussion in Crook County ever since the Forest Service announced administrative closure of the station and most of its facilities in 2012 due to budget limitations, a \$4 million backlog of maintenance needs and minimal agency use of the facilities. Two groups have expressed an interest in keeping the facilities open to the public or in use by a private or nonprofit group, but so far there have been no actual proposals for an adaptive use at the site. The Forest Service has recently received funding to decommission buildings in accordance with the facilities plan for Rager and is in the process of contracting the work out.

I attended the Salem meeting of the NOHVCC/BLM open house series of meetings held in OR/WA this past week.

The primary purpose is to get stakeholder input and comments of how BLM can best provide quality OHV experiences for users, and what the users want to see and the requirements for a satisfactory experience. One of the functions of this series of meeting is to find out where BLM can best put amenities and establish priorities in the future.

As can be expected, a wide set of values were expressed. The majority of the people attending the Salem meeting were from the class II (4x4) OHV user groups. It was expressed that more trails were needed in different difficulty ratings. Since this meeting was being held on the west side, most comments were on areas there, most notably Shotgun Creek Recreation area just north of Eugene, and the lack of class II opportunities, and also in the other areas of the west side. Users are aware of the checkerboard pattern of ownership, but are looking to NOHVCC and BLM to acquire easements with the timber companies to establish trails. This is less expensive and a somewhat faster/easier method than blocking up ownership through land swaps/purchases.

It was also expressed that more cooperation between agencies is needed to provide continuity in trails and opportunity. Also mentioned was the time it takes to implement designations once a RMP is finished, typically five (5) years, often taking much longer due to funding issues.

I gave comments concerning the Virtue Flat, Christmas Valley Dunes, and the proposed Denny Flat areas, as well as my views on what most class II users are looking for in trails. Other than the systems that are established and in process on the Deschutes NF, and the system planned on the Ochoco (in litigation) there is not one (1) mile of designated class II trail east of the Cascades that I am aware of.

Art Waugh

Outdoor Recreation/OHV