

John Day – Snake River RAC
October 7, 2016
Boardman, Oregon

Meeting called to order at 8:05 a.m., October 7, 2016.

Designated Federal Officials begin their respective reports:

- Vale, BLM
- Umatilla National Forest
 1. Jim Reiss: Concerns over water rights pertaining to mining—what happens to water pools from mining activities once the operations have concluded?
 - a. Randy Jones: It is generally left to evaporate.
 2. Randy Jones: How can the John Day – Snake River RAC interact with the land management agencies in terms of providing comments and suggestions related to the Blue Mountain Forest Resiliency Plan?
 - a. Gen Masters: The RAC can recommend increased budgetary support for the Umatilla National Forest as well as encourage public support of upcoming and ongoing projects. Also, the Umatilla National Forest will be bringing projects to the John Day – Snake RAC for review in the near future.
- Prineville, BLM
 1. Jim Reiss: Pertaining to potential State Park establishment, what is the anticipated use of the park?
 - a. Carol Benkosky: Use of the roads to access the area are different than anticipated—users are preferring to access the river via Starvation Lane.
 2. Jim Reiss: How are grazing permits being managed?
 - a. Carol Benkosky: Grazing is currently being managed by Western Rivers, as a private contract. The land is being leased and if the land becomes federal land, grazing will continue per federal grazing regulations.
 3. Bryan Sykes: It sounds like the goal of acquiring these lands is to maintain public access?
 - a. Carol Benkosky: Yes. There are also maintenance concerns with the area, so a plan will be required to be developed.
- Ochoco National Forest
 1. Steve Lent: What was the result of the escaped fire?
 - a. Slater Turner: A severity analysis has been ordered. Depending on the results, we will see what options are available to us.
 2. Steve Lent: What does the restoration process look like?
 - a. The goal is to restore the insulation created by the foliage around the watershed, keeping it cool in the summer and warmer in the winter for the riparian species.
- Deschutes National Forest

John Day – Snake River RAC
October 7, 2016
Boardman, Oregon

- **Wallowa Whitman National Forest**
 1. Greg Jackle: In terms of the Travel Management Plan, how does it apply to the Blue Mountain Forest Revision Plan?
 - a. Chuck Oliver: We don't necessarily want to complicate this plan with another layer. We want to look at the situation individually, to keep it as simple as possible.

- **Malheur National Forest**
 1. Steve Lent: What is the status of the Ochoco National Forest Snow Mountains? Are they part of the Malheur or the Ochoco?
 - a. Ryan Neil: The Malheur manages the area, but it is owned by the Ochoco—the ownership of any area of the established National Forests cannot be changed without an act of congress.
 2. Randy Jones: This summer, the task order was issued for salvage?
 - a. Ryan Neil: The way the service contract works, ideally the timber value matches restoration on the ground. But negotiations occur when there is a discrepancy.
 3. Randy Jones: What's the funding source for the Facilities Master Plan?
 - a. Ryan Neil: Capital investment.
 4. Steve Lent: The Rail Fire went through three Type 2 teams...what were the suppression costs? What three teams?
 - a. Ryan Neil: The Monument Rock Wilderness was south of the fire, which created difficulty in suppression. The fire was also slow moving, burning over more than 40 days.
 - b. Chuck Oliver: The fire cost nearly \$40 million at last estimate.
 5. Steve Lent: What portion of those suppression costs went back into the local economy?
 - a. Ryan Neil: Efforts are made to recruit local contractors—our incoming Incident Management Teams are given direction to recruit local contractors when possible.
 - b. Chuck Oliver: There are also national contract obligations we cannot avoid.

End of Designated Federal Official Reports

Snake River Fee Proposal Update – Jake Lubera, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

1. Terry Drever-Gee: What were the general feelings from the comments?
 - a. Jake Lubera: Even some of the “strongly disagree” comments proposed another fee structure.
2. Jim Reiss: Where do the bulk of the program funds for existing services come from?
 - a. Jake Lubera: Allocated funds from congress.
3. Jim Reiss: Are the commenters aware of the process, that it's inclusive?
 - a. Jake Lubera: It's possible. It's going to be a very long process, and one of our priorities is to get members of the public to understand the need.

John Day – Snake River RAC
October 7, 2016
Boardman, Oregon

4. Brian Sykes: What has been the outfitter response?
 - a. Jake Lubera: Outfitters came out on both sides—some understand the need, others are asking for current funds to be more efficiently used.
5. Art Waugh: Do we know how many of these comments came from groups?
 - a. Jake Lubera: None came with multiple signatures.
6. Steve Lent: Have you made it clear that part of the reasoning is because allocated funds are going down and that you need the funds to maintain the river?
 - a. Jake Lubera: Perceptions in the comments included that publics wanted to look at our budget—we did that. We held public meetings where we showed the budget situation as it pertains to the river.
7. Randy Jones: How do you decide on a venue when you're working with collaborating agencies?
 - a. We alternate venues based on distance from all of the collaborating agencies (Nez Perce, etc.)
8. Art Waugh: Even though this is the RAC with responsibility over the area, we would be happy to work with neighboring RACs (Idaho RAC, Eastern Washington) in working collaboratively on this issue.
9. Terry Drever-Gee: Is there a possibility for a collaborative group outside of the RAC, with a RAC representative participating—for the sake of transparency?
 - a. Jake Lubera: We'll look into that.

End Snake River Fee Update

Vale District Herbicide Document Overview

Deschutes River Fees Subcommittee Update

1. Brian Sykes: Use patterns are changing on the Deschutes—boaters are funding all uses of the river. As an outfitter, I don't want to make my customers responsible for getting their own boating passes on rec.gov. The proposal helps solve land management funding issues, but the fees aren't very equitable—boaters are footing the bill. An increase in fees affect outfitters substantially, an increase of 28 percent, based on 2016 numbers. "Fee weariness" is a real phenomenon.
2. Randy Jones: Shall the work of the subcommittee be accepted as-is?
3. Jim Reiss: I will take the subcommittee recommendations to the Deschutes Managers Group and bring any feedback to the RAC at a later meeting.

Next Meeting Subjects:

- Revisit the Deschutes Fee Issue
- Explore recruitment of a grazing representative on the RAC
- Reach out to other RACs affected by the Snake River issues and propose a collaborative group
- Finalize e-mail voting
- Organize a relevant September 2017 RAC field trip



John Day Snake River Resource Advisory Committee

INFORMATION UPDATE New Information Only

Vale District Office

BLM

October 2016

Baker Resource Area

Greater sage-grouse:

The Oregon State Office is working on the Causal Factor analysis for the decline in sage-grouse population in the Baker PAC. Last week a meeting was held with the Local Implementation Tea. Once these findings are received, the Baker Field Office will prepare the required NEPA documentation and begin implementing mitigation measures that will hopefully reverse the downward population trend.

The Baker Field Office will also be implementing numerous sage-grouse habitat improvement measures throughout 2017, including treatment of encroaching and/or invasive vegetation and seeding of beneficial vegetation. The focus will be on both the Baker and Cow Valley PACs.

Mining:

The environmental assessment (EA) will soon be released for the True Claims Mining Plan of Operations (PoO). The PoO is for a proposed placer gold mining operation located on Clark's Creek in the general vicinity of the recently approved Paul Ada #2/Snappy Ben Plan of Operations. The True Claims PoO takes the place of the analysis that had begun for the Don J Plan of Operations, which the proponent requested to postpone.

Lands and Realty:

We are recruiting a second realty specialist to help manage the backlog of requests for easements, rights-of-ways and other realty/lands actions, including the reduction of our existing trespass case backlog.

The staff is preparing a Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact (DR/FONSI) for the Wallula-McNary power line. This proposed 230kV power line near Umatilla would span approximately 29 miles and transfer power between the Wallula and McNary substations.

The Boardman to Hemingway transmission line Final EIS is due for release at the end of November. The public will then have 30 days to review and comment before final decisions are made by each involved federal agency.





John Day Snake River Resource Advisory Committee

INFORMATION UPDATE

New Information Only

Range Management:

NEPA analysis has resumed for livestock grazing in the Keating Geographic Unit (GU). The interdisciplinary team is nearing completion of an EA, which once completed would allow renewal of grazing permits within the GU. The EA will be released for public comment later this fall.

The public comment period for the expanded Vale District Weed EA has passed and comments are being addressed. As previously reported, a decision was made to expand our nearly completed original EA to provide for the use of an additional three herbicides that are believed to be more effective at combatting weeds while also more environmentally friendly.

A partnership is being discussed between the Burnt River Soil and Water Conservation District, USFS and BLM. The partnership would blur land ownership boundaries while focusing on mapping and combatting weeds within the Camp Creek drainage.

Melinda Razor has been hired from Winnemucca, Nevada to be the new Baker Office weed coordinator and is scheduled to report on November 14th.

Fire and Burned Area Rehabilitation:

While 2016 was a relatively quiet wildfire year for the Baker Field Office, stabilization and rehabilitation activities continue on the 2015 wildfires. Activities are designed to reduce erosion, protect water quality, reestablish native vegetation and rebuild fences to control livestock distribution when they are returned to these landscapes.

Forestry and Fuels:

The fourth and final timber salvage sale from the summer 2015 wildfires was sold on September 26th. Salvage logging will proceed through the fall and winter seasons. This last offering brings the total salvage acreage from public lands managed by the Baker Field Office to 963 acres, with an anticipated yield of approximately 5.5 MMBF.

Outdoor Recreation:

The Baker Field Office's new Outdoor Recreation Planner, Brian Woolf, reported for duty on August 22nd. Brian and his staff have been busy with hunting season activities such as administering outfitter/guide permits, providing information to the public and ensuring all legal public access to the public lands remain open. Work includes removal of improperly posted "No Trespassing/No Hunting" signs and replacing them with signs welcoming people to the public lands.



Briefing Paper

Pacific Northwest Region – Umatilla National Forest

Forest Supervisor: Genevieve Masters
John Day Snake RAC – October 7, 2016



Ten Cent Community Wildfire Protection Project is located within the Granite Creek Watershed, on the Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests. The fuels reduction project area is identified as a high risk area in the Communities at Risk Assessment in the Grant County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) with numerous residences and the communities of Granite and Greenhorn located adjacent to the two forests. Proposed activities include commercial and non-commercial thinning, prescribed fire and the designation of firewood/post and pole permit areas. The DEIS is expected to be released this month.

For more information contact: Ian Reid, North Fork John Day District Ranger (541) 427-5316.
Or visit: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=45203>

Umatilla Forest Collaborative Group Projects: The collaborative group has recently completed work on two projects and are in the initial stages of working with the forest to develop a third project:

- **Kahler Dry Forest Restoration:** This vegetation management project on the Hoppner Ranger District seeks to restore dry upland forest conditions throughout the Kahler Creek watershed through a combination of thinning and prescribed burning. The Final EIS and Record of Decision was signed in June 2016. Strawberry, the first sale, sold on September 27th. The collaborative will follow through with monitoring plans.
- **Thomas Creek Restoration Project EA:** Located on the Walla Walla Ranger District, this project focused on the restoration of off-site ponderosa pine plantations in cool/moist forest type. Commercial mechanical treatments and non-commercial small-diameter hand thinning are proposed. The Final Decision Notice FONSI was signed in Sept., 2016. Collaborative will follow through with monitoring plans.
- **Glass Project EA:** Currently working on developing a proposed action with scoping to begin this fall. The project is located on the Walla Walla District about 16 miles north of Elgin, OR in the Little Lookingglass/Upper Lookingglass and Jarboe Creek subwatersheds. It was identified to highlight restoration opportunities in previous harvested, moist forest, and build on the common understanding and lessons learned from the Thomas Creek Project.

For more information contact: Wallowa Resources (541) 426-8053

Granite Creek Mining Analysis: The Granite Creek Watershed is located primarily within the administrative boundaries of the Whitman District, Wallowa-Whitman NF and the North Fork John Day District, Umatilla. Project activities will affect about 105 acres of this 94,000-acre watershed. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and draft Record of Decision (ROD) were released in March, 2016. The FEIS was developed through an iterative process with the miners, an IDT team of natural resource specialists, treaty Tribes, and state & federal regulatory agencies. No objections were received and the Final ROD was signed in June, 2016. This is a significant step towards approving 28 mining plans of operations. The majority of operations use a gravity-process utilizing water recycled through settling ponds to collect gold. Reclamation bonds, 401 certifications and valid water rights will be required before the Plans of Operations are approved and mining activities commence.

For more information, contact: Jeff Tomac Whitman District Ranger (541) 523-1301 or Ian Reid, North Fork John Day District Ranger (541) 427-5316. Full documents/maps can be found at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=2209>



for the greatest good

BRIEFING PAPER - (continued)

Tollgate Vegetation and Fuels Management Update: The project identified fuels reduction and forest stand density projects within the Tollgate Wildland/Urban Interface (WUI) area. The Record of Decision (ROD) for the project was signed in June 2014. Two of four timber sales and one stewardship project have sold and are currently being implemented. The District also expects to implement future pre-commercial thinning projects. A public meeting on project implementation was held in September for recreational land owners and resident community members.

For more information contact: Mike Rassbach, Walla Walla District Ranger, (509) 522-6009.

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=28356>

2016 Umatilla NF Wildfire Statistics * acreages do not include private/State protected lands						
District	Lightning Fires	L. Acres	Human Caused	HC Acres	Total Fires	*Total Acres
Heppner RD	0	.00	2	45.90	3	45.90
North Fork John Day RD	1	1.00	2	1.40	3	2.40
Pomeroy RD	3	.30	1	.10	4	.40
Walla Walla RD	5	196.00	3	1.10	8	197.10
Totals	9	197.30	8	58.50	18	245.80

2016 Fall Prescribed Burning: This year the Umatilla NF developed an InciWeb page <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4703/> to track prescribed burn operations throughout the year. Annual burn plans/maps were uploaded in early spring to inform hunters and other recreationists where landscape and pile burning activities would take place when weather and fuel conditions line up. This provides the public information on where to avoid camping and hunting when planning their excursions. The site is updated frequently with new information as ignitions are planned and work is completed. The forest is also developing an interactive public map for easier location of planned burns. **For more information contact:** Chris Johnson, Deputy Fire Staff, (541) 278-3704.



2017 Fire and Fuels Career Camp:

The 2016 Fire and Fuels Camp, hosted by the Umatilla National Forest at the North Fork John Day Ranger District, brought together 21 students from Tri-Cities, WA and Pendleton and Ukiah, Oregon to experience wildland firefighting. The 3-day camp immersed students in a variety of activities including stations demonstrating engine and pump operation, progressive hoselays and mobile attack, digging line and mopping up on a live fire, ignition devices and land management on a mock-Ranger District. Forest employees from each district, the La Grande helibase and the Oregon Department of Forestry contributed to the effort. Students were enthusiastic and several said they hope to apply to temporary positions or pursue wildland firefighting careers in the future. **For more information contact:** Amber Mahoney, Public Affairs Specialist, (541) 278-3849.

Miscellaneous:

- **2017 Temporary Hiring: Region 6** – The Pacific Northwest summer job hiring process begins soon. Vacancy announcements open in USAJobs Nov. 15-21. Stay tuned! Position descriptions for temporary hiring will be posted at:
 - **Umatilla NF Temp Hiring Information:** <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/umatilla/about-forest/jobs>
 - **Region-wide Temp Hiring Information** <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/r6/jobs>
- **Olive Lake Dam Maintenance and Repair:** Mechanical failure of the water release closure gate closes portion of lake to recreationists. Lake will be drained approx. 27 feet to conduct maintenance operation this fall and next spring. We are working closely with ODF&W to protect the resident fisheries in the lake.
- **Firewood Season ends November 30:** \$5 per cord, minimum \$20 permit, and maximum 12 cords per household per year. <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/umatilla/passespermits/?cid=stelprdb5417750>
- **Christmas Tree Permits go on sale in late November:** \$5 per tree, one per household. http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/umatilla/passes-permits/forestproducts/?cid=fsbdev7_016114





Forest Resiliency Project

Blue Mountains Restoration Strategy

Ochoco, Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests

Why Here? Why Now?

Across the Blue Mountains of eastern Oregon and Washington, more than 2.3 million acres of dry forests have become overcrowded and vulnerable to unusual outbreaks of insects, diseases, and wildfires. The current pace of active forest restoration is not keeping pace with forest growth. Forests have become denser, ladder fuels have increased, and the abundance of fire-tolerant tree species has declined. Climate trends are leading to extended late season drought and longer wildfire seasons – and the forests are losing against these conditions.

The Blue Mountains **Forest Resiliency Project** is the Forest Service's attempt to address this critical need. This project is a landscape effort to return large portions of the Ochoco, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests to healthier conditions, reduce the risks of unusually large and severe wildfires and reintroduce the natural role of fire to the landscape.

The Blue Mountains Restoration Strategy Team is attempting to accomplish this by moving the dry forests to more resilient landscape forest patterns, while concentrating treatment efforts in the moist forests to minimizing wildfire risk.

Where have we been?

The **proposed action** was released on February 5, 2016, for a 60-day scoping period. This proposal includes approximately 610,000 acres of vegetation treatments (logging and thinning) and prescribed fire treatments across the three National Forests in areas with the greatest restoration need, including:

- 118,000 acres of treatment on the Ochoco National Forest
- 212,000 acres of treatment on the Umatilla National Forest
- 280,000 acres of treatment on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

The scoping period resulted in 184 comments. During the scoping period, the Forest Service hosted eight public engagement sessions in communities surrounding the project areas to share information about the proposed action and identify key concerns from the public to consider in project development. More than 170 people participated in these sessions. Additional engagement efforts during scoping included presentations at collaborative meetings, meeting with staff from three Tribes, and meeting with other interested stakeholders.

What are we doing now?

The planning team is currently working to better articulate the existing and desired conditions in terms of a resilient landscape. This information will be used to inform a more detailed proposed action. Part of this refinement includes using a Wildfire Risk Assessment to evaluate the risk from wildfire to valuable resources and assets, which will be used to inform treatment design and prioritization.

As the planning team refines the proposed action, the team is also developing alternatives within the proposed treatment areas. The team has identified a third alternative (in addition to the proposed action and the "no action") that came from issues raised during the scoping process. This third alternative will reduce the areas that would be treated mechanically, focusing on removing proposed treatments in the moist forest. More information on these alternatives will be available as they are further developed.



United States Department of Agriculture

Briefing Paper

BLUE MOUNTAINS FOREST PLAN REVISION

Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman
National Forests

OVERVIEW

We are working on the final Forest Plans for the Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests. Over the next 15-year planning period, these Plans will guide how the Forest Service manages approximately 5 million acres of public lands in eastern Oregon and Washington. Over the past year, as part of a public re-engagement effort, we have visited with over 700 individuals in 24 public listening sessions held in communities across eastern Oregon, eastern Washington, and western Idaho. Although we have heard differences of opinion about how to best manage these spectacular landscapes and ecosystems of the Blue Mountains, most agree that these National Forests should continue to be managed for the many uses and benefits they provide, both now and into the future.

PUBLIC INPUT and NEW ALTERNATIVES

We found the input shared during the public re-engagement process to be very helpful, and we are using this input in a variety of ways. For example, the public listening sessions have brought additional context to the 2014 formal comments and have given us a better understanding of how different Alternatives may affect our diverse publics. In response, we are currently crafting two new Alternatives, which we will analyze in detail in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS):

- 1) The first Alternative will emphasize restoration and has been informed by formal public comments, re-engagement input, and revised recommendations by Forest Service resource specialists.
- 2) The second Alternative will build upon the first. This Alternative would considerably increase the pace of forest restoration during the plan period (15 years) by moving a larger portion of the forested landscape toward the Desired Conditions – i.e., thinning densely forested stands, reducing fire severity, and decreasing the risks posed by insects and diseases

REVISED TIMELINE

We are currently on a path to publish the Revised Plans, Final EIS, and draft Records of Decision in 2017. These documents will not be ready to publish this Fall of 2016 as our timeline had previously indicated. We will announce a revised publication date after we complete Formal Consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service. There are a number of reasons for this schedule change. One reason is the time required to develop and analyze the two new Alternatives announced this year. We also need to spend additional time revising Plan components related to watershed condition and habitat conservation for aquatic species. To share another important example, an unexpected delay emerged from the need to update our vegetation modeling across all Alternatives to ensure alignment between different modeling processes.

We will continue to provide public updates on our progress through our website, emails, conference calls, and other modes of communication. As we work to complete the Forest Plans and EIS, we will also continue to engage with federal, state, local, and tribal governments to share information and discuss their individual interests regarding the Plans. For more information, visit www.fs.usda.gov/goto/BlueMountainsPlanRevision.



for the greatest good



United States Department of Agriculture

BLUE MOUNTAINS FOREST PLAN REVISION - 2016

Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman
National Forests

Fall Newsletter

Hello from the Forest Plan Revision Team. We are working on the final Forest Plans for the Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests. Over the next 15-year planning period, these Plans will guide how the Forest Service manages approximately 5 million acres of public lands in eastern Oregon and Washington. To keep everyone informed on our progress, we are publishing a series of newsletters to share updates and possible changes that are shaping the final Forest Plans and the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). In this newsletter, we will cover the following topics:

- *Team leader transition*
- *Revised timeline and next steps*
- *Intergovernmental cooperation and coordination*
- *Consultation with tribal governments*
- *Consultation with federal agencies on the Endangered Species Act*

Recent newsletters and other details related to the Forest Plans are available on our website at fs.usda.gov/goto/BlueMountainsPlanRevision. To review, our April 2016 newsletter provided a status update on the Forest Plans and announced that we are analyzing two new Alternatives in response to public input and revised information from resource specialists. Our June 2016 newsletter shared examples of Forest Service staff recommendations on Backcountry Areas, Recommended Wildmess, Wildlife Corridors, and Designated Routes. Future newsletters will continue to provide public updates on key topics, including timber and grazing.



Working together in the Blue Mountains.

Team Leader Transition

It is with a heavy heart that we share with you the sad news of Sabrina Stadler's recent passing. Sabrina passed away on September 7, 2016 due to complications with pancreatitis. Her family, friends, and colleagues are shocked and saddened by this news. Sabrina gave her all to the Forest Plan Revision effort for more than four years in her role as Team Leader. In August, she began her new role as District Ranger back home on the Plumas National Forest in northern California. Our hearts go out to Sabrina's husband and two young daughters. We will miss Sabrina dearly. If you would like to send condolences, please address mail to The Stadler Family, c/o The Forest Plan Revision Team, 1550 Dewey Avenue, Suite A, Baker City, OR 97814.



While we search for a new Team Leader, Michael Hampton, of MLH Natural Resource Consulting, will serve as our Interim Team Leader until late 2016. Michael retired from the Forest Service in 2015 and the majority of his 38 years of Forest Service work have been in the Pacific Northwest Region. He is no stranger to the Blue Mountains or to the Blue Mountains Forest Plans. Michael spent four years on the Umatilla National Forest as a Planner and as Acting District Ranger in Walla Walla, WA. He worked directly with the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision Team from 2010 through 2015 in his position as Regional Planner. We are fortunate to have both his level of Forest Plan knowledge and his Blue Mountains experience. Welcome back, Michael.

Revised Timeline

We are currently on a path to publish the Revised Plans, Final EIS, and draft Records of Decision in 2017 (please see the milestone graphic on the next page). These documents will not be ready to publish this Fall of 2016 as our timeline had previously indicated. We will announce a revised publication date after we complete Formal Consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

There are a number of reasons for this schedule change. One reason is the time required to develop and analyze the two new Alternatives announced this year. We also need to spend additional time revising Plan components related to watershed condition and habitat conservation for aquatic species. To share another important example, an unexpected delay emerged from the need to update our vegetation modeling across all Alternatives to ensure alignment between different modeling processes. We will cover these topics and others in future newsletters, and we will continue to provide public updates on our progress through our website, emails, conference calls, and other modes of communication.

BLUE MOUNTAINS FOREST PLAN REVISION - 2016

Continue engagement with federal, tribal, state, and local governments, as well as the general public



Formal Consultation on the Endangered Species Act (ESA) with US Fish & Wildlife and National Marine Fisheries Services (135 days, 2016-17)



Publish Final EIS, Revised Forest Plans, and Draft Records of Decision (To be determined in 2017 after ESA Consultation)



Objection Period



Resolution of Objections



Records of Decision Signed

As we work to complete the Forest Plans and EIS, we will also continue to engage with federal, state, local, and tribal governments to share information and discuss their individual interests regarding the Plans. Please read the sections below to learn more.

Intergovernmental Cooperation and Coordination

Because National Forest management affects state, local, and tribal governments, the Forest Service seeks their input in a number of ways. During the formal comment period for the Draft EIS and Draft Plan(s), the States of Oregon and Washington submitted comment letters, as did many of the tribes and counties in and around the Blue Mountains. Additional opportunities exist for the Forest Service and other government agencies to *cooperate and coordinate*.

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and implementing regulations, government agencies can agree to serve as Cooperating Agencies. Cooperating Agencies work with the Forest Service to share information and shape successful Plans. Cooperating Agencies may participate in special briefings and discussions with the Forest Service regarding the NEPA process. Cooperating Agencies may also have access to select draft documents in advance of the publication of the Final EIS and Revised Forest Plans. Where they have special expertise, Cooperating Agencies can provide information to the Forest Service (e.g., social and economic information), which is interpreted by a technical expert on the Revision Team. Moreover, Cooperating Agencies are listed as such in the Final EIS and Revised Forest Plans.

The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) and its implementing regulations state that "the responsible line officer shall coordinate regional and forest planning with the equivalent and related planning efforts of other federal agencies, state, and local governments, and Indian tribes" (36 CFR 219.7, 1982). As part of the Forest Plan Revision process, the Forest Service reviews government planning and land-use policies; considers the objectives expressed in those plans and policies; assesses the interrelated impacts of the plans and policies; determines how the revised Forest Plans should deal with the identified impacts (consistent with federal laws, policies, and regulations); and considers alternatives for resolving conflicts with the revised Forest Plans (36 CFR 219.7(c), 1982). Our "coordination review" is currently in progress, and we will include the results in the Final EIS.

To conclude, the Forest Service is the lead agency and maintains decision-making authority on the Forest Plans, yet we also strive to be good neighbors by cooperating and coordinating with other government agencies. This involves exchanging information and seeking win-win solutions whenever possible.

Consultation with Tribal Governments

The tribes involved in the Blue Mountains Forest Plans have included (in alphabetical order) the Burns Paiute Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, the Nez Perce Tribe, and others. Their long histories with these lands are well-documented, and their knowledge and experience is helpful to us as federal land managers. Therefore, we seek the tribes' advice and support when making decisions for these National Forests.

The Forest Service's legal responsibilities to federally recognized tribes are identified in treaties and clarified in statutes, executive orders, and case law. Tribal-U.S. treaties have legal authority under the U.S. Constitution, and the Forest Service has an obligation to uphold the rights recognized by those treaties. Tribal treaty rights often include fishing, hunting, gathering roots and berries, and pasturing horses and cattle.

Executive Order 13175 on Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, sets forth guidelines for all federal agencies to (1) establish regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with tribal officials in the development of federal policies that have tribal implications, (2) strengthen the U.S. government-to-government relationships with Indian tribes, and (3) reduce the imposition of unfunded mandates on tribes. Federal agencies are directed to consult with tribes when engaging in policymaking or programs that may have implications on tribal resources. In addition to Executive Order 13175, consultation obligations are included in a number of legal statutes, including the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and the National Historic Preservation Act. USDA Departmental Regulation 1350-002 on Tribal Consultation, Coordination, and Collaboration also provides direction.

In summary, we value our relationships with the tribes. Through regular consultation, we exchange information and build mutual understanding that improves stewardship of the ecological and cultural resources that are significant to the tribes.

Consultation with Federal Agencies on the Endangered Species Act

In the Forest Service, we have a responsibility to conserve diverse habitats for many different species, and it is a responsibility that we take seriously.

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) directs all federal agencies to assist in conserving species "listed" as threatened or endangered under ESA. Under Section 7 of ESA, any federal agency whose actions may



Bull trout. Credit: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

affect listed species and their critical habitats must consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and/ or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The purpose of this consultation process is to ensure that the agency's actions are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or adversely modify designated critical habitats. For more details on the Section 7 consultation process, please see the FWS and NMFS handbook on ESA Section 7 consultation: <http://go.usa.gov/xZPHx>.

The Blue Mountains Forest Plans may affect ESA-listed species and their critical habitats, including Bull trout, Steelhead, Chinook salmon, and others. The Forest Service is currently engaged in early, informal consultation with FWS and NMFS about the potential effects of Forest Plan components on listed species and their critical habitats, and opportunities for improvement. To learn more about ESA-listed species and their critical habitats, please visit <http://go.usa.gov/xZP7d> and <http://go.usa.gov/xZPAT>.

Next steps: Before initiating formal ESA consultation with FWS and NMFS, the Forest Service must prepare a Biological Assessment, a report detailing how the Forest Service expects the Forest Plans may affect listed species and their critical habitats. Upon receipt of a complete Biological Assessment and request to initiate formal consultation, FWS and NMFS have 135 days (unless extended) to complete a Biological Opinion. The

Biological Opinion will state whether or not the Forest Plans are likely to jeopardize the survival of ESA-listed species or adversely modify their critical habitats. If a "jeopardy" or "adverse modification" determination is made by FWS or NMFS, their Biological Opinion must identify reasonable and prudent alternatives that the Forest Service would adopt to move the Forest Plans forward.

The Blue Mountains of eastern Oregon and Washington provide special habitats for a wide variety of species, including those listed as threatened or endangered under ESA. The Forest Plans will provide direction to help contribute to the conservation and recovery of habitats for these species. We will also continue to work with federal, state, tribal, and county agencies at the project level to promote resilient ecosystems that support the rich biological heritage of the Blue Mountains region.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov



Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision Team
1550 Dewey Ave, Suite A
Baker City, OR 97814

for the greatest good

Coming soon! Public conference call with Forest Service staff

November 17, 2016 • 5:30-6:30 p.m. • Dial: 1-888-844-9904, then enter Access Code: 2651088# We will discuss topics related to those covered in this newsletter and answer questions. Please email your questions to bluemtnplanrevision@fs.fed.us by **November 10**, and we will do our best to respond to your questions during the call. This will be a broadcast-style call with one-way audio, and it will be recorded for those who cannot listen to the live broadcast. To listen to previous conference calls and read the transcripts, please visit fs.usda.gov/goto/BlueMountainsPlanRevision, and see "Recent Communications."



Prineville District – Bureau of Land Management Briefing Paper – October 2016

Prineville Invasive Plant Environmental Assessment

The BLM issued a decision to expand its existing 2004 integrated noxious weed management program by increasing the number of herbicides available for use from 4 to 14, and allowing the use of herbicides on non-native invasive plants, not just State-listed noxious weeds. Use of the new herbicides was analyzed in the 2010 Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on BLM Lands in Oregon, Final Environmental Impact Statement in 2010 (2010 FEIS). The decision was recently appealed to the IBLA and we are anticipating a favorable ruling within the next month.

Greater Sage-grouse RMP amendment

BLM released final environmental reviews for land use plans in Oregon that will help to conserve greater sage-grouse habitat and support sustainable economic development. The plans are now undergoing a 60-day Governor's Consistency Review period. The District will be developing an Implementation Plan this fall and holding a series of meetings with affected permittees.

Ratray Property Acquisition

BLM is proposing to acquire approximately 11,500 acres on the John Day River. At this point, the Ratray property acquisition is moving forward in three phased transactions. The properties consist of lands purchased by Western Rivers from the Ratray and the Campbell estates.

BLM is scheduled to make the following transactions over the next few years:

- 1,320 acres along Thirty-mile Creek with \$600K funds carried over from FY15
- 4,825 acres of combined John Day River frontage and uplands property south of Thirty-mile Creek with \$2.45M in FY16 Recreational Access money
- 2,040 acres of upland property containing Armstrong Canyon Road using \$1.02M in FY17 money
- 3,317 acres of uplands property using \$2.43M in FY17 money

The properties are expected to transition into the federal land base with the usual process, and will include maintaining grazing privileges to be exercised by Western Rivers under BLM oversight.

Teaters Road

Teaters Road opened this past August to public traffic, and will remain open until the end of November (fall hunting season). Teaters will be then closed again, while construction of the new road continues.

McGrath Trespass

The Prineville District is still working to resolve an occupancy trespass between BLM and a local landowner. The current property owner purchased land northeast of Prineville Reservoir in 2008. Although the current property owner thought they were only buying private land, it turned out the previous landowner had built a second home about a .5 mile onto public lands.

Options to resolve the trespass include having the current occupant remove the house and structures, selling a portion of the affected public land parcel, conducting a land exchange, or issuing a land use agreement that would exist through the current landowner's lifetime. The proposed action by the current landowner has been the purchase some portion of public land that would include the home and other encumbrances. To address this proposal or any other alternatives, the BLM will have to complete an environmental analysis. This will include



addressing any wildlife habitat issues, including sage-grouse, as well as considering impacts to cultural and other natural resources.

Currently the BLM is working initiate the scoping process associated with the environmental analysis, and working with our Washington and state offices to answer any questions they have in regard to the project. We are looking to release the initial scoping letter this fall. This fall and winter, we plan to complete to complete a survey of the public land parcels, conduct cultural survey work and consultation, complete hazardous materials reviews, and work with ODFW to identify potential wildlife mitigation and conservation measures.

Washington Family Ranch Fire Trespass

Incident #312 was a human-caused fire that started on private land on July 2, 2015 and burned 2,150 acres (600 acres of BLM; 1,550 acres of private). The fire was ignited when employees working on a fence, used a saw to cut through metal, which threw sparks into dry grass.

After reviewing the case, the US Attorney determined that Mr. Hartenstein, the employee who ignited the fire, failed to exercise the degree of care that would be expected of a careful, prudent person under the circumstances, and that it is appropriate to proceed with trespass processes. Specifically, rather than stop work earlier as originally planned; Mr. Hartenstein continued to operate a saw that emitted sparks into the late afternoon in hot, dry, breezy conditions. It was obvious that using a saw to cut metal pipe, which emitted sparks, would pose a fire danger in the presence of dry wildland fuels. Although Mr. Hartenstein and his fellow employee had watering equipment on site, they had not watered the area where sparks were flying prior to ignition.

For these reasons, the record contains evidence to support the conclusion that the fire was caused by negligently operating a saw that emitted sparks that ignited dry wildland fuels in the immediate vicinity. The federal costs for suppressing the fire are \$151,763.29, and a notice of fire trespass was sent to the Washington Family Ranch last April. Although BLM staff have met with Washington Family Ranch staff since this incident, the Ranch staff have been unable to provide any additional information that might counter a conclusion of negligence. Washington Family Ranches can work with the BLM OR/WA State office and the attorney to request a settlement; however, they have not requested this at this point, and have said they would like the trespass dismissed.

Newberry Geothermal

BLM offered approximately 6000 acres of National Forest System lands for competitive geothermal leasing. The decision adopts the U.S. Forest Service's October 2014 Final Environmental Assessment for the Newberry Geothermal Consent to Lease Project and fully incorporates the USFS' leasing stipulations for protection of other resources on the lands to be offered as identified in that Agency's Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact signed on October 9, 2014, signed by the Forest Supervisor for the Deschutes National Forest.

The lands are situated in Deschutes County, Oregon, within the USFS' Bend-Fort Rock Ranger District, approximately 15 miles nearly due east of the community of La Pine. The parcels are located outside the boundary of the 50,000 acre Newberry National Volcanic Monument, with several parcels situated immediately adjacent to the Monument.

With this sale, **only** the leases themselves were available and any development or exploration would require an additional application by the lease holder and NEPA completed by the Prineville District.



FORGE update: At the end of August, the Department of Energy announced the site locations for the second phase of the Frontier Observatory for Research in Geothermal Energy (FORGE). Unfortunately, the Newberry site was not selected and AltaRock's efforts to establish a geothermal field laboratory near Newberry Volcano are complete. The NEWGEN consortium (AltaRock and partners) is committed to continuing geothermal research and development at Newberry and will be investigating other funding sources in the near future.

Cottonwood Canyon

Cottonwood Canyon State Park encompasses a checkerboard of State (8,100 acres) and BLM (10,171 acres) land. Western Rivers purchased the private parcels collectively known as the Murtha Ranch in 2008 and sold 8,008 acres to Oregon State Parks and Recreation (OPRD) for the state park. BLM is preparing an Environmental Analysis of alternatives to provide the public with a seamless recreation experience and enhance resource values in and around the new park, and would allow the construction of 20 miles of trails.

Update: Work on the Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Assessment was temporarily postponed to accommodate other priority work. The EA will result in a definitive long-term Cooperative Management Agreement between the OPRD and the BLM. The EA is expected to go out for public comment in late January 2017, with a draft agreement scheduled for release in Feb 2017. The final Cooperative Management Agreement should be signed by March 2017.

National Public Lands Day

BLM partnered with Oregon Parks and Recreation Department to conduct a National Public Lands Day in Cottonwood Canyon State Park September 23-24th. We worked on a variety of projects including: building trail, building a 10-tent spot campsite, pulling weeds, constructing river access points, creating pullout/rest areas along a trail, and installing benches. Almost 60 people showed up to help with this event!

Boater Pass System Upgrade

The BLM continues to work with the current government contractor Active Network to negotiate a transition of the Lower Deschutes Boater Pass system to a new system to be operated by *Rec.gov*. The new system will include several improvements requested by boaters, including the a seven-day block release making it easier to purchase a boater pass for a multi-day trip in one sitting, and blocks of passes released at 7:30 AM instead of midnight. The system is still expected to be online no sooner than January 4, 2017.

Special Recreation Permit- IBLA Decision

Over the past year, the Prineville District has been working on a new special recreation permit (SRP) system that will provide opportunities for new guide and outfitter permits, as well as facilitate SRP permit transfers. The process involved working with partners, opening an informal public comment period, and developing a draft proposal.

As a result, in August, the Prineville BLM implemented a competitive prospectus process to solicit applications from interested outfitters and guides. Four new permits will be available for issue (5% of the total number of current permit holders).

The application and prospectus is available on the BLM website, and applications will be taken until November 28, 2017. The objective of this process is to offer opportunities for new businesses to provide the public with additional opportunities for outfitted and guided experiences that are high quality, safe, increase knowledge and skills of participants, promote the Leave No Trace land ethic, and meet BLM goals of land stewardship and resource protection.



Segment 3 Environmental Assessment

In recent years, extended whitewater rafting trips have floated Segment 2 (Harpham to Sandy Beach), portaged Sherars Falls, and then floated four more miles from Buckhollow to Pine Tree. This increased whitewater day-use is taking a majority of allocated passes during Limited Entry weekends resulting in fewer passes being available for other boaters in the remainder of Segment 3. Limited Entry implementation as called for by the Lower Deschutes Management Plan (the Plan) is continuing to reduce available passes by 10% per year.

The managing agencies formed an inter-agency technical team to assist with writing and reviewing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to consider how changing boating use levels in Segment 3 and/or adjusting segment boundaries would affect the outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) identified in the Plan. These ORVs are: recreational, fisheries, wildlife, cultural, geologic, scenic and botanical values. The actions considered in the EA were dividing Segment 3 into Segments 3A and 3B (division at Pine Tree boat ramp), moving the boundary between Segment 2 and 3 to Pine Tree, using Pine Tree as a "soft boundary" between Segments 2 and 3, requiring a "pass through" zone in Segment 3A for guided whitewater boaters or for all users, and changing the daily and seasonal limits of Segment 3.

Segment 3 EA Decision: On June 21st the Lower Deschutes Managers Group considered and approved a recommendation made by the Interagency Technical Team. It was:

Divide Segment 3 into two separate segments, 3A (Buckhollow to Pine Tree) and 3B (Pine Tree to Macks Canyon). Segment 3A would have a daily limit of 300, and Segment 3B would have a daily limit 250. These daily limits would be implemented seven days a week. Segment 3A would have a seasonal target limit of 15,000, and Segment 3B would have a seasonal target limit of 13,600. If the seasonal target is exceeded in two consecutive years, a 10 percent reduction would be made to the daily limit on that segment after the second year the target is exceeded. This proposal would not require boaters to pass through Segment 3A.

The recommendation also highlighted how limited entry would be triggered and clarified that the group size limit from Buckhollow to Pine Tree was increased from 16 to 24, effective in 2016.

Next Steps: The BLM issued a Decision Record for the EA and the Lower Deschutes Managers will amend the Plan to incorporate the EA Decision. The BLM will be working to implement the changes for the 2018 season; and as an interim measure, limits for the entire Segment 3 will be increased to 300 for the 2017 season.

South Junction RR Crossing (Lower Deschutes River)

BLM continues to work with Burlington-Northern to provide a safe and legal crossing from the South Junction campground to the Lower Deschutes River. BLM recently removed the ladders/step-overs at the fences that encouraged illegal access. The railroad, at the same time, has indicated that people directly crossing the tracks (not walking up or down the tracks) will not be ticketed, and should be aware that they are crossing at their own risk. Walking on (up or down) the tracks or within the 4-foot right-of-way on either side of the tracks is still considered criminal trespassing in the first degree and violators can be cited. BLM has posted notices to this effect, and will work on a cross-over environmental assessment in 2017.



Briefing Paper

Pacific Northwest Region – Ochoco National Forest

Ochoco National Forest & Crooked River National Grassland - Updates

John Day – Snake RAC, October 2016

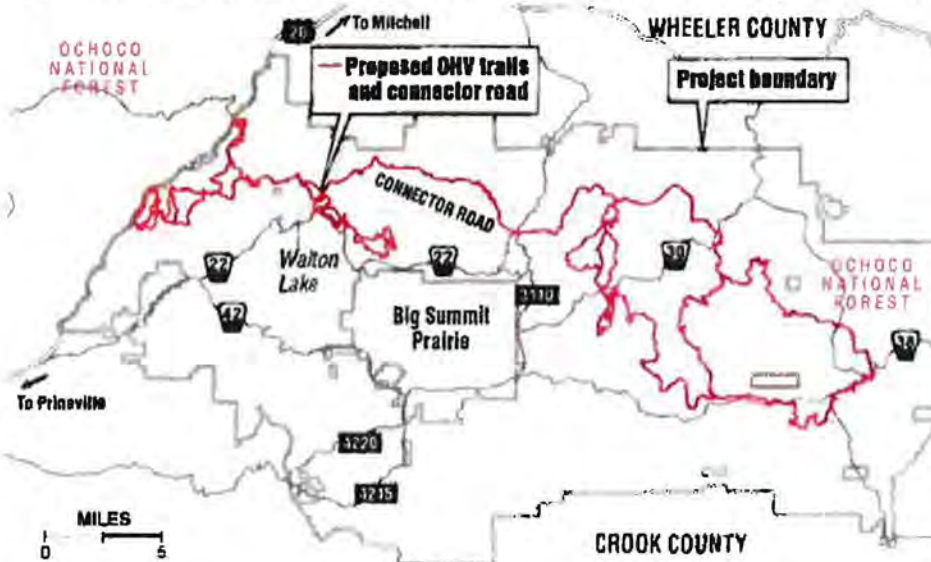
Ochoco Summit OHV Trail Project: The Forest released a Final EIS and Draft Record of Decision for this project on September 23. A 45-day objection period follows for those who have previously filed written comments on the proposal. At the end of that period, the Forest Service will work to resolve any objections received. Following objection resolution, the Forest Supervisor may choose to proceed with the project as proposed, to make modifications and continue the analysis, or to halt the project.

A Supplemental Draft EIS was released this spring with a public comment period that ended April 4. The previous DEIS and FEIS released in 2014 were withdrawn following the Bailey Butte fire. The new FEIS incorporates feedback from multiple stakeholder meetings. The new FEIS used that feedback to create Alternative 5, which proposes to create a 137-mile OHV trail system with a season of use from June 1 – September 30.

The intent behind the project is to create a sustainable place for recreational OHV use in the Ochocos so that riders will have an authorized place to recreate and will not create their own routes in other parts of the Forest. The Ochoco riding opportunity is intended to dovetail with other riding areas across Central Oregon, like Bend-Ft. Rock, Millican, and Santiam Pass, so that OHV riders have a place to recreate in all seasons. Adoption of an OHV trail system does not eliminate other OHV riding opportunities currently available on open mixed-use roads in the Ochocos.

Ochoco OHV trails system advances

The Ochoco National Forest calls for about 137 miles of trails for motorized off-highway vehicle riding. A draft decision and final environmental impact statement mark the latest move in the long planning process.



Source: Ochoco National Forest

Graphic Credit: The Bulletin



for the greatest good

BRIEFING PAPER - (continued)

East Maury wildfire: On Thursday, Sept. 29, a planned prescribed burn in the Maury Mountains became a wildfire when an unforeseen wind event pushed fire across planned containment lines and into adjacent private ranch property. Fire managers were conducting a prescribed burn to improve the resources within a 333-acre unit Thursday afternoon when a storm system moved in from the south and created a 180-degree wind reversal. The storm event pushed fire north of the planned unit and onto 90 acres of adjacent private ranch lands. A quick suppression effort that included federal and state resources, and the Post-Paulina Rangeland Protection Association, surrounded the fire at 1,555 acres where it remains today. Full containment is expected this week.

Fire season overview: Fire season was steady but quiet this year in Central Oregon. The Ochoco/Grassland had a total of 37 wildfires for just over 1,600 acres burned. Of those, 19 fires were human-caused. This is down significantly from the 10-year average for Ochoco/Grassland, which is 61 wildfires per year. Factors that led to a quiet season include heavy precipitation last winter and this spring, minimal lightning activity during the driest periods, and a quiet fire season across the Pacific Northwest which meant more local resources were available to quickly respond to and suppress the local fire starts that occurred.

Blue Mountains Forest Resiliency Project: The Ochoco National Forest, along with the Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests, is part of the Blue Mountains Forest Resiliency Project. The Ochoco took part in a public engagement session in Prineville on March 16, which was one of many taking place to discuss the Proposed Action. Across the Blue Mountains of eastern Oregon and Washington, more than 2.3 million acres of dry forests have become overcrowded and vulnerable to unusual outbreaks of insects, diseases, and wildfires. The current pace of active forest restoration is not keeping pace with forest growth. The project is an effort to restore more than a half million acres of forests on the Ochoco, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests. This project will use thinning and fire to actively restore dry forests toward more resilient conditions.

The Proposed Action suggests:

- 118,000 acres of treatment on the Ochoco National Forest
- 212,000 acres of treatment on the Umatilla National Forest
- 280,000 acres of treatment on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement is planned for release early next year.

Big Summit Wild Horse Herd Management Plan: The Ochoco National Forest is continuing an effort to update its management plan for the Big Summit Wild Horse Territory, a Congressionally-designated area of 27,300 acres located about 25 miles east of Prineville. Planners have begun gathering data in order to prepare an EIS and the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council has formed a public stakeholder group to explore the social values surrounding wild horse management and provide recommendations to the Forest. The current plan was written in 1975 and calls for a managed herd size of 55-60 head. Some of the management tools provided in that plan are no longer available to the Forest and many conditions have changed since 1975. The June 2015 annual wild horse inventory estimated a current herd size of 152 horses. In the interim, the Forest continues to gather animals that have strayed outside the territory and work with the Central Oregon Wild Horse Coalition to adopt them out.

Ochoco Forest Restoration Collaborative (OFRC): The OFRC has worked collaboratively with the Ochoco to provide recommendations for the Gap Fuels and Vegetation Management Project planning area. A Record of Decision for the Gap project was released in July. The project calls for thinning and restoration treatments on about 38K acres southwest of Big Summit Prairie in the Upper Crooked River and Horse Heaven watersheds of the Paulina Ranger District. The project will include 14K acres of commercial thinning, 2K acres of noncommercial thinning, and 5.5K acres of under burning, along with hardwood restoration, stream restoration and culvert replacements.

BRIEFING PAPER - (continued)

Walton Lake Restoration Project: The Ochoco National Forest will begin thinning operations on October 15 in 178 acres surrounding Walton Lake in order to remove disease-infected fir trees on one side of the lake and to preserve the mature ponderosa pine trees on the other three sides. Laminated root rot has infected Douglas and Grand fir trees on the east side of the lake, rotting them at the base from the inside. The fir trees often fall without warning, which creates a safety hazard at the busiest recreation site on the Forest, and creates a fire danger with the accumulation of heavy ground fuels. On the other three sides of the lake, treatment will remove fir trees that are crowding and stressing the large, legacy ponderosa pines that visitors come to enjoy. Replanting of shrubs, forbs, and disease-resistant trees will follow thinning. The proposal was advertised in 2015 and the analysis was completed using a Categorical Exclusion. Work will take place outside of campground season this fall and winter.

Crooked River National Grassland Ecological Site Descriptions (ESDs): The Grassland received \$100,000 to refine and enhance its ESDs in partnership with the BLM and NRCS. Our partners are very encouraged and excited to hear that the Forest Service is interested in pursuing further development of ESDs as a tool for describing restoration potential. This effort will help us determine a starting place, and the best places to invest in restoration in the future, to reduce the spread of medusa head and enhance health of native plant communities.

What are Ecological Site Descriptions (ESDs)?

Ecological Sites provide a consistent framework for classifying and describing rangeland and forestland soils and vegetation, thereby delineating land units that share similar capabilities to respond to management activities or disturbance.

Ecological Site Descriptions (ESDs) are reports that provide detailed information about a particular kind of land - a distinctive Ecological Site.

ESDs provide land managers the information needed for evaluating the land as to suitability for various land-uses, capability to respond to different management activities or disturbance processes, and ability to sustain productivity over the long term.

ESD information is presented in four major sections:

- Site Characteristics - physiographic, climate, soil, and water features
- Plant Communities - plant species, vegetation states, and ecological dynamics
- Site Interpretations - management alternatives for the site and its related resources
- Supporting Information - relevant literature, information and data sources

Ochoco Stream Restoration Projects: The Ochoco National Forest continues to move forward with stream restoration projects to improve water quality and floodplain connection on mountain streams, while improving fish habitat and restoring what were historically wet streamside meadows. The Forest completed about a mile of restoration on Trout Creek and upper Deep Creek last year, and is currently working to restore a one-mile section of McKay Creek. The work is unsightly at first glance for many visitors so the Forest is working to communicate what the work involves and why it's so important. Much of the work involves using earthmoving equipment to remove berms that were installed on the stream banks in the past to control flooding. The berms have channeled the streams and disconnected them from their historic floodplains, moving water downstream in flashes. Berm removal allows water to linger in pools that spawn fish and spread out into meadows that nurture riparian vegetation. Once berms are removed and streams made level with the floodplain, trees and other woody debris are laid across the channels to increase shade that cools water temperature and increase complexity of fish habitat. Treatment is followed by replanting of riparian trees and plants.

BRIEFING PAPER - (continued)

Grassland Restoration Projects: Several large projects to remove juniper from the Crooked River National Grassland continue to progress with the goal of restoring range conditions for cattle and wildlife and making ground moisture available for the forbs and grasses that support them. Pine Ridge and Westside Stewardship projects are ongoing with the help of Oregon Hunters Association. This year, the Willow Creek project began with help from a \$142K grant from Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. The Grassland also enjoys a close working relationship with the Gray Butte Grazing Association with whom the Grassland is partnering on experimental grazing rotations combined with prescribed fire to reduce infestations of medusa head and other noxious weeds. The Grassland has completed about 750 acres of slash burning this fall to remove hazardous fuels left over in personal firewood cutting areas and to clear woody debris before replanting grasses for range improvement.

Human Ecology Mapping survey will help shape Forest Plan Revision: The National Forests of Central Oregon, in partnership with Discover Your Forest, have released a survey asking people to describe what they value about their public lands. The survey was developed in partnership with Portland State University and the US Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station. Input received will help shape the upcoming forest plan revision process by providing forest planners data about areas of special concern, management issues important to the public, and trends of use at different locations. The online survey is housed on the Discover Your Forest website at <http://discoveryourforest.org/hemsurvey/>. The Forests are encouraging as wide a participation as possible.

2017 Solar Eclipse Planning: The Ochoco National Forest and Crooked River National Grassland are engaged in monthly meetings with county emergency managers, the Oregon Office of Emergency Management, the Prineville BLM, and the Governor's office, to share information and coordinate a public safety response during next year's solar eclipse event on August 21. Predictions call for large numbers of tourists (possibly as many as 100,000) coming to Central Oregon next year during the eclipse. There are many related safety concerns among local communities, businesses, and government agencies. The National Forests in Central Oregon will remain engaged with local stakeholders throughout the coming year to ensure next year's event is as safe and enjoyable as possible for residents and visitors to the area.

John Day and Snake River RAC Deschutes National Forest Briefing

October 2016

Joint Chiefs Greater La Pine Basin Cohesive Strategy Restoration Project: In February, the Deschutes NF and the Deschutes and High Desert Basin NRCS received \$1.2 million in funding from the Department of Agriculture through the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership. The partnership is between the Forest Service and the NRCS to improve the health and resiliency of forest ecosystems where public and private lands meet.

Spanning 344,701 acres, the project area includes national forest, state, public, and private lands. The project is successfully moving forward on all fronts and the partners are putting in a proposal for continued funding for the 3-year project.

Central Oregon Interagency Dispatch Center: In December, 2015 the Redmond City Council approved a new 20-year lease agreement with the Deschutes National Forest to move the Central Oregon Interagency Dispatch Center (COIDC) from Prineville to a new city-owned building at the Redmond Air Center. On September 19, 2016 a ground-breaking ceremony was held at the site as construction began on the facility. The facility is expected to be completed by May, 2017 in time to be ready for the summer fire season.

COIDC provides dispatch support and coordination for all risk incidents for the Oregon Department of Forestry, BLM Prineville District, the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests and the Crooked River National Grassland.

Sisters District Office Sale/Conveyance: In August, the Deschutes National Forest sent out a solicitation for a Real Estate Broker to sell approximately 66 acres of the Sisters Ranger District's administrative site. The current office buildings and outbuildings will be included in the sale. A new office will be built on the remaining 13+ acres of the administrative site. Preliminary designs for a new office building have been developed. The new office building will be built with the funds from the sale.

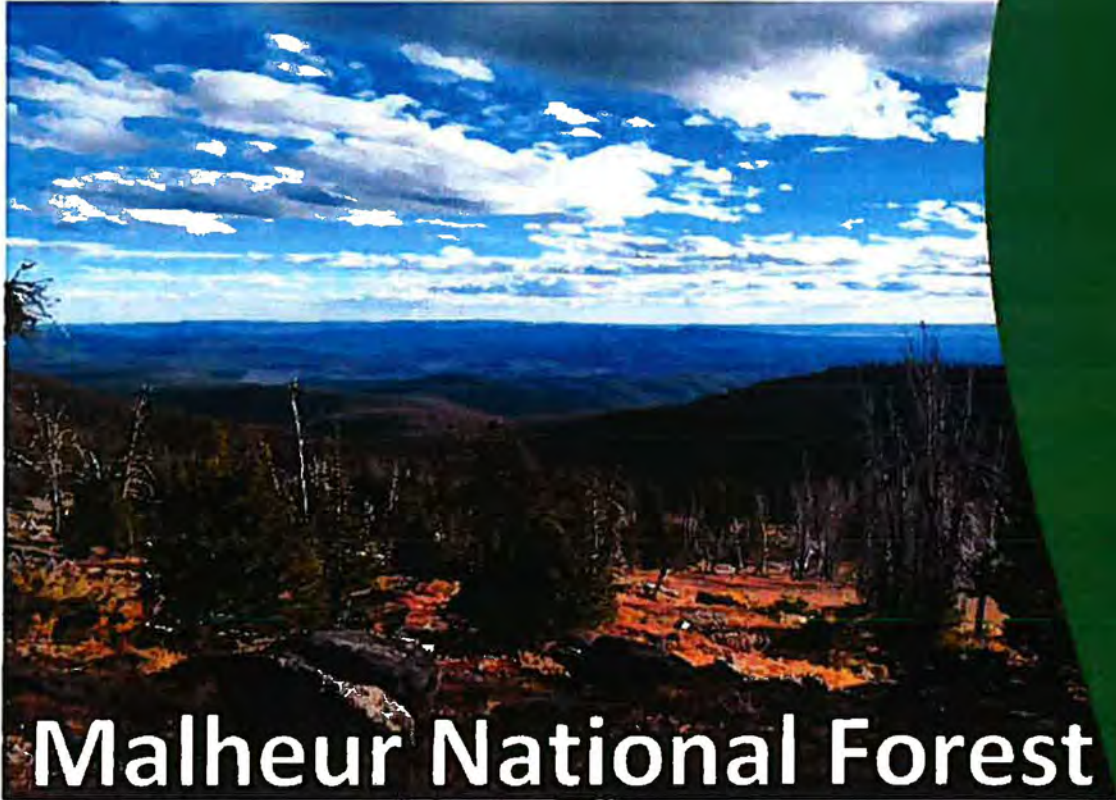
Human Ecology Mapping Survey: The Deschutes and Ochoco NFs and Crooked River Grassland's non-profit partner, Discover Your Forest, recently released a survey to gain input from a broad range of public on what they value about their national forest lands and how they connect to these lands. The survey can be found on Discover Your Forest's website: www.discoveryourforest.org/survey.

The survey was developed through a partnership with Discover Your Forest, Portland State University, USFS Pacific Northwest Research Station, Forest Service- Pacific Northwest Region, Children's Forest of Central Oregon, and the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests and Crooked River National Grassland.

Crescent Lake Guard Station: The Crescent Lake Guard Station recreation rental, since being approved by the RAC earlier this year, has had approximately 90% occupancy through its first summer of operations. The guard station has been very well received based on visitors' comments and it has a 5 star rating on Recreation.gov. Visitors to the Crescent Lake Guard Station have come from as far away as Paris, France.



for the greatest good



Malheur National Forest

In Brief—October 2016

An Information Update of Malheur National Forest Projects

10-Year Integrated Resource Service Contract (IRSC) Stewardship Contract

This project has increased the number and scale of ecological restoration treatments within the forest boundary. It will treat between 180,000-500,000 acres over a 10 year period using an Integrated Resource Service Contract (IRSC).

Task orders under the IRSC will be issued annually and will contain between 70-80% of the Forest's annual timber target and associated restoration treatments such as fuels reduction, road maintenance to improve water quality, treating noxious weeds, thinning overstocked stands, improving stream and riparian habitat.

The IRSC Stewardship Contract and first task order were awarded to Iron Triangle, LLC of John Day in September of 2013 to treat the Marshall Devine project area on the Emigrant Creek Ranger District. Since then, additional task orders have been awarded including restoration work in the Upper Pine project on Emigrant Creek Ranger District, the Soda Bear project in the Bear Valley area of the Blue Mountain Ranger District and the Galena project in the Upper Middle Fork John Day River area. This summer a task order was issued to the 10 Year Stewardship Contract to treat the roadside hazard trees in the Canyon Creek fire area.



For more information, contact Steve Beverlin at 541-575-3073 or sbeverlin@fs.fed.us.

Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) Program

In 2011, the Southern Blues Restoration Coalition, a collaborative group that works closely with the Malheur National Forest, submitted a Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Proposal. They received a grant of \$2.5 million per year for ten years to be used for ecological restoration activities on across 483,245 acres of the Forest. In 2015, after several years of very successful use of the funds, the Southern Blues Restoration Coalition CFLR project was approved for expansion by the Washington Office with a \$1.5 million increase of funds for a total of \$4 million annually. The expansion added an additional 394,043 acres to the project, a large portion of the Malheur National Forest in the Middle Fork John Day River area. One of the emphasis for the use of the funds in this area is for aquatic/riparian restoration.

The project provides a dramatic increase in the availability of small diameter forest products, including biomass, for the nearby communities of John Day and Burns. Prescribed burns will be used to improve forage habitat for big game and fuels reduction. These activities will reduce the threat of uncharacteristic wildfire. The project will increase restoration employment by approximately 70% and create and save approximately \$3 million in wildfire management costs.



For more information, contact Steve Beverlin at 541-575-3073 or sbeverlin@fs.fed.us.

Aquatics Restoration Analysis

Environmental Assessment signed in 2014.

Providing for a consistent, programmatic approach for the restoration of degraded aquatic habitats with the use of standardized restoration activities including:

- Fish Passage Restoration (Stream Simulation Culvert and Bridge Projects; Headcut and Grade Stabilization; Fish Ladders; Irrigation Diversion Replacement/Relocation and Screen Installation/Replacement),
- Large Wood (LW), Boulder, and Gravel Placement (LW and Boulder Projects; Engineered Logjams; Porous Boulder Weirs and Vanes, Gravel Augmentation; Tree Removal for LW Projects),
- Dam, Tide gate, and Legacy Structure Removal,
- Channel Reconstruction/Relocation,
- Off- and Side-Channel Habitat Restoration,
- and Streambank Restoration.



For more information, contact Steve Namitz at 541-575-3167 or smnamit@fs.fed.us.

Blue Mountain Ranger District - Dave Halemeier, District Ranger

Canyon Creek Complex Fire Salvage Project

The objectives of this project are to recover the economic value of dead trees and to provide for societal needs for wood products, while maintaining the ecological integrity of post-fire habitats for woodpecker species.

Web Link: http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=48518.

For more information, contact Sasha Fertig at 541-575-3061 or sashafertig@fs.fed.us.

Starr Aspen Project

The Starr Aspen project planning area encompasses approximately 17,500 acres in the Starr sub-watershed. The aspen and meadow restoration treatments being proposed under this analysis were originally a component of the Starr Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) Project completed in July 2012.

The project includes felling and girdling conifers that have encroached into aspen stands, fuels treatments, aspen stand fencing, aquatic restoration activities, and fish barrier improvements.

- Scoping completed April 2014.
- Final Environmental Assessment released May 2016.

Web Link: http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=41023.

For more information, contact Sasha Fertig at 541-575-3061 or sashafertig@fs.fed.us.

Ragged Ruby

The Ragged Ruby Project will likely include a suite of activities to restore forest resiliency, including silviculture and fuels treatments, riparian restoration, existing trail improvements, and associated road activities. The planning area is located in Grant County approximately 9 miles north of Prairie City, Ore.

- Scoping expected for November 2016.
- Final decision expected for fall 2017.

Web Link: http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=49392.

For more information, contact Sasha Fertig at 541-575-3061 or sashafertig@fs.fed.us.

Camp Lick Project

The Camp Lick project planning area encompasses approximately 40,000 acres in the Lick Creek, Lower Camp Creek, and Upper Camp Creek sub-watersheds. The project is being developed in cooperation with the Blue Mountain Forest Partners collaborative.

The project will likely include silviculture and fuels treatments, juniper removal, spring and shrub enhancement for wildlife, riparian restoration, recreation, and associated road activities.

- Scoping started May 4, 2016.
- Est. Comment Period Public Notice December 2016
- Decision expected June 2017.

Web Link: http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=46219.

For more information, contact Sasha Fertig at 541-575-3061 or sashafertig@fs.fed.us.

Magone Project

The Magone project planning area encompasses approximately 27,000 acres in the East Fork Beech Creek and Grub Creek sub-watersheds.

The project is being developed in cooperation with the Blue Mountain Forest Partners collaborative.

The project will likely include silviculture and fuels treatments, juniper removal, riparian restoration, range developments, trail and other recreation improvements, and associated road activities.

- Scoping completed February/March 2015.
- Draft EIS NOA in Federal Register February 5, 2016
- Est. Final EIS Fall 2016

Web Link: http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=44907.

For more information, contact Sasha Fertig at 541-575-3061 or sashafertig@fs.fed.us.

North Finger Allotment Project

The North Finger Complex project area encompasses approximately 17,800 acres of National Forest System lands within the McHaley, Lower Fox Creek, Upper Fox Creek, Upper Cottonwood, Lower Cottonwood, and Deer Creek sub-watersheds that drain into the North Fork of the John Day River, and the Basin Creek and Upper Long Creek sub-watersheds that drain into the Middle Fork of the John Day River. The project area includes six livestock grazing allotments: Donaldson, Deer Creek, Hamilton, King On/Off, Indian Ridge, and Highway.



The project includes reauthorization of livestock grazing on six allotments within the North Finger Complex using adaptive management strategies designed to meet Forest Plan standards and guidelines, as amended, and improve livestock distribution use levels and riparian habitat conditions within the project area. Project activities also include riparian restoration activities such as bog and spring protections, large woody debris placement within streams, new riparian pastures, instream pond removals, and water development construction to provide water sources outside of riparian areas.

- Scoping completed March 12, 2015.
- Final Environmental Assessment released August 2015.
- Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact released July 2016.

Web Link: http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=45406.

For more information, contact Sasha Fertig at 541-575-3061 or sushafertig@fs.fed.us.

Emigrant Creek Ranger District - Christy Cheyne, District Ranger

Evaluation Plantation Thinning

Precommercial thin 17 evaluation plantations on 235 acres. Trees would be thinned by hand with chainsaws and felled trees would be yarded by ATV. Created slash would be utilized as biomass where practical or burned.

Web Link: http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=47364.

For more information, contact Lori Bailey at 541-573-4366 or lubailey@fs.fed.us.

Dove Vegetation Management Project

The Dove project encompasses an area of approximately 43,892 acres in a portion of the Upper South Fork John Day River watershed. The project is being developed in cooperation with the Harney County Restoration Collaborative.

The project, in the early stages of planning, would include forest products, fuels management, road management, watershed management, vegetation management, and wildlife and fish restoration.

- Scoping released September 2015.
- 30-Day Legal Notice of Comment on EA occurred in June 2016.
- Preliminary EA released June 2016.

Web Link: http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=45415.

For more information, contact Lori Bailey at 541-573-4366 or lubailey@fs.fed.us.

Flat Vegetation Project

The project includes vegetation management and watershed restoration activities including timber harvest and road closures and decommissioning.

- Scoping expected October 2016.
- Decision expected for July 2017.

Web Link: http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=47364.

For more information, contact Lori Bailey at 541-573-4366 or lubailey@fs.fed.us.

Prairie City Ranger District – Greg Moon, District Ranger

Whitebark Pine Protection

Application of Verbenone on whitebark pine to protect them from immediate mountain pine beetle attack. Additionally, removal of competing conifers from around the whitebark to increase their resilience to beetle attack and drought stress.

- Scoping begun June 2016.
- Decision and implementation expected for Fall 2016.

For more information, contact Teresa Corning-Sevey at 541-820-3842 or tcorningsevey@fs.fed.us.

Blue Dollar Complex Allotment Management Plans Project

Evaluation of livestock grazing authorization on three existing allotments: Blue Bucket, Dollar Basin, and Star Glade.

- Developing Proposal
- Est. Scoping Start November 2016
- Expected decision April 2017.
- Expected implementation June 2017.

Web Link: http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=48798.

For more information, contact Jason Spence at 541-820-3849 or jspence@fs.fed.us.

Aspen Wildlife Thinning

The Wildlife Department of the Prairie City Ranger District plans on thinning conifers in approximately 87 separate aspen exclosures to improve aspen stand growth and regeneration.

- Scoping begun June 2016.
- Expected implementation fall 2016.

For more information, contact Justin Hadwen at 541-820-3857 or jhadwen@fs.fed.us.

Summit Creek Restoration Project

Reduce fire hazard near evacuation route for at-risk communities; reduce stand density to increase resilience to insect and disease; protect bull trout habitat; develop pre-fire suppression old-growth stand composition; protect scenic and roadless

- Est. Comment period public notice October 2016.

For more information, contact Sarah Bush at 541-820-3807 or sbush01@fs.fed.us.

Fee Proposed for the Wild and Scenic Area of the Snake River

Forest managers at Wallowa-Whitman National Forest are interested in hearing your comments on a proposal for a new recreation fee associated with the Wild and Scenic portion of the Snake River.

The Forest is proposing a special recreation permit fee of \$5.00 to \$10.00, depending on public feedback received. This proposed fee would be, per-person, per-trip and would be collected from all boaters and passengers. This fee would also include individuals using outfitter/guide services on the Wild and Scenic portion of the Snake River. The area subject to the proposed fee is the Snake River beginning at Hells Canyon Dam to Cache Creek Ranch (approximately 70 miles).

Employees of outfitters and guides would not be subject to the fee during working hours, nor would travel by private, noncommercial boat to any private land inholding; or any person who has right of access for hunting or fishing privileges under specific provisions of treaty or law.

The proposed fee would be used to help provide a sustainable funding source for the Wild and Scenic Snake River. The \$5 to \$10 fee would be used to improve maintenance of developed facilities and historic sites used for recreation, expand interpretation, address health and safety concerns and provide extra river patrols.

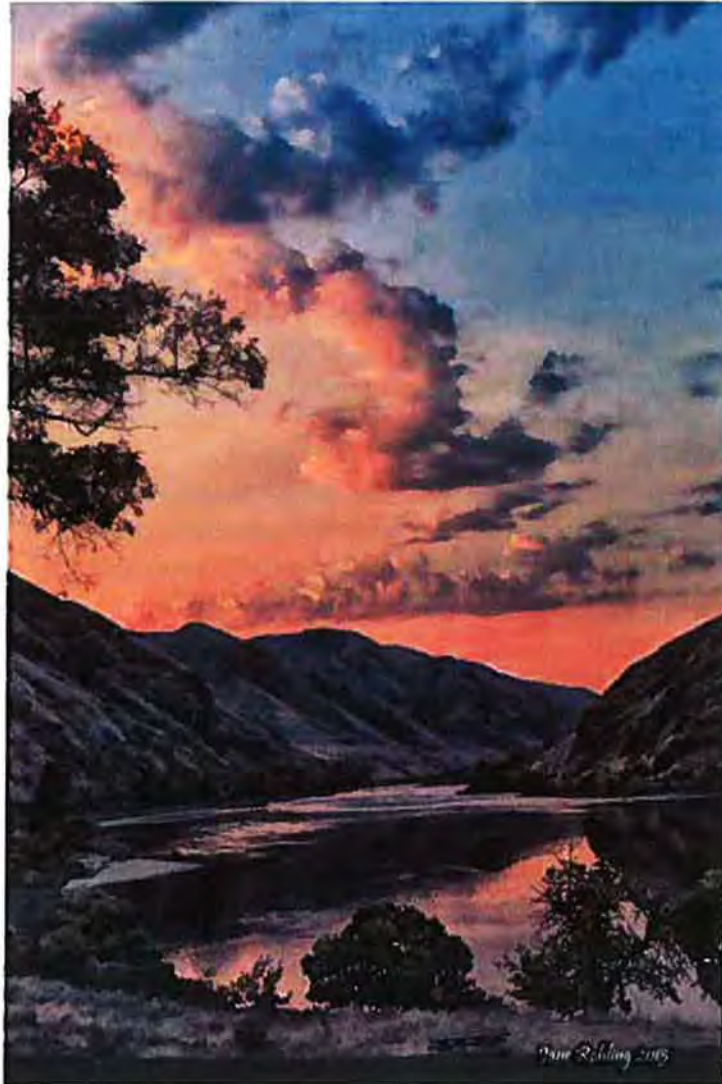
All new fee proposals will be presented before the John Day-Snake River Resource Advisory Committee, a citizen's advisory committee. Committee members represent a broad array of interest groups to help ensure that the Forest Service is proposing reasonable and publicly acceptable fee changes and addresses any concerns.

For more information, questions or comments about any of these new fee proposals, please contact Jake Lubera, Deputy District Ranger, Wallowa Mountains Office at 541-426-5581 or jlubera@fs.fed.us and comments-pacificnorthwest-wallowa-whitman@fs.fed.us And visit the 2016 Wild and Scenic Snake River Fee Proposal website at www.fs.usda.gov/goto/WildScenicSnakeRiverProposedFee



for the greatest good

2015
WILD AND SCENIC
SNAKE RIVER
ANNUAL VISITOR USE REPORT



HELLS CANYON NATIONAL RECREATION AREA
USDA FOREST SERVICE



Introduction

This report contains float and powerboat recreational use data for the Wild and Scenic Snake River, which is located within the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area. This 71.5 mile segment of the Snake River is managed by the U.S. Forest Service. Both commercial and private recreational use data is included. This data is intended to provide information, which reflects general trends in overall use patterns rather than an exact count of yearly users of the Snake River. Private and commercial floaters that launch from Hells Canyon Creek Recreation Site during the managed use season and all private and commercial power boaters must meet special requirements for access. As a result, use figures shown for these recreational user groups represent the most accurate figures for determining overall use trends on the Snake River.

Private float and powerboat use data is collected from all permits year round for this annual report.

- **THE PRIMARY SEASON** extends from the Friday preceding Memorial Day through September 10th each year. Permits are required year round however, **reservations are only required during the primary season** and can **ONLY** be reserved by going to www.recreation.gov or by calling 877-550-6777.
- **THE SECONDARY SEASON** extends from September 11th through the Thursday before Memorial Day the following year. Self-issue permits are accepted during the Secondary season as well as Monday –Thursday in the Scenic section during the Primary season. Permits are available at Cache Creek, Pittsburg Landing, Dug Bar and Hells Canyon Creek Launch.

The data gathered from these permits is used to compile the total number of private visitors and service days spent on the river during the primary season and secondary season.

All commercial powerboaters and floatboaters must have a valid Forest Service Special Use Permit to charge fees on the Wild and Scenic Snake River. They are required to report the total number of guests transported and total number of service days spent on the river. Information obtained from manifests and actual use reports is used to compile the commercial use data.

Definitions

Private - A non-commercial trip is a trip for which there is no payment, collection, receipt, or request for consideration. Non-profit status of any group or organization does not in itself determine whether a trip or trips arranged by such group or organization is non-commercial.

Commercial – Commercial outfitting and guiding is defined as all activities where someone makes a profit, receives a reimbursement or salary, receives rental for the use of animals or equipment, or supports, in any part, other programs or activities from amounts received from customers of the permitted activities.

Service-Day – One day spent by one person on the river; a person spending two days on the river would equal two service-days.

Primary Season – The period when private users are required to obtain a reservation and river permit prior to floating or boating the river – from the Friday preceding Memorial Day through September 10.

Floatboat – To travel by floatboat is to move primarily downstream with the river current. Craft used include rafts, kayaks, canoes, and dories. They may be propelled by paddles, oars, motors (no longer allowed in the wild river) or other devices, but are not generally capable of upstream travel.

Powerboat – To travel by powerboat on the river is to use motorized craft capable of upstream travel through major rapids.

2015 Primary Season – May 22nd through September 10th

COMMERCIAL POWERBOAT USE - JANUARY ~ DECEMBER 2015

OUTFITTERS	PASSENGERS	SERVICE DAYS
BENTZ, Rusty – Bentz River Explorations	130	308
BONSON, Bill and CASSELL, Gabe - Snake Dancer Excursions	1,491	1585
DAYTON, Brett – Dayton Adventures	118	212
FRIEND, Richard - River Adventures, LTD.	515	515
KILLGORE, Kurt - Killgore Adv., LLC	2259	2,844
KILLGORE, Kurt - Killgore Adv.,LLC II	470	470
KING, Bruce – Kingfisher river trips, INC	76	82
KOCH, Jim and Jill	(Total)	2882
• Heller Bar Excursions	1695	
• Rivers Navigation	613	
• Idaho Rivers Navigation	574	
LAMM, Alan - Mainstream Outdoor Adventures, Inc.	0	0
LUTHER, Justin - Snake River Adventures	4,714	4,199
LUTHER, Justin - River Quest Excursions	4,585	4,673
SCHULTZ, Jason - Hells Canyon Sport Fishing	622	876
THOMAS, Brian – Borderline River Charters	192	321
BAUGH, Jess and Brenda- Mountain River Outfitters	288	303
YATES, Mark - Hells Canyon Adv. III, LLC	3,511	3,432
SMITH, Mike - Z & S Outfitters, Inc.	215	548
LUTHER, Mike – Adventures Afloat	202	212
2015	22,270	23,462
2014	20,833	22,216
2013	17,693	19,263
2012	17,688	18,432
2011	17,410	18,796
2010	21,385	22,790
2009	19,964	21,322

COMMERCIAL POWERBOAT USE - PRIMARY SEASON 2015

OUTFITTERS	PASSENGERS	SERVICE DAYS
BENTZ, Rusty – Salmon River Explorations	32	52
BONSON, Bill and CASSELL, Gabe - Snake Dancer Excursions	1,321	1,327
DAYTON, Brett – Dayton Adventures	73	86
FRIEND, Richard - River Adventures, LTD.	419	419
KING, Bruce – Kingfisher River Trips, INC.	19	19
KILLGORE, Kurt - Killgore Adventures, LLC	1,965	1,965
KILLGORE, Kurt - Killgore Adventures, LLC II	470	470
KOCH, Jim and Jill dba Heller Bar Excursions, Idaho Navigation, Rivers Navigation	2,499	2,513
LAMM, Alan - Mainstream Outdoor Adventures, Inc.	0	0
LUTHER, Justin - Snake River Adventures	2,121	2,163
LUTHER, Justin - River Quest Excursions	2,701	2,743
LUTHER, Mike - Adventures Afloat	202	212
SCHULTZ, Jason - Hells Canyon Sport Fishing	37	46
THOMAS, Brian – Border Line River Charters	47	63
MOUNTAIN RIVER OUTFITTERS – Jess and Brenda Baugh	154	154
YATES, Mark - Hells Canyon Adventures III, LLC	2,695	2,723
SMITH, Mike - Z & S Outfitters, Inc	50	50
Total 2015	14,805	15,005
2014	13,982	13,908
2013	12,473	12,535
2012	12,619	12,619
2011	12,776	12,541



Commercial Power boat Trips 2015

Allocated with
Special Use Permit*

	Primary Season	January- December
BENTZ, Rusty – Salmon River Explorations *11	5	16
BONSON & CASSELL, Gabe - Snake Dancer Excursions *85	85	108
DAYTON, Brett – Dayton Adventures * 85	7	20
FRIEND, Richard - River Adventures, LTD.*40 (+Riggins pool)	57	70
KING, Bruce and Pam *6	5	17
KILLGORE, Kurt - Killgore Adv., LLC *31 (+Riggins pool)	60	135
KILLGORE, Kurt - Killgore Adv.,LLC II *9 (+ Riggins pool)	38	38
KOCH, Jim and Jill * 224, 118, 85 = 427 dba Heller Bar Excursions, Idaho Rivers Navigation, Rivers Navigation	101	130
LAMM, Alan Mainstream Outdoor Adventures *55	0	0
LUTHER, Justin - Snake River Adventures *139	124	121
LUTHER, Justin –River Quest Excursions *85	85	115
LUTHER, Mike – Adventures Afloat *43	14	18
SCHULTZ, Jason - Hells Canyon Sport Fishing *6	6	120
THOMAS, Brian - Border Line River Charters *4	4	27
BAUGH, Jess and Brenda *7(Riggins Pool)	22	52
YATES, Mark - Hells Canyon Adv. III, LLC *397	187	266
SMITH, Mike - Z & S Outfitters, Inc *6	6	49
Total 2015	806	1,302
<i>2014</i>	903	1,544
<i>2013</i>	699	1,477
<i>2012</i>	848	1,307

COMMERCIAL FLOAT USE - JANUARY THROUGH DECEMBER 2015

COMMERCIAL OUTFITTERS	TRIPS	PASSENGERS	SERVICE DAYS
ARRIEN, Parker – America's Rafting Company	9	75	233
ARENSEN, Paul - Winding Waters Rafting	18	216	980
ARMACOST, Kurt - Hells Canyon Raft, Inc.	31	294	1190
BAUGH, JESS –Mountain River Outfitters, LLC.	13	110	453
BOYD, Chuck – Salmon River Experience	0	0	0
COLBERT, Dave – Idaho Afloat	3	19	57
GRUBB, Peter - River Odysseys West (ROW)	11	164	820
HAUPTMAN, George - Canyon Outfitters, Inc.	15	114	436
HUGHES, Jerry - Hughes River Expeditions, Inc.	22	170	530
WARREN, Jacob - North Star River Expeditions, Inc.	1	12	36
WENDT, George (Curt Chang) - OARS-DORIES, Inc.	14	213	1008
ZOLLER, Mark - Zollers Outdoor Odysseys, Inc.	04	37	193
Total 2015	141	1,424	5,936
2014	163	1,543	6,502
2013	133	1,370	5,776
2012	141	1,396	5,730
2011	138	1,294	5,355
2010	147	1,453	5,951



COMMERCIAL FLOAT USE - PRIMARY SEASON 2015

COMMERCIAL OUTFITTERS	TRIPS	PASSENGERS	SERVICE DAYS
ARRIEN, Parker – America’s Rafting Company	9	75	233
ARENTSEN, Paul - Winding Waters Rafting	15	186	869
ARMACOST, Kurt - Hells Canyon Raft, Inc.	29	290	1178
BAUGH, Jess – Mountain River Outfitters, LLC.	13	110	453
BOYD, Chuck – Salmon River Experience	0	0	0
COLBERT, Dave – Idaho Afloat	3	19	57
HAUPTMAN, George - Canyon Outfitters, Inc.	13	106	404
HUGHES, Jerry - Hughes River Expeditions, Inc.	22	170	530
GRUBB, Peter - River Odysseys West (ROW)	11	164	820
WARREN, Jacob - North Star River Expeditions, Inc.	1	12	36
WENDT, George (Curt Chang) – Oars and Dories, Inc.	13	196	957
ZOLLER, Mark - Zoller’s Outdoor Odyssey’s Inc.	4	37	193
2015 TOTAL	133	1,365	5,730
<i>2014</i>	143	1,409	6,010
<i>2013</i>	119	1,283	5,459
<i>2012</i>	128	1,315	5,365
<i>2011</i>	128	1,295	5,131



May 22nd –September 10th (Primary Season) (www.rec.gov)

Wild: 634

Scenic and Lower Salmon: 347

Total Reservations: 981

Total People by Powerboat during primary season: 6271



Total private powerboat trips from all portals January through December 2015: 2,861

PRIVATE POWERBOAT USE - PRIMARY SEASON 2015

LAUNCH LOCATION	TRIPS	PEOPLE	SERVICE DAYS
CACHE CREEK	946	4,511	8,338
DUG BAR	4	22	34
PITTSBURG LANDING	296	1,573	5,239
HELLS CANYON CREEK	36	165	423
2015	1,282	6,271	14,034
2014	1,332	6,418	16,087
2013	1,380	6,120	12,507
2012	1,321	6,425	10,370
2011	1,235	5,352	12,338

PRIVATE POWERBOAT USE - SECONDARY SEASON 2015

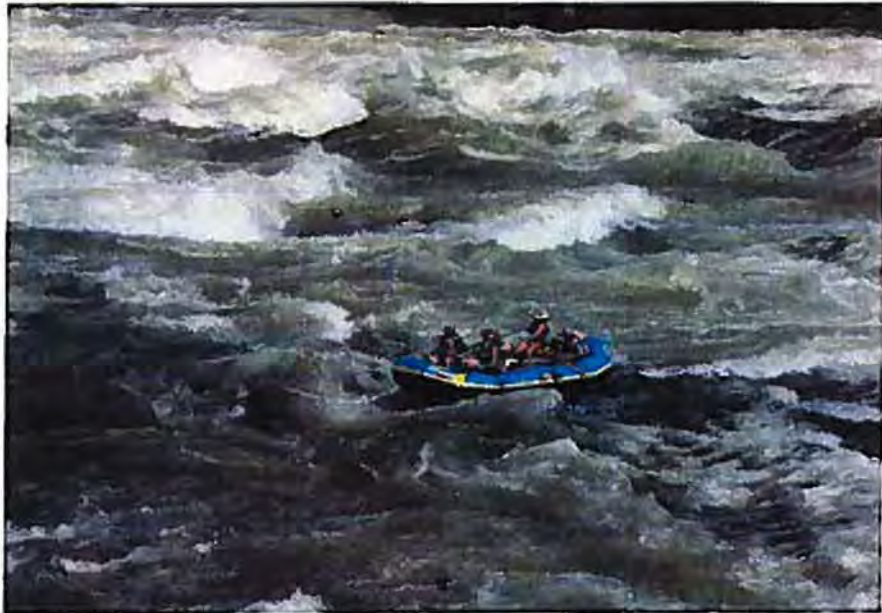
LAUNCH LOCATION	TRIPS	PEOPLE	SERVICE DAYS
CACHE CREEK	1040	3,828	6,336
DUG BAR	7	24	162
PITTSBURG LANDING	363	1,383	3,344
HELLS CANYON CREEK	180	670	1,709
2015	1,590	5,905	11,551
2014	1,345	5,088	11,107
2013	1,429	5,120	12,630
2012	1,342	5,183	9,588
2011	1,592	6,040	11,213

**PERCENT BY DESTINATION --- COMMERCIAL AND PRIVATE FLOAT ---
PRIMARY SEASON 2015**

PITTSBURG LANDING	64%
JETBOAT BACK TO DAM	2.5%
HELLER BAR	30%
OTHER	3%

**PERCENT BY DESTINATION -- COMMERCIAL AND PRIVATE FLOAT --
SECONDARY SEASON 2015**

PITTSBURG LANDING	81%
JETBOAT BACK TO DAM	5.5%
HELLER BAR	9%
OTHER	5.5 %



PRIVATE FLOAT USE - PRIMARY SEASON 2015

LAUNCH LOCATION	TRIPS	PASSENGERS	SERVICE DAYS
HELLS CANYON CREEK	238	2,120	12,034
PITTSBURG	32	166	498
TOTAL	270	2,784	12,532

PRIVATE FLOAT USE - SECONDARY SEASON 2015

LAUNCH LOCATION	TRIPS	PASSENGERS	SERVICE DAYS
HELLS CANYON CREEK	146	956	3,521
PITTSBURG	7	142	426
TOTAL	153	1098	3,947

TOTAL PRIVATE FLOAT TRIPS = 423

TOTAL FLOAT PASSENGERS = 3,882

TOTAL SERVICE DAYS = 16,479



FLOAT RESERVATION SYSTEM - PRIMARY SEASON 2015

	COMMERCIAL	PRIVATE
AVAILABLE LAUNCHES	224	336
TRIPS PRIMARY SEASON	133	238

**TOTAL TRIPS COMMERCIAL AND PRIVATE
PRIMARY SEASON**

707

FLOAT CRAFT FROM HELLS CANYON CREEK PRIMARY SEASON 2015

COMMERCIAL AND PRIVATE
TOTAL

RAFT	1255
KAYAK	67
DORY / DRIFT	24
INFLATABLE KAYAK	304
CANOE	3
DRIFT	30
OTHER	67

TOTAL CRAFT PRIMARY SEASON

1,726



**RIVER USE BY USER GROUP -
PRIMARY SEASON 2015**

USER GROUP	PEOPLE	SERVICE DAYS
Commercial Powerboat Passengers	14,805	15,005
Private Powerboaters	6,271	14,034
Sub-Total	21,076	29,039
Commercial Float Passengers	1,365	5,730
Private Floaters	2,784	12,532
Sub-Total	4,149	18,262
TOTAL PEOPLE (Power and float ~ Commercial and Private	22,525	SERVICE DAYS 47,301

Primary Season 2014 ~ People = 23,695 ~ Service Days = 49,366



RIVER USE BY USER GROUP
January -December - 2015

USER GROUP	PEOPLE	SERVICE DAYS
Commercial Powerboat	22,270	23,462
Private Powerboaters	12,176	25,585
Commercial Float	1,424	5,936
Private Floaters	3,882	16,479
TOTAL ANNUAL RIVER USE (PEOPLE & SERVICE DAYS)	39,752	71,462



**Visitors to
CACHE CREEK ADMINISTRATIVE SITE 2015**

JANUARY	112
FEBRUARY	42
MARCH	172
APRIL	279
MAY	1,382
JUNE	1,882
JULY	3,145
AUGUST	2,571
SEPTEMBER	1,574
OCTOBER	547
NOVEMBER	394
DECEMBER	42
TOTAL	12,142



Visitors to Kirkwood 2015

JANUARY	24
FEBRUARY	129
MARCH	459
APRIL	970
MAY	1,781
JUNE	3,375
JULY	4,121
AUGUST	2,911
SEPTEMBER	1,684
OCTOBER	414
NOVEMBER	122
DECEMBER	32

Total

16,022



**VISITORS TO HELLS CANYON CREEK RECREATION SITE -
PRIMARY SEASON 2015**

COMMERCIAL POWERBOAT PASSENGERS AND GUIDES	2,864
COMMERCIAL FLOAT PASSENGERS AND GUIDES	4,794
PRIVATE POWERBOAT PASSENGERS	148
PRIVATE FLOAT PASSENGERS	2,120
DRIVE IN VISITORS	5,342
FISHING	376
OTHER ** HIKERS, BUS VISITORS, ETC.	385
DOWNRIVER PRIVATE AND COMMERCIAL JETBOAT VISITORS	2,562
	18,591





(Buffalo Eddy, petroglyph site south of Asotin, Washington)

HELLS CANYON
NATIONAL RECREATION AREA
PO Box 699
Clarkston, WA 99403
General information line:
509.758.0616

Powerboat Reservation
Float Reservations
www.recreation.gov
or 877-444-6777



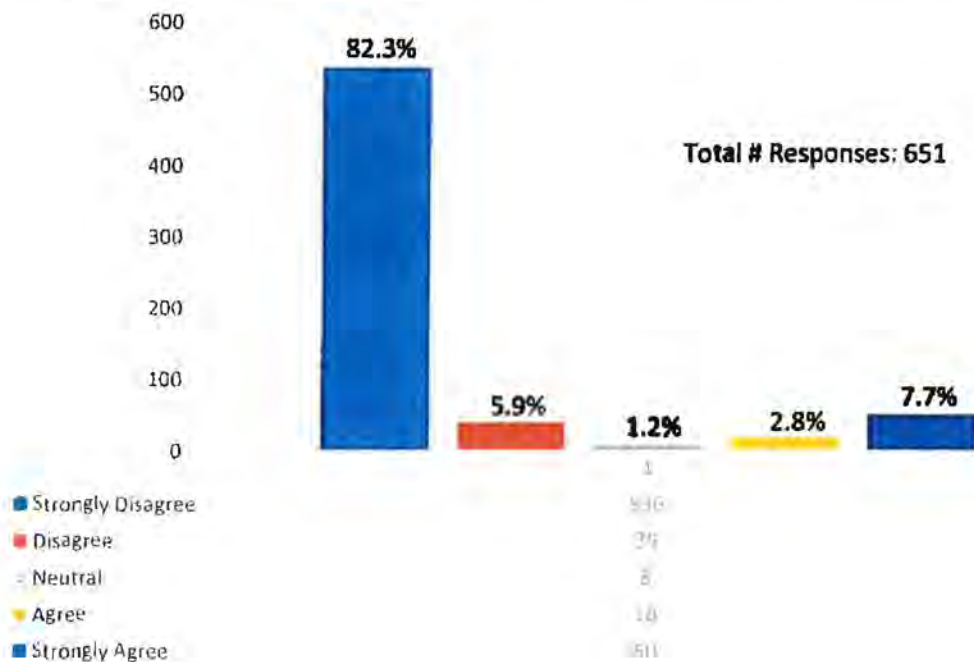
Background and Public Participation

On June 21, 2016, the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest (WWNF) proposed to implement a Special Recreation Permit Fee on the Wild and Scenic Snake River in the Federal Register. Following this notification, public meetings were held in Boise, ID, Riggins, ID, Clarkston, WA and Joseph, OR. In addition information sharing meetings were also held since July 2016 with boater groups such as Western Whitewater Association and Intermountain Jetboat Association. Comments opportunities have also been available on the WWNF website.

Based on these various public forums, the WWNF has received over 650 comments during the 3 month comment period.

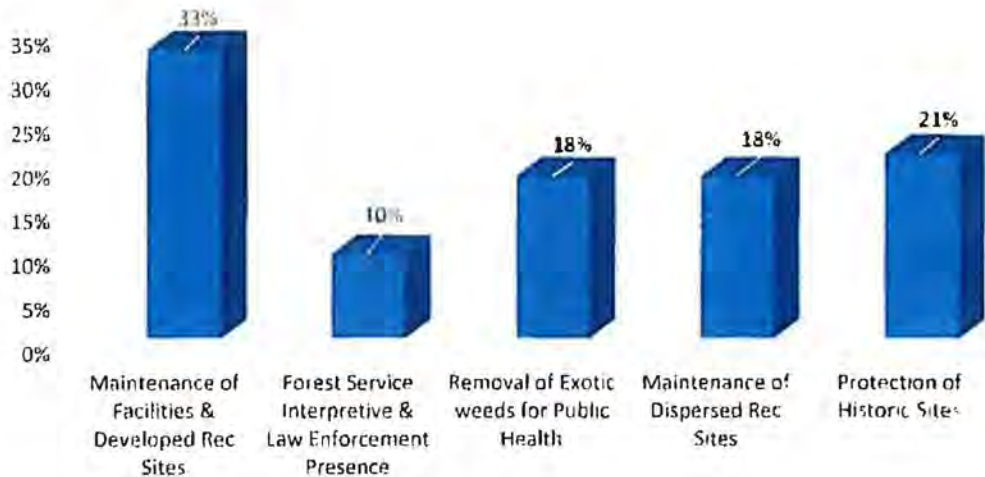
Public Survey Results

As part of the process, the Forest Service committed to analyzing all of the comments for review by the interested publics and presentation to the John Day-Snake Resource Advisory Council (RAC). Following is a summary of the comments:



509 Responses came from Idaho, Washington and Oregon Residents. Less than 20 Responses came from other states. The remaining responses did not list a state or zip code.

Uses for Proposed Fee



Next Steps

- Present current public comments to RAC for their review and clarification of any information
- Finalize public comment analysis and post on WWNF website
- Coordinate with Regional FS recreation fee staff on inputting results to national "Rec Fee Tool"
- Participate in "working groups" as requested by boater associations to better understand complexities of the river management resources and stewardship obligations.



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

September 12, 2016

News Release

Oregon/Washington

Contact: Larisa Bogardus 541-947-6237



Vale BLM Seeks Comment on Revised Environmental Assessment of Weeds Treatment

VALE, Ore.— The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Vale District is asking for public input on a Revised Environmental Assessment (EA) for Weeds Treatment.

New regulations allow for the use of three active herbicide ingredients aminopyralid, fluroxypyr, and rimsulfuron in addition to those currently approved for vegetation treatments on BLM-administered lands in the western United States, including Oregon, subsequent to site-specific environmental analysis.

The Vale District prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) (DOI-BLM-ORWA-V000-2011-0047-EA) to expand and update its existing District-wide Integrated noxious weed management program and released it on December 23, 2015 for a 45-day public comment period.

Due to the availability of the three new herbicides, Vale BLM has decided to revise the analysis in the EA to add a third alternative to the No Action and the Proposed Action - the Revised Proposed Action - that considers the effects of the use of the additional three herbicides as part of the District's Integrated Weed Management Program. The Revised EA is now available for public consideration.

The Revised EA is available to view at the Vale District ePlanning website at <http://1.usa.gov/1mwy1HW> under the **Documents** link on the left side of the page.

To facilitate public review, all changes made since the close of the comment period of the original EA, including changes incorporating the new herbicides and responses to public input is highlighted in blue font. Comments can be submitted electronically, subject Vale Inv. Plant Mgt. EA, to: blm_or_invasive_plant_ea_comments@blm.gov, or by mail:

OR/WA Bureau of Land Management
Attn: Vale Invasive Plant Management EA (OR932)
PO Box 2965
Portland, OR 97208

To be considered, comments must be postmarked by October 11, 2016

-BLM-

The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America's public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. In Fiscal Year 2015, the BLM generated \$4.1 billion in receipts from activities occurring on public lands.

Don Gonzalez Designated Federal Officer

Blm Vale District Office

100 Oregon Street

Vale, Oregon 97918

Re: John Day Snake River RAC, Deschutes River Corridor fee increase proposal subcommittee.

Our task, as a subcommittee was to review current fees in the Deschutes River corridor and make possible recommended changes in the fee structure.

First a few facts about the area in question. The section of the Deschutes River that our subcommittee is dealing with, starts where highway 26 crosses the river in the Warm Springs area, and ends at the mouth of the Columbia River. The section of river from Shearers falls to Bake Oven creek is excluded, as it lies under the jurisdiction of the Warm Springs Indian Reservation.

This section of river is 98 miles long and, for management purposes is broken up into four sections. Each of these sections have different management issues. For example: sections one and four have virtually no road access, while sections two and three have a road paralleling their entire length.

We, as a subcommittee, are fully aware that the BLM is not generating enough revenue, from the current river corridor fees, to operate with adequate services. These services would include law enforcement, river cleanup and toilet maintenance, and noxious weeds, to name a few. There is, as the corridor experiences increased use, the need to share the burden of paying for these much needed services.

Currently, boater fees, and guide fees, generate 90% or more of revenues, with the remainder in drive in camping fees. As our subcommittee looks at use trends by non-boaters, we feel that all corridor users need to help in making sure the corridor is adequately taken care of.

As a subcommittee, we have strived to make our new fee proposal as simple as possible, to meet the needs of all four river sections. Currently, boater fees are as follows:

\$2/ day to Oregon State Parks for each boater 365 days/year



~~\$3~~/day to the BLM on peak weekends starting May 28 of each year and ending September 4.

\$50 Frequent user pass with May 15 to September 15 restrictions in different sections

Our subcommittee is recommending a \$5 per person day fee 365 days of the year, with continuing the \$2 fee to the state parks and a \$3 fee to the BLM. Additionally, we propose a \$5 fee, to every person camping in the river corridor who does not have a boater pass. We also felt that the frequent user pass should remain.

We, as a subcommittee, looked at parking stickers, day use fees, and bicycle fees, but came to the conclusion that the camping aspect covered all four sections without becoming too difficult to understand. These particular users are in sections one and four, as there is already a camping fee system in place in sections two and three.

