

John Day – Snake RAC Mtg Minutes

June 23, 2016

Imperial River Lodge, Maupin Oregon

Meeting called to order 12:01

RAC members present: Art Waugh, Berta Youtie, Chris Perry, Terry Drever-Gee, Tim Unterwegner, Greg Jackle, Randy Jones, Brian Jennings, Brian Sykes, Ben Gordon, Steve Lent, Jim Reiss, Erica Maltz, Harry Dalgaard

Agency Representatives Present: Slater Turner (Ochoco National Forest), Shane Jeffries (Deschutes National Forest), Larry Moore (Vale District, Facilitator), Don Gonzales (Vale District BLM, DFO), Lisa Clark (Prineville BLM), Chuck Oliver (Wallowa-Whitman National Forest), Greg Moon (Malheur National Forest).

Quorum: yes.

Welcome, housekeeping – agenda updates

Email from Robert Gentry – update on presentation for Crescent Lake Guard Station. The Deschutes is close to bringing the cabin up to rentable condition. Robert wanted to pass on a thank you to the RAC for support. At this point, the forest is close to hitting the go button on renting it.

Email voting (Randy Jones)

Action item/vote on whether or not the RAC should institute email voting.

The Forests and BLM recognize that RAC members for the most part donate their time, and that we sometimes bump up against people's commitments in their regular jobs. We want to consider options that accommodate these occasional schedule conflicts and still allow us to get things done in a timely manner. At the same time, we don't want to turn these meetings into a situation where people don't show up.

Discussion

The discussion focused on the value of meeting face-to-face and clarified more the option that allowing email or phone voting would be beneficial if it was maybe the final go-ahead on something the RAC had worked on already in a meeting. For example, the group works on a draft comments to an EA together, and then the final comment letter is approved via email. The other benefit might be the ability to address an issue that would have normally been off the table due to timing. For example, an EA is released for comment after a RAC meeting and the comments are due before the next meeting – allowing email voting might be a way to work on it. In general, email or conference call voting *following* a face-to-face meeting was generally preferred.

Some suggestions included: allowing email/phone voting by type of issue (e.g. fee proposals would need to be in person, but comments on a document could go to email vote); meeting on a topic in person and then authorizing a future email vote at that time on that specific issue; considering conference call but not email participation; continue to bring issues forward to stakeholder groups and stay in contact with the areas we represent; making substantive edits/having meaty discussions in person, but allowing final

approval via email/conf call; and, check into other technology such as “go to meeting” for video conference calling so the face-to-face is maintained.

The main concerns would still be:

- Quorum to vote
- Making sure items from a subcommittee were presented in person to the RAC
- Making sure the public process is maintained – check the legality of an email vote (at least on a conference call, the public can still listen in)
- Avoid using email/conference if timing is NOT an issue
- Defining the specific situations where we might allow email/conference call voting
- Ensuring public is still involved by announcing items being reviewed via Federal Register
- Making sure that we don’t lose actual participation by RAC members – we don’t want email/conference call participation to be a fallback and lose the value of discussion.

Decision: We’ll keep working on this – Don Gonzalez will put together some options and get a review by solicitors, based on some of the discussion we’ve had today. We can check in on legality of participation/voting by email and/or conference call, and identify what are other RACs doing.

RAC Purpose Statement (Randy Jones)

At the March 2016 mtg, members of the RAC discussed the Harney County/Malheur Refuge takeover situation. As an outcome of the discussion, the RAC established a subgroup to further define the RAC’s purpose and to possibly create a purpose statement.

Review of the subgroup process:

The group considered the audience of the letter, and what the statement would look like to show cohesion, as well as malleability. The intent would be to clarify our purpose, make sure we’re on the same page, and increase the predictability of working together. Similarly, the Secretary of the Interior would know our feelings as to our purpose. In general, this is a tricky process, we have a lot of parts to blend into a statement.

Discussion:

There is some concern over the language of the letter. Although it may be written to be delivered to Agency Reps and the Sec. of the Interior, the letter will be read by all of our constituents. There are some words that could be considered antagonistic, too bureaucratic, or misunderstood. There is also some concern about what the subgroup worked on – is this a letter about Harney County or a purpose statement. There were so many versions going around on email that it became confusing. In general, the group needed some clarification on the intent of the letter: a statement to the federal agencies or outreaching the public about the RAC process.

- We need to make sure that the RAC identifies itself as a way to deal with issues on public lands – without resorting to violence. The public needs to better know that they have a voice through the RACs.
- The challenge is that, the people who would occupy a refuge won’t read a letter like this (or respond to it). So the value may be more in an internal letter.
- We can consider that the letter has two values – a formal letter given to the federal officials, and an invitation to participate in the process to the public.

- We are good with the concept of the letter, but would like to work on the wording a bit (the subgroup will meet later today and bring a final version in to the meeting tomorrow).
- We can make a more concerted effort to let the public know the RAC exists and how to use it.

Could subcommittee meet today, and then a new draft brought forward tomorrow?

As for audience, the intent is that the letter officially go up to the BLM leadership, and possibly the Dept. of Interior. Just remember that the public will read it and should feel included. The letter can also go to the Association of Counties.

For the October RAC – prepare for a discussion on how the RAC can message, outreach and better serve the public we represent.

Murderers Creek Restoration

Guest Presenter: Dan Marvin, ODFW, habitat manager

Dan Marvin gave an update on the South Fork Fire, which burned in 2014, 20 miles south of Dayville, OR. ODFW and the BLM completed some restoration after the fire.

The ODFW Philip W. Schneider Wildlife Area covers about 52,000 acres and is split 50-50 between BLM and the State. ODFW purchased the original ranch land in 1972, as winter range and historic refuge for mule deer.

The agency completed a joint management plan for wildlife and mule deer habitat, which was the first document of its kind in the nation. Initially there was a strong partnership between USFS, BLM, ODFW (note: partnership not as strong today).

In 2009, ODFW created the Mule Deer Initiative to address large scale habitat issues and wildlife management plan to address some of the limiting habitat factors such as juniper encroachment, increase in annual grasses, etc.

They constantly work on the legacy effects of early ranching. Still site degradation, areas with 6-8 inches of topsoil loss, more juniper moving in, and the effects of active fire suppression. All of this culminates in decline of a functional ecosystem.

2014 – S. Fork Fire (66K acres)

Rehab goals – restore ecosystem resilience and resistance, and function.

- Control annual grasses
- Establish a greater shrub component
- Get desirable herbaceous species
- Re-grow BLM/ODFW partnership.

Fire Rehab:

- Herbicide treatments (90% effective – and ODFW is just starting to see some expansion of annuals after 2 years)

- Reseeding (drill, 2 mixes, 2200 acres – seeing promise; then added in aerial seeding – another 1300 acres with ARTR/grassy mix)
- Shrub planting (seed collection in 2016; ARTR, PUTR, - grow out seedlings for next year, and just put out seed as well; partner with students in Dayville to grow out other forbs)
- Monitoring (OSU mule deer collar study, and small mammal response; seeding establishment, annual grass, encroachment).

Going forward, ODFW needs to identify:

- If/where they're going to retreat
- Collaborative discussions needed, such as any OWEB grants, ESI evaluations, BLM relationships, reviving the habitat management plan, renewing grazing allotment renewal, Dayville Grazing Association (ODFW bought ranch with permits but can't "hold" a permit. So the association was formed to co-manage those pastures, allotments, etc.).
- How to mitigate the effect of Wild Horses on treatments
- Partnering with Watershed council – how can this expand beyond CRMP to watershed level? Resource concerns don't stop at property boundaries.
- Continued management needs for the two mule deer focus areas (Mule Deer Initiative).
- Continued monitoring of landscape level treatments to get data for vegetative response around springs, etc.

Will ODFW consider the use of soil bacteria to manage weeds? Yes- open to all options. Not sure where Grant county is, know Wheeler Co. is in, so we'll see as results come in.

Suggest that ODFS look at Access and Habitat funding. This is good for things like the Mule Deer Initiative, and may be a way to tap into funds to allow ODFW to partner with the Dayville school.

The Great Railroad War

Steve Lent, Bowman Museum

Presentation on the history of the railroad war on the Lower Deschutes River.

Blue Mountain Forest Plan Revision Process Update

(see comment memorandum attached)

The subcommittee provided 3 comments on: use of collaboratives, road use and classification and maintenance; and social and economics of managing at the landscape level (including the role of biomass in future planning). General acknowledge of the hard work the subcommittee did to balance needs, maintenance, restoration, etc.

The subcommittee provided additional input:

Stewardships often the venue chosen by collaboratives, but it's important to remember this can keep projects small. The thinking is that it keeps money locally and that it doesn't go to the treasury, but the counter point is that there also isn't shared receipts at that point that goes back to the counties. So consider a balance of projects with some that have timber receipts; this money is critical to local counties, etc.

It's important to consider too that with the loss of small milling infrastructure, grazing may have more of a benefit to local economies, and can represent a loss that trickles down through the community if a permit is retired. It would be good to add language that reflects other contributions to local economies.

The subgroup will work on these changes and re-present tomorrow for a decision.

Fire Restoration Process (Don Gonzalez)

After a wildfire, BLM sets up an Emergency Stabilization and Rehab Plan, usually within a week. The information for these plans is provided by the Resource Advisors who have been visiting the line and working with the incident management team. They help map the fireline, identify disturbance and damage, and document fire effects. In general, the rule was to try to get it back to where it used to be; however, now there are opportunities (and funding) to get it to the *way you want it to be* and even go beyond the fire perimeter. Note: we don't fix fence unless we ruined in suppression activities. Not because it burned.

Windy Cornet example: see handout.

After a fire, the rule is to rest from grazing for a *minimum* of 2 growing seasons. On Oregon side of the Soda Fire, for example, the fire moved fast and burned surface fuels but left roots, so recovery after 2 years will be good. On the Idaho side, the fire burned more slowly and consumed plant roots as well, so the area will need a longer time to recover and may need more than 2 years of rest.

BLM does try to find grazing alternatives to help permittees but it is not always reasonable or feasible – e.g. if part of a pasture burns, the burned half can be fenced off and the permittee can use the other half; or if a vacant pasture available, the permittee may be able to use that. In a past case, for example, the Malheur Refuge opened up for grazing temporarily to help out burned out ranchers.

So once you have an approved plan, you hope to get funding. There is not an unlimited pool, and there are some fires (e.g. on sage grouse habitat) that rank as a higher priority. If funded, we do the fixes and monitor for 5 years to see how it recovers.

Does the BLM get appealed on fire salvage logging? Yes and no. Salvage goes out as an EA, and allows the opportunity for public comment, but generally these pass as “white hat” projects. We get more appeals for herbicide use on annual grasses.

What does an appeal on herbicide use mean? We have a couple fires where we want to use it and we were appealed – and this can hold up all the rehab actions in an EA. So, with their concurrence, we dropped herbicide out so the rest of the document could go forward. We'll deal with herbicide later but this way we get to seed, address erosion, etc.

Are you seeing positive results on the Windy Cornet in 2 years? Good results in some areas, but we lost some sagebrush. We've been using Snake River Corrections to grow out sagebrush seed into plugs for us, and we're seeing about 80% success on planting plugs. Aerial seeding the success rate is approximately 5%. It can take 20 years to get sagebrush growth back to sage-grouse habitat levels.

How do you decide to do a Wild Horse gather? With WHB gathers, the priority is anything court ordered, followed by areas where horses are impacting grouse habitat, and then anywhere where horses are

starving/injured, etc. On the OR side of Soda they didn't have a herd, except when after it burned. They're drawn toward the greenup on recently burned. So Vale will be removing horses from this area (about 50) to protect sage grouse habitat.

Do fires affect recreation access? Can be short term limitations, often driven by safety concerns (falling snags), or by suppression activities (short term closures to keep people away from the fire).

There are often at least perceptions of bad feelings toward feds after a fire, especially permittees if they have to be off the range for years. How do we work with them to help them economically? We work with them and see how many animals (AUMs) we can turn out. We monitor closely and see how we can help. Also some county/state agricultural organizations have some funding to help. Also, if fire burns on private grouse habitat, we may be able to help using the Wyden authority as a direct benefit to federal lands. We try to get people connected with sources of aid.

Recreation Economy (Harry Dalgaard)

The JDS RAC now has subcommittee on outdoor recreation (**we should plan to meet either before or after the next overall RAC meeting**).

Travel Oregon has a statewide mission to enhance Oregon's quality of life through sustainable recreation and economic benefits of recreation. Make the experience good for business, resident and the person recreating.

How does Travel Oregon monitor ecological impacts? They have an environmental rep on the leadership team. There are also subgroups that can be formed if there is a need to monitor for more conservation.

It seems to Travel Oregon could take a lead in putting more emphasis on getting people out for the "health" of it, reaching the people who aren't getting out yet. That's a great thought and one I'll bring back.

Will Travel Oregon tackle events like Solar Eclipse? Yes – likely a subgroup that will take on events kinds of things – to help with public and private opps. We can tie in and help convey responsible marketing message, fire safety, etc. We're working with governors' office for overall response, but kind of a mini-marketing campaign.

Destination Development Team at Travel Oregon focuses on finding new rec opportunities around the state, as an enhancement to the recreation economy.

Intro some of the initiatives and ongoing efforts:

New kickoff – **Oregon's Outdoor Rec (Means Business) initiative**: enhance tourism based economies. This would look at Oregon's world-class opps that we're not taking advantage of. This team would be looking at recreation core area development. They will pull together leadership team of 25-30 folks from across the state, and would include a wide variety of folks. From this, a broader coalition will be brought together to create a common vision for Oregon. Then Action Teams will develop and implement strategies. Leadership will look at:

- Infrastructure and capacity
- Economic Impact, business development
- Marketing and Communications

- Access (car free, varieties of opps and diversity of participation)
- Policy
- Data

The group viewed a Travel Oregon PPT.

RAC Meeting adjourned: 4:36 p.m.

John Day Snake RAC mtg Day 2

Convene at 8:00 a.m.

RAC Members Present: Art Waugh, Berta Youtie, Chris Perry, Terry Drever-Gee, Brian Jennings, Greg Jackle, Randy Jones, Harry Dalgaard, Erica Maltz, Ben Gordon, Steve Lent, Tim Unterwagner, Jim Reiss

Agency Representatives Present: Slater Turner (Ochoco National Forest), Shane Jeffries (Deschutes National Forest), Larry Moore (Vale District, Facilitator), Don Gonzales (Vale District BLM, DFO), Lisa Clark (Prineville BLM), Chuck Oliver (Wallowa-Whitman National Forest), Greg Moon (Malheur National Forest).

Review of public comment process

Adjusting agenda (will review letter and BMFPR letter updates)

Review of March minutes – no minutes from last meeting. Larry will circulate electronically and we'll approve at the next mtg.

BMFPR comment revision from last night – added language in sections A, B, C

Item C – end (at page 70). Add on to end of italicized section – “BMFP also acknowledges other forest resource ecosystem services that public lands provide to communities and economies including grazing, mining, and public and private recreation opportunities.”

Request to approve the comment letter to the BMFPR:

Motion to approve? Moved by Steve Lent

Discussion? No – everything already clarified

In favor: unanimous approval.

RAC Purpose statement

Discussion of changes: The subgroup spent some time keying into phraseology. For example: federally owned becomes federally managed. We didn't want to incite additional conflict. Global change. See handout for changes. The group also added a note to the fact that we each represent different areas. We added to the last paragraph, and recommend that FS/BLM publicize to the public the role of the RAC and the way to work with the RAC. The RAC is a venue to work through for change, as well as the public comment period. We want to strengthen invitation to public to use the RAC, and encourage communication to the public that the RAC is a venue for dialogue.

This letter will be directed at the Secretary of the Interior, and with the changes can be put on the BLM website, with the intent of getting the RAC concept more publicized. BLM will work with RAC on a fresh publicity take on the RAC. We can continue to share how the public can (and is allowed) to participate.

With no more discussion, all in favor with the edits as proposed.

Unanimous – letter can be sent to Secretary.

DFO and other fed reports:

Don Gonzalez, Vale District BLM (Baker Field Office) see handout.

B2H – addition – EIS – for 300 mile Transmission line. As a cooperator, all the counties have a copy of the document; they'll have 30 days to look for errors, etc. Once that comes back to BLM, we'll put it out final for public comment in September. About 1/3 of the line is on fed lands, of that – 20 miles would be within the lands of this RAC boundary. The John Day – Snake RAC will have to decide if they want to comment. Our next mtg is October, so the RAC could decide on a comment if they want to.

The RAC would at least like to take a look at an executive summary, as well as the full document. Although not a lot of the line is within the JDS RAC boundary, there may be some sensitive issues like curlew, ground squirrels, etc. The good news is that the B2H EIS is electronic, so members can search for relevant sections.

For the Vale weeds EA, the district is still doing some adjustments, and incorporating a few changes, such as the addition of some new chemicals. The Vale District by being a little behind now will have the opportunity to be the first district to analyze the new chemicals and be able to use them.

Shane Jeffries, Deschutes NF

Handout, 2015 Forest Summary

New Welcome Station now open on the west side of Bend. Getting a lot of use and it's more visible/accessible.

COIDC – we are making it through a decade-long process to get a permanent location. The new facility will be built at the Redmond Air Center, under a lease agreement with City of Redmond. Expect groundbreaking this August, and new center maybe by next April (hoping).

Collaboratives – relatively new thing, primarily around restoration. We have about 5 years under our belt, but still fuzzy on working with public on other topics like grazing. One new thing – the Deschutes recently held a Sustainable Trail Summit with many key figures. We really talked about sustainability and focused on trails. We tried to talk about socio aspect, ecological aspect, and the economic aspect. We had panels, and got a lot of good dialogue. This is just the beginning. Next step will be a working group to figure out what a collaborative might look like – use the working group to form this, rather than have it be driven by federal agencies and staff.

This will be an important collaborative - we're seeing 20-30% increase in recreation across the board on the Deschutes. The same use is heading east as well, so everyone is seeing a lot of use on the BLM and the Ochocos. It's important to start the discussion about managing what's coming. The discussion also needs to include recreational carrying capacity. Things like how to know "what's enough?" and what to look for to catch the "over-loved" threshold.

We started on the Mt. Bachelor expansion years ago, and the expansion will involve new infrastructure including lodges, new runs, and new lifts. Overall, there should be a lot of improvements for families. We have been working with Bachelor to engage with communities; and we finished the NEPA document with no objection. Bachelor just hasn't moved on it yet – but now they've had a change in leadership – we're seeing a move to start putting the changes into effect, and they're adding a lot more summer activities. We'll need to think about connections from Mt. Bachelor to our trails- if we don't plan for it, folks will do it any way they need.

Slater Turner – Ochoco National Forest

See handout.

Where is the Ochoco with the OregonWild NRA proposal? At this point, the OregonWild proposal is in direct conflict with the Summit Trail OHV proposal.

Greg Moon – Malheur NF

See Program of Work on Malheur Website

The Blue Mountain Forest Plan and Harney County Collaborative – has played a big role and given a large benefit to community and the FS. Allowed the FS to go through with accelerated restoration project and we're on track for doing NEPA through the whole forest. Would encourage the RAC to visit the collaboratives.

Invasive plants treatment EIS – completed. Starting implementation this year, and Aquatics Restoration Analysis – completed. Success really due to some of our partners.

Canyon Creek Complex – doing fire salvage. We're looking to get eco value and provide for wood products, while maintaining ecological integrity of post-fire habitat. This means monitoring woodpecker habitat, etc. and offering info to forest managers for continued conservation (black-backed, white-headed, Lewis's). We're doing salvage logging on about 6,000 acres, and 1200 acres will be treated and harvested. Some areas will have a high retention of large snags. Logs going to local mill, La Grande, and Pilot Rock.

How are you handling erosion? There was some seeding, and they've put large wood in streams and put in some culverts. So far so good - this past winter, the snowpack and work helped dodge the bullet. We're seeing success with seeding thanks to good moisture. The first two years are important – so we'll need to watch one more season.

How long for implementation? Just finishing some of our oldest NEPA so just beginning to go forward with the new stuff. We figure 10 years on NEPA, with implementation going on at the same time as things are done. We're moving forward with the stands with the most agreement on what types of treatment should be done, while we try to figure out our plans for the next round of more complex stands.

Stewardship contract: April unemployment down below 8%, first time in years and graduation from the local high school is at a 15 year high. We're seeing benefits on community from timber work – local folks

being hired. Also large youth component in hiring through watershed council. Basically, every kid who wants to work, can. They're working in silviculture, timber, fisheries, fire...about 60 young people working.

Chuck Oliver – Wallowa Whitman NF

See handouts

- WW annual report
- Snake River fee proposal

What are we going to do to address the increasing issue of fees? We need to figure out how the RAC goes forward with this – and we may need to go up to the Secretary level. How do tax dollars – which people are already paying...figure or not figure into the picture? What other options do we have for local funding options – like local bonds, etc. to supplement the recreation budgets? The spectrum is wide open really. RAC could provide advice on this. Local basis is hard – the thought may be that too many users are coming from out of the area – are communities too small to support a bond measure? It's more about having the discussion and looking at the local communities. Are the communities getting money from tourism, so it's worth it? Something to think about – with rec budgets, come up with signs showing how xxx dollars appropriated each year, and xx in dollars/fees, etc. go here or pay for this etc.

Randy Jones would be willing to poke around a bit and see what options are out there. Gov. Brown signed good neighbor plan, so maybe a good place to start. Bring it in October.

Lisa Clark, for Carol Benkosky – Prineville BLM

See handout

BM Forest Resiliency Project Subcommittee Report:

Landscape scale effort to reduce fire fuels across 610K acres on Ochoco, Umatilla, Wallowa Whitman NF. Working on a report to bring to the RAC, and working with W-W PAO. We will be getting 7 questions to all forests – and hope that asking the questions allows us to gain info to present to the RAC. Coming in the fall will be good timing for reporting feedback to the RAC.

Thank you to Berta Youtie – “Bexit” for 21 years of service to the RAC. One of the founding members of this RAC. And she chaired us as well. Helping drive it makes it viable. People want to be on this RAC because it does things.

Berta expressed what an honor it was to spend her time here – and we have it in writing that she plans to come visit!

Next meeting: October 6-7 Pendleton?

Discussion over field trips, 1 or 2 day meetings. Also, what field trip opps are available? Field trip that is relevant, vs. field trip for simple RAC education.

With Pendleton, there could be an option to visit to a power facility and learn about the torrefaction process. (Tour in Boardman).

Yes – and stay in **Boardman**. Randy Jones will see if it's an option. October 6-7.

If not – the meeting will be in Pendleton, on Oct. 6 – all day, with travel the day before or after.

Next mtg topics:

- Snake River Fee
- B2H
- BMRP
- Deschutes Fee Structure
- Randy looking at opps for specific funding through good neighbor
- Evoting and solicitor review
- Subcommittee for rec opps either pre/post
- Approve notes for March, June.

RAC Meeting Adjourned at 11:15



John Day/Snake River Resource Advisory Committee

INFORMATION UPDATE New Information Only

Vale District Office

BLM

June 2016

Baker Resource Area

Greater sage-grouse:

AIM (Assessment, Inventory and Monitoring) Data Collection crews recently finished collecting data pertaining to the amount and quality of Greater Sage-grouse habitat within the Baker Priority Area of Conservation (PAC). The data collected will help refine the baseline conditions of grouse habitat that will be used to determine habitat trend in following years.

Mining:

The Baker Field Office has completed the field surveys necessary to finish the NEPA analysis process 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 PoOs.

True Claims PoO replaces efforts for the Don J PoO, which the proponent requested the BLM to postpone. Surveys have been concurrently conducted during the True Claims process and are nearly completed.

Bat surveys are being conducted the week of June 20th on a number of old, abandoned mine shafts and adits throughout the Baker Resource Area. The surveys will show whether these shafts and adits are being used as habitat by bats and help determine whether the features can be reclaimed or must be mitigated in another manner to provide bat passage while protecting public safety.

Lands and Realty:

The big news for the Baker Lands and Realty program is that we have filled our vacant Realty Specialist position. Dara Glass, who came to Baker from BLM-Carlsbad, NM, reported for duty on June 13 and is in the process of familiarizing herself with open case files and new requests for realty actions.

The comment period for the Wallula-McNary power line closed on April 29, 2016. One comment response in opposition to the proposed action was received from WildLands Defense. CH2M Hill, the contractor hired by the proponent Pacific Corp, is in the process of evaluating the comments and drafting a response for the BLM.



John Day/Snake River Resource Advisory Committee

INFORMATION UPDATE

New Information Only

Range Management:

Activity by the interdisciplinary team (IDT) assigned the task of developing alternatives and assessing the effects of livestock grazing in the Keating Geographic Unit (GU) has been postponed. The postponement is due to requirements for further data required by the Greater Sage-grouse Management Plan. Completion of the EA would allow Baker Field Office to proceed with renewing grazing permits within the GU. The EA process will resume once the additional data gathering has been completed.

The public comment period required for the permittee proposed alternative to the Powder River Canyon Geographic Unit (GU) EA is closed and additional comments were addressed. The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Decision Record (DR) became final on June 7th, which renewed the grazing permits associated with the GU and will result in the installation of range improvements designed to improve livestock distribution and improve riparian conditions. No appeal was filed against the Decision and implementation is underway.

The public comment period for the Vale District EA regarding the expanded use of herbicides closed in early February. Recently, the Vale District and Oregon State Office have begun an amendment of the EA to incorporate three additional herbicides approved for use by the BLM Washington Office (aminopyralid – Milestone, fluroxypyr – Vista, and rimsulfuron – Matrix). The three herbicides being analyzed are believed to perform as well, if not better, than some of the herbicides previously analyzed, but with less short term residual effect.

Fire and Burned Area Rehabilitation:

As a result of the Windy-Cornet, Lime Hill and Dry Gulch wildfires, Baker Field Office prepared three Emergency Stabilization & Recovery Plans for the BLM managed public lands burned. The implementation decisions for Windy and Lime Hill were appealed regarding the proposed use of herbicides for the control and prevention of noxious weeds and annual grasses. The appeals were resolved and all stabilization and rehabilitation activities, with the exception of herbicide use, are being implemented as planned.

Forestry and Fuels:

A result from this past summer's wildfires (Windy-Cornet and Grizzly Complex), two categorical exclusions (CX's) were prepared for the Dark Canyon and Grizzly Timber Salvage Sales and the sales were offered for bid in October and January, respectively. Both sales received protests that were denied. No appeals were filed and the Baker Field Office proceeded with awarding both salvage sales. Operations have concluded on both. Dark Canyon resulted in the harvest of approximately 1300 MBF from 192 acres and Grizzly resulted in approximately 1088 MBF from 81 acres.





John Day/Snake River Resource Advisory Committee

INFORMATION UPDATE

New Information Only

The Baker Field Office has prepared an EA to address the changed condition and potential salvage of another 1,000 acres of timber impacted by the Windy Ridge and Cornet fires. Public comments are being addressed from the comment period that closed on June 13th. Baker's goal is to offer salvage timber within the next several weeks. If no protest or appeal is received, salvage logging will begin this summer.

Outdoor Recreation:

The Baker Field Office hired Brian Woolf as our new Outdoor Recreation Planner. Brian will report on August 22nd and hails from The Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument in Fort Benton, MT. Brian will fill the vacancy created by the departure of Kevin McCoy, formerly one of the longest standing employees of the Baker Field Office.



Briefing Paper

Pacific Northwest Region – Ochoco National Forest

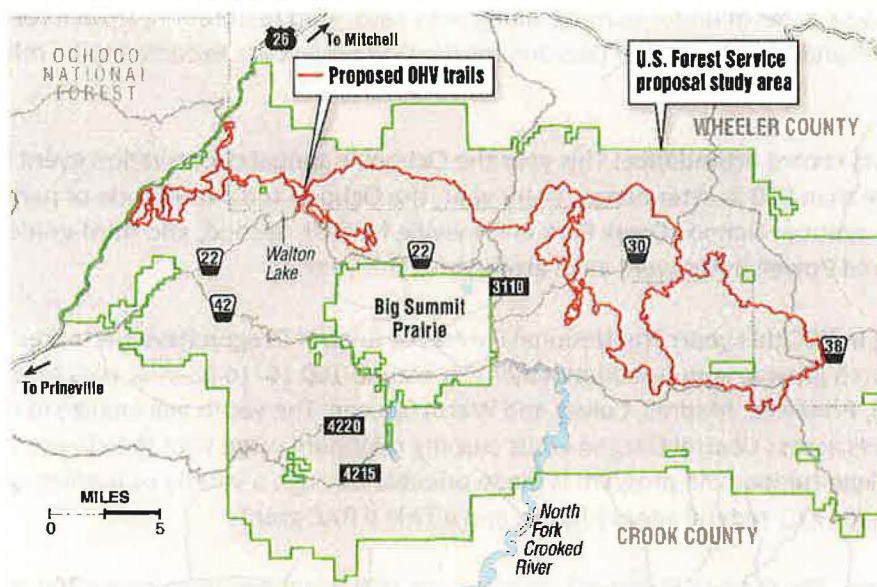
Ochoco National Forest & Crooked River National Grassland - Updates

John Day – Snake RAC, June 2016

Ochoco Summit OHV Trail Project: The Forest expects to release a Final EIS and Draft Record of Decision for this project in July. 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 SDEIS incorporates feedback from multiple stakeholder meetings following the fire and withdrawn FEIS. The new DEIS used that feedback to create Alternative 5, which proposes to create a 135-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.

USFS off-highway vehicle trails proposed in the Ochoco National Forest

The U.S. Forest Service is proposing a 135-acre trail system in part of the Ochoco National Forest.



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.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



for the greatest good

BRIEFING PAPER - (continued)

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

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement is planned for release this summer.

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 been working collaboratively with the Ochoco to provide recommendations for the Gap Fuels and Vegetation Management Project planning area. The Gap project proposes thinning and restoration treatments on about 38K acres southwest of Big Summit Prairie in the Upper Crooked River and Horse Heaven Creek watersheds on the Paulina Ranger District. A Draft EIS was released for public comment at the end of 2015. The proposed treatment calls for 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. A Final EIS and Draft Record of Decision for the Gap project are expected to be released for public comment this year.

'Fin, Fire and Feather' event hits record attendance: This year the Ochoco's annual conservation event in Prineville hit an all-time record with more than 800 in attendance. Every year, the Ochoco and a multitude of partners host an all-day conservation education event at Ochoco Creek Park in Prineville for first, second, and third-graders. Students from Prineville, Post, Paulina, and Powell Butte were all in attendance this year.

100 young adults participating in YCC this year: The National Forests of Central Oregon have partnered with Heart of Oregon Corps again this year to provide summer employment to around 100 16- to 18-year-olds from Crescent, La Pine, Sunriver, Bend, Redmond, Prineville, Madras, Culver and Warm Springs. The youth will engage in natural resource projects on public lands across Central Oregon while earning minimum wage with the chance of earning extra money to put toward college tuition. The program is made possible through a variety of funding sources that includes community donations to HOC, federal agency funds, and a Title II RAC grant.

Walton Lake Restoration Project: The Ochoco National Forest expects to begin thinning on about 200 acres surrounding Walton Lake this fall 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.

BRIEFING PAPER - (continued)

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

Central Oregon NFs to treat 10K acres of invasive weeds this year: As part of an ongoing campaign to halt the spread of invasive weeds, land managers plan to treat more than 10,000 acres of infestations this year on sites administered by the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests and the Crooked River National Grassland.

Often overlooked or unrecognized by the general public, invasive weeds are a major threat to both public and private lands in Oregon. They reproduce quickly while displacing or altering native plant communities and they cause long-lasting ecological and economic problems. Plans this year call for the manual removal of weeds on about 2,500 acres and herbicide treatments using backpack sprayers and OHVs on another 7,500 acres.

Work will follow the design features in the Record of Decision for the 2012 Invasive Plant treatment project. Treatments will take place along roads, at rock quarry sites, and at some other areas with a high disturbance.

Ochoco Stream Restoration Projects: The Ochoco National Forest continues to move forward with a number of 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, with plans to restore sections of McKay Creek and lower Deep Creek this year. 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 rather than allowing it 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.

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 will begin with help from a \$142K grant from Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. The Grassland also enjoys a close working relationship with the Gray

BRIEFING PAPER - (continued)

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.

Renewed interest in Rager RS: The Crook County Patriots group continues to express a strong interest in finding a use for Rager Ranger Station, about 70 miles east of Prineville, which would keep buildings in operation and benefit the nearby community of Paulina. Forest Service staff, Crook County commissioners, and a group of Patriots held a joint field trip to Rager last week to discuss ideas and inspect facilities. The Forest Service closed the ranger station in December 2012 after 104 years of continuous operations at the site. Administrative costs and the remoteness of the site make continued Forest Service investment infeasible. An engineering report estimates more than \$4 million in deferred maintenance at the site and housing full-time employees is no longer an efficient way to provide Forest Service management services. The Ochoco NF is open to discuss any proposals for an adaptive use of the site by another group, but there have been no proposals so far. In 2009, the Forest Service completed a NEPA analysis which recommended the decommissioning and removal of most of the 38 structures on site, but there are currently no bids or solicitations for such work, nor does the Forest Service have any funding allocated for such a project.

Ochoco Community Ambassadors start first season: A new program aimed at helping to connect forest and grassland visitors with the Forest Service and its policies has begun this year. Two seasonal "Community Ambassadors" have begun patrolling the forest and grassland, making visitor contacts, and providing interpretive presentations. Loosely modelled on similar field ranger programs on other national forests, the ambassadors play many roles. From handing out maps to explaining travel management policies and campfire safety, participating in community events and helping the Forest Service to survey areas of high use, these new positions are helping to fill a critical need for visitor contact in the field.

Human Ecology Mapping survey will help shape Forest Plan Revision: The National Forests of Central Oregon will soon publicize 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 will be housed on the Discover Your Forest website and advertised widely once available.



Pacific Northwest Region
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest
1550 Dewey Ave.
Baker City, OR 97814
www.fs.usda.gov/wallowa-whitman

News Release

Contact: Jake Lubera 541-426-5581 or Matt Burks 541-523-1208

June 20, 2016

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest proposes a new recreation fee for the Wild and Scenic portion of the Snake River – Open House Dates

JOSEPH, OR - Forest managers at the 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.

"We recognize how important this river corridor is to both our local communities and visitors; however, we are seeing a decline in our ability to keep up with normal operations. With this proposed investment from those who use the river, we will be able to maintain the sites to the level and quality that people expect and invest in other needs such as education and safety," said Jake Lubera, Deputy District Ranger, Wallowa Mountains Office.

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 the greatest good

In 2004, Congress passed the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act which allows the Forest Service to keep 95 percent of fees collected at certain recreation

NEWS RELEASE

(continued)

sites and use these funds locally to operate and maintain and improve these sites.

The new fee proposal will be posted in the Federal Register on June 21, 2016. In addition, open house sessions will be conducted in Boise, Riggins, Clarkston/Lewiston and Joseph.

Boise

July 5th, 2016

6pm – 8pm

Valley View Elementary School Gymnasium

3555 N Milwaukee St. Boise, ID 83704

Riggins

July 6th, 2016

6pm – 8pm

HCNRA Riggins Office Conference Room

1339 Hwy 95 South Riggins, ID 83549

Clarkston

July 7th, 2016

6pm – 8pm

Walla Walla Community College – Clarkston Campus Multipurpose Room

1470 Bridge St. Clarkston, WA 99403

Joseph

July 8th, 2016

6pm – 8pm

Joseph Community Center

East 1st St. Joseph, OR

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

Please visit the 2016 Wild and Scenic Snake River Fee Proposal website at www.fs.usda.gov/goto/WildScenicSnakeRiverProposedFee

2016 River Fee Proposal Comparison

Providing	Existing Condition	\$5.00 permit fee	\$10.00 permit fee
Water	Potable water for public use is only available at Pittsburg Landing. The water system has been unreliable on occasion.	The Pittsburg Landing water system available for public use would receive maintenance to insure future use.	Pittsburg Landing Water system would receive routine maintenance. The potable water at Cache Creek and Kirkwood sites would also be available for limited public use.
Float Boat Crew	The float crew is currently funded through a specialized regional funding program (Valuing People and Places). The float crew's primary duties include permit compliance checks, river camp clean up, visitor contact and information, emergency communications and response when requested. Average river trip frequency is 1-2 time per month.	A slight increase in frequency of 2-3 float trips per month would occur. All other duties would remain the same.	An increase in frequency of float trips would occur up to 3-4 times per month. The float crew would be certified as Forest Protection Officers (FPO) and conduct interpretation and education visits to river users at developed and dispersed sites.
Jet Boat Crew	The jet boat crew conducts maintenance and resupplies remote developed recreation sites and supports the volunteer program with supply needs and transportation. They act as communication between sites when on river as well as emergency response when requested. They are able to do limited patrols for permit compliance due to site and volunteer needs. Average patrol is 1-2 days per week during the primary season, and 1 day per week during the secondary season.	The jet boat crew would conduct 2-3 days per week during the primary season, and 1-2 days per week during the secondary season for patrol and permit compliance.	The jet boat crew would conduct 3-4 days per week during the primary season, and 2+ days per week during the secondary season for visitor contact/information, and permit compliance. The increase would allow for further permit compliance, interpretation, and education opportunities. A second FS jet boat that is currently assigned for law enforcement duties may also be available for additional patrols in the scenic river section.
Boat Launch	There is limited maintenance associated with access at the Hells Canyon, Pittsburg Landing and Dug Bar boat launches.	Deferred maintenance would be addressed in a 3-4 year rotation at the 3 boat launches.	Improvement to facilities and access could occur at a shorter rotation.
Historic Facilities	Of the 11 historic facilities found within the river corridor, 5 receive some form of limited annual and deferred maintenance work. To protect and interpret the sites, Cache Creek and Kirkwood Ranches are staffed year round with the support of a volunteer program. These are also the only ones that have on-site interpretive displays/signs	Some increased deferred maintenance would be addressed at the 11 sites. Updated interpretation would be established at Kirkwood and Cache Creek Historic Ranch facilities.	A management plan would be developed to address priority deferred maintenance needs at the 11 historic sites, and annual work tasks would be implemented. Updated interpretation would be established at Kirkwood and Cache Creek Ranch facilities. Paid staff would be present during peak use seasons, and volunteers still staffed during the secondary season. All staff would be trained to conduct interpretative programs at select facilities.
Volunteers	Volunteers staff Cache Creek and Kirkwood Historic Ranches year round. They do not receive a stipend for their stay which ranges from 2 weeks to a month.	Volunteers would receive a stipend for their stay at Cache Creek and Kirkwood Historic Ranches.	Volunteers would receive a stipend for their stay at Cache Creek and Kirkwood Historic Ranches. Volunteer housing facilities would be improved to allow for a more comfortable stay. This could include increased electrical storage capacity to accommodate swamp coolers.
Operations and Maintenance	Annual maintenance occurs on an "as needed" basis. The main tasks are very limited and include water testing, visitor and staff safety, and minor cleaning \$1,000,000 of deferred maintenance exists.	Two seasonal employees would be hired to address annual operations and maintenance at the primary recreation, administrative and historic sites. This would allow the River Manager and River Ranger positions to address overall program goals such as outfitter & Guide permit compliance, interpretation, and education.	The two seasonal staff and some expertise from the River Manager and River Ranger would address critical infrastructure needs associated with health and human safety. Due to the remoteness in the canyon, the installation of a WIFI hotspots could be available for visitor use to review/make permit reservations, check river flows and weather, and be used for administrative use to update river issues.

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

Briefing Paper

Pacific Northwest Region – Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

Deputy Forest Supervisor: Chuck Oliver

John Day Snake RAC – June 2016

Forest Plan Revision Update

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.

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):

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.

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.

We will provide public updates with new information as we develop these additional Alternatives and continue with the analysis of other Alternatives within the EIS. While we seek to be responsive to all of our diverse publics, any Alternative we consider must be analyzed for compliance with federal laws, regulations, and policies governing National Forest management. Also keep in mind that the Forest Plan Revision is still a work in progress, and the deciding officer (the Regional Forester) has not made any final decisions.

For more information contact: Peter Fargo, Public Affairs, 541-523-1231



for the greatest good

Scoping to Begin on the Sparta Vegetation Management Project

The Whitman Ranger District is requesting comments and feedback on a vegetation management and fuels reduction project in the Sparta Butte/Eagle Creek area. The 17,951 acre project area encompasses approximately two thirds of the previous Snow Basin analysis area.

The Record of Decision (ROD) for the Snow Basin Vegetation Management Project Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was signed in 2012. Four timber sales came out of this project (Puzzle, Empire, Snow Basin, and Skull). Three timber sales (Puzzle, Empire and Skull) were sold in 2012 and 2013. Most of the harvest was completed on the Puzzle Timber Sale in 2014 and approximately 100 acres of the Empire Timber sale was logged before a District Court decision vacated the Snow Basin FEIS and ROD in 2015 for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and National Forest Management Act (NFMA) violations. This court decision halted harvest and other restoration activities within the Snow Basin project area. A new environmental analysis must be completed to go forward with resource management activities within the Snow Basin project area. <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=48947>

“Because we believe there is still a need to manage the resources in this area to create a fire resilient landscape and meet forest plan desired conditions, we have adjusted the boundary to meet the courts direction and are re-analyzing resource management activities under the Sparta Vegetation Management Project,” said Wallowa-Whitman Forest Supervisor Tom Montoya. “Since the courts vacated the Snow Basin decision, timber contracts for Skull and Empire have been terminated and we are currently working with the purchaser of the Puzzle timber sale to find replacement volume for the amount still under that contact,” said Montoya.

For more information contact: Jeff Tomac, Whitman District Ranger, 541-523-1301

Lostine Corridor Public Safety Project

Since the initial project announcement on February 2nd, the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest has received numerous public comments outlining support and concern for the proposed Lostine Corridor Public Safety project. Varying parties, including residents, visitors, natural resource organizations, and business interests, have provided 35 public comments regarding the public safety project located on the 11 mile Lostine River corridor.

The Lostine Corridor Public Safety Project seeks increased public safety in conjunction with improving forest health and resiliency in the high-use public area leading into the Eagle Cap Wilderness. The proposed project aims to achieve its objective through removing hazard trees, reducing fuel loads, creating defensible areas, and thinning dense forest stands.

The feedback received concerning the proposed project will allow the Forest Service to further coordinate with the public and cooperating agencies in completing the environmental analysis by fall of 2016. This coordination will facilitate achieving the project’s public safety objectives while considering the corridors remarkable values, such as scenic quality, recreation, historic sites, and habitat.

www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=48592

For more information contact: Jake Lubera, Deputy District Ranger, 541-278-3762

Eastside Strategy – Accelerated Restoration Update

The Eastside Team is working on the **Blue Mountains Resiliency Restoration Project**, addressing larger landscapes on all four forests encompassing 2.3 million acres of both warm/dry and cool/moist forests looking at future conditions and values at risk. The timeline for a decision is December 2016.

www.fs.usda.gov/goto/forestresiliencyproject

Lower Joseph: Received Biological Opinion on June 15, 2016 from NOAA Fisheries and the team is now sending the documents to the GPO to print. After the documents are received the team will release the drafts: ROD and FEIS for the objection period.

For more information contact: Darcy Weseman, Public Affairs, 541-278-3762

Invasive Plants Treatment Project – Record of Decision Signed

This SEIS corrects deficiencies in the FEIS found by the District Court by providing a complete analysis of cumulative effects and corrects the deficiency found by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit by documenting consistency with PACFISH-INFISH standards. The SEIS also provides an analysis of impacts to sensitive species added to the December 2011 Regional Forester Special Status Species list that was issued following the 2010 Record of Decision. www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=41451

For more information contact: Larry Sandoval, Natural Resources Staff Officer, 541-523-1242

Granite Creek Mining Analysis - Record of Decision Signed

The final Record of Decision is signed and issued; prior to the commencement of mining activities, reclamation bonds and any 401 certifications and valid water rights determined necessary as a result of this analysis will be required before the Plans of Operations are approved. www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=2209

The Granite Creek Watershed (approximately 94,480 acres) is located in the Blue Mountains of eastern Oregon and is primarily within the administrative boundaries of the Whitman Ranger District, Wallowa-Whitman national Forest (40,624 acres), and the North Fork John Day Ranger District, Umatilla national Forest (49,539 acres). The Granite Creek Watershed is located approximately 30 miles west of Baker City, in Baker County, Oregon, and 40 miles southeast of Ukiah, in Grant County, Oregon.

For more information contact: Jeff Tomac, Whitman District Ranger, 541-523-1301 or Ian Reid, North Fork John Day District Ranger 541-427-5316.

Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Powerline

BRIEFING PAPER - (continued)

Idaho Power Company is proposing to construct and operate a 500 kV transmission line from Boardman, Oregon to Murphy, Idaho. A segment of this power line will cross a portion of the La Grande Ranger District. BLM is the lead agency.

Draft EIS – March 2015 close of public comment period

FEIS – Winter 2016

For more information contact: Arlene Blumton, Wildlife Biologist, 541-962-8522 and <http://boardmantohemingway.com/>

Little Dean Fuels Vegetation Management project

The project involves commercial timber harvesting, non-commercial thinning, fuels reduction (pile burning slash), aspen restoration, and prescribed burning and underburning on approximately 17,000 acres of forest, including some riparian areas. A primary purpose of this project is to create sustainable, diverse and resilient forest vegetation across this portion of the watershed, reducing the risk of high intensity and high severity fire. The entire area is classified as Wildland Urban Interface. In order to accomplish the project's purpose there is a need to reduce tree density, manage tree species, manage the landscape's structural diversity, and restore hardwood species including aspen. To accommodate project activities, a number of roads would need to be reconstructed and maintained. Some temporary road construction is needed; after project completions all temporary roads would be rehabilitated. The project is expected to take approximately 5 years to fully implement.

For more information contact: Jeff Tomac, Whitman District Ranger, 541-523-1301

East Face Update

The East Face of the Elkhorn Mountains Project is a forest restoration project located in eastern Oregon's Grande Ronde and Powder River watersheds. The primary purpose of the project is to reduce the risk of loss to catastrophic wildfire throughout 141,000 + acres of public and private lands in an area historically prone to large wildfire. Other benefits/objectives include:

- Improve forest resiliency to insect and disease
- Enhance diversity and quality of wildlife and wildlife habitat
- Improve forest stands for healthier trees and soils (forest health)
- Protect threatened and endangered species habitat
- Support local communities and economies through recreational opportunities, resource management activities, and commodities

The East face project has received more than \$3 million in funding via the Joint Chief's Landscape Initiative, which combines funding from both the Forest Service and NRCS to support fuel reduction work on federal, state, and private lands. The project began in 2014 and will continue for three to five years.

BRIEFING PAPER - *(continued)*

The main practices associated with the project are: commercial timber harvesting, pre-commercial thinning, slash-busting, and prescribed burning. These activities reduce the amount of "fuel" within the forest, which contributes to the spread of wildfire. Dense, overstocked forests pose a higher risk for catastrophic wildfire because the excess vegetation creates a fuel ladder; allowing fire to rise higher into the canopy with causes the most damage. Managing timber stand densities also improves resiliency and forest health.

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=41765>

For more information contact: Bill Gamble, La Grande District Ranger, 541-962-8582

Prineville District – Bureau of Land Management

John Day – Snake RAC Project Briefing Paper - June 2016

Prineville Invasive Plant Environmental Assessment

In October 2010, the Oregon/Washington Bureau of Land Management (BLM) State Director signed the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) on "Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on BLM Lands in Oregon." Each OR/WA District will "step down" the statewide EIS in site-specific analyses particular to each District. These EAs will provide best management practices for treating weeds including prevention, mechanical, chemical, and biological treatments. They allow for use of 14 herbicides, expanding the current range of options for chemical control, consistent with national and state direction for use of herbicides on BLM managed lands.

Update: BLM sent out a signed Record of Decision, Revised EA and FONSI this past month and received one appeal from Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project/League of Wilderness Defenders. The appeal was lengthy, and essentially challenged the range of alternatives, the analysis, the science used, and the fact that BLM did not do an Environmental Impact Statement. BMBP has requested a stay, and BLM will not move forward with any weeds treatment for 10 days. Pending the court decision, BLM will either be able to move forward or the stay will be continued. In the meantime, BLM has 30 days to provide a statement of response to the issues raised by BMBP.

Teaters Road

The Prineville District was notified this past spring that Teaters Road would be closed to public access. Teaters Road extends several miles through private land, and the landowners (Waibel Ranches, LLC) installed gates on the road to prevent access by the general public. Waibels have said the closure is due to years of trespassing, illegal hunting on private land, off-road vehicle damage, illegal antler hunting and littering.

In October 2015, Waibel Ranches filed a complaint seeking a definitive judicial ruling on the scope of BLM's right-of-way.

Update:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Prineville District Office and Waibel Ranches, LLC, worked cooperatively to find a solution to the 2015 closure of Teaters Road that will restore public access from Highway 380 (Paulina Highway) north to the North Fork Crooked River area and the Ochoco National Forest.

Under the mutually acceptable resolution, Waibel Ranches, LLC has offered to build a new, high-quality road to the west of Teaters Road, solely on private property and at its own expense. The new road will be designed and inspected by a professional engineer and will be donated to Crook County upon completion. Once accepted by the county, the road will become a Local Access Road open to the public with the same kinds of access to the BLM North Fork Crooked River area and Ochoco National Forest that Teaters Road has provided.

While the new road is under construction, Teaters Road will remain closed to public access, in part to minimize the risk of vandalism to road construction equipment. However, if the new road is not complete and open to the public by August 10, 2016, Teaters Road will be opened for public use from that date through November 30, 2016 to allow access to BLM and Forest Service lands to the north during fall hunting season. Teaters Road would be closed again after November 30, 2016, while road construction continues. If the new road is still not complete and open by August 1, 2017, though, Teaters Road would be opened again for public use until the new road is complete and available for public use.



These dates could change; however, if there is evidence of poaching, trespass, or vandalism on Waibel Ranch lands adjacent to Teaters Road while the gates are open, and the parties jointly agree that the damage warrants closure of the gates. Throughout this time, Waibel Ranches, LLC, has indicated it will allow the use of Teaters Road for emergency purposes or BLM administrative access at any time.

After the new road is complete, the BLM intends to initiate an environmental assessment to consider: relinquishing some or all of its rights under its existing easement on Teaters Road, providing maintenance on the new road, and accepting an easement and/or right-of-way from the County on the new road, as well as any other related realty actions concerning isolated parcels of public land within the Waibel Ranches, LLC property.

The public is asked to continue to be respectful of private property rights and to report to authorities any suspicious activity or witnessed vandalism to the Waibel Ranches property. A variety of sportsmen's groups, including Oregon Hunters Association and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, have expressed their willingness to help prevent vandalism and trespass during this process. The BLM and Waibel Ranches, LLC, also appreciate the support and input of Crook County Judge Mike McCabe and Crook County Commissioner Ken Fahlgren regarding the County's role in facilitating this mutually acceptable outcome. The full statement of the courses of action that BLM and Waibel Ranches, LLC, intend to take is set forth in the Joint Motion that has been filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon.

Newberry Geothermal

BLM is in the final stages of making a decision to offer approximately 6000 acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands for competitive geothermal leasing. The decision will adopt the U.S. Forest Service's (USFS) 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 (DN) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) signed on October 9, 2014, signed by John Allen, Forest Supervisor for the Deschutes National Forest.

The lands to be offered for geothermal leasing 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 (NNVM or the Monument), with several parcels situated immediately adjacent to the Monument.

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

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. Unless the BLM allows access through connecting trail segments on public land, the OPRD would forego constructing 20.1 miles of the park's trails system.



Update: The BLM and Sherman County are jointly submitting for a Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) grant to widening and graveling Starvation Lane into a two-lane road. If Starvation Lane is improved, State Parks would not develop a take-out and facilities at Hay Creek. The BLM is considering this new information in the Environmental Assessment (with a decision in the next 3 months).

National Public Lands Day

BLM is partnering with Oregon Parks and Recreation Department to conduct a National Public Lands Day in Cottonwood Canyon State Park September 23-24th. With the completion of the EA anticipated, BLM and State Parks will plan to work with volunteers to work on a variety of projects including: building trail, decommissioning trail, building a 10-tent campsite, installing interpretive signs, pulling weeds, pulling wire. BLM staff will provide and evening program, as well as dinner, breakfast and lunch. This will be an overnight event – volunteers will be able to stay Friday night for free, and we're working on seeing if they can stay Saturday as well.

Jefferson County – Rails to Trails FLAP Grant

BLM and Jefferson County are submitting a FLAP grant to obtain funds to make improvements on a 7-mile stretch of an old railroad bed Right-of-Way that the County owns down Willow Creek (Madras NE to Lake Billy Chinook). This is part of the county's existing "Rails to Trails" project, and would be a new funding system to help pay for a trail bridge to cross a drainage, route the trail around a collapsed tunnel, address noxious weeds and a small area of trash dumping. BLM has determined that there is an existing Right-of-Way across BLM land; however, we are still determining what amount of construction/rehab is allowed within the 60-ft ROW.

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 AM instead of midnight. The system is still expected to be online in 2017.

Special Recreation Permit- IBLA Decision

Kevin Dieker, doing business as Rivers In Oregon Rafting, applied for a commercial special recreation permit to run guided boat trips on the Lower Deschutes River in 2013. Prineville initially denied his permit application, and on June 1, 2015, IBLA set aside a Decision by the Prineville District to deny Kevin Dieker's application to run guided boat trips on the Lower Deschutes River.

The BLM has done the following to identify a new special rec permit system:

- The Prineville District, working with a variety of partners, had an informal comment period for 30 days that allowed individuals, businesses, etc. to provide ideas and comments in regard to a new system that would meet the requirements of the plan and take into consideration IBLA's decision.
- A draft proposal has been developed that will receive solicitor review before being implemented. The first year will be considered a pilot, which may be adjusted the next year based on feedback from the outfitting community, as well as those who are seeking a permit and not buying an existing business.
- In July 2016, the BLM will implement a competitive prospectus process to solicit applications from interested outfitters and guides. We will be offering new special recreation permits; up to 5% of the total number of current permit holders (which is ~80). Therefore, 4 new permits will be available to be issued in 2016.



Through discussions with representatives from the CTWSR, OPRD, and other agencies, it was determined that though the initial intent of the plan was to prevent SRPs from having private property value, it was not intended to create an absence of security for the buying and selling of an outfitting business. Based upon the Managers' Group determination and subsequent discussions, the Lower Deschutes Manager's Group voted unanimously to:

- Clarify and correct text within the LDRMP and its 1997 Supplement in regard to the transfer policy; and
- Adopt the BLM's transfer policy as spelled out in the BLM Handbook H-2930-1 Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook with special emphasis on ensuring that policies implemented do all they can to prevent any value being assigned to an SRP issued on the Lower Deschutes.

We have announced this process to the public and are currently working with outfitters and guides interested in transferring their permits.

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.

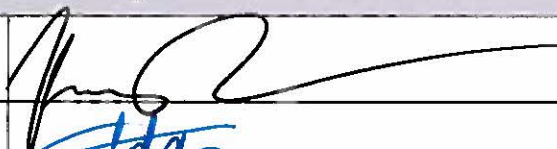

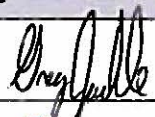
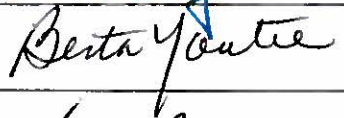
Next Steps: The BLM will issue a Decision Record for the EA, the Lower Deschutes Managers will amend the Plan to incorporate the EA Decision and the agreed upon changes will be implemented for the 2018 season.



John Day-Snake RAC SIGN-IN

June 24, 2016

Maupin, OREGON


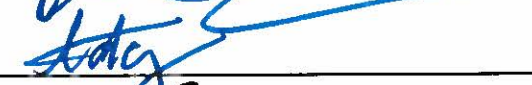




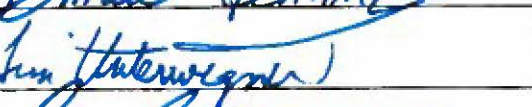





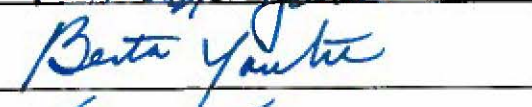

NAME	INTEREST	SIGNATURE
Group 1 – Commodity		
Harry Dalgaard	Outdoor Recreation	
Terry Drever-Gee	Energy	
Brian Sykes	Commercial Recreation	
Art Waugh	Outdoor Recreation	
Group 2 – Conservation		
Jim Reiss	Dispersed Recreation	
Brian Jennings	Environmental	
Tim Unterwegner	Dispersed Recreation	
Ben Gordon	Environmental Organization	
Steve Lent	Archaeological and Historical Interests	
Group 3 – Community Interest		
Greg Jackle	State Agency Rep.	
Chris Perry	Elected Official	
Randy Jones Chair	State Agency Rep.	
Berta Youtie	Academia Natural Sciences	
Erica Maltz	Tribal Representative	

Lisa Clark Prineville BLM

John Day-Snake RAC SIGN-IN

June 23, 2016

Maupin, OREGON

NAME	INTEREST	SIGNATURE
Group 1 – Commodity		
Harry Dalgaard	Outdoor Recreation	
Terry Drever-Gee	Energy	
Brian Sykes	Commercial Recreation	
Art Waugh	Outdoor Recreation	
Group 2 – Conservation		
Jim Reiss	Dispersed Recreation	
Brian Jennings	Environmental	
Tim Unterwegner	Dispersed Recreation	
Ben Gordon	Environmental Organization	
Steve Lent	Archaeological and Historical Interests	
Group 3 – Community Interest		
Greg Jackle	State Agency Rep.	
Chris Perry	Elected Official	
Randy Jones Chair	State Agency Rep.	
Berta Youtie	Academia Natural Sciences	
Erica Maltz	Tribal Representative	

 Lisa Clark for Carol Benlensky