



File Code: 1950

Date: December 19, 2008

Dear Interested Citizen,

The Hood River Ranger District on the Mt. Hood National Forest has identified you as an individual, agency, or organization that might be interested in commenting on the Red Hill Bridge proposal which would replace the Middle Fork Hood River Bridge on Red Hill Drive. The original bridge built in 1949 was destroyed during the flood event in the fall 2006.

Background

The 2006 flood event washed away the Red Hill Bridge which provides access to the Hood River Ranger District of the Mt. Hood National Forest. Red Hill Drive connects with Forest Service Road 16 which provides access to National Forest System lands, popular recreational sites and is used as a biking route by members of the public. Replacing the bridge and reconnecting the road system provides opportunity for more efficient access to Forest administrative, recreation, and vegetation management activities. Forest Administration management activities include safe, timely fire suppression and access to Dollar Quarry. Vegetation management activities may include management of existing plantations and previously harvested areas in the Red Hill and Bear Creek areas of the Forest. Current public and Administrative access to these areas is provided by driving around using the 18 and 16 Roads, which takes an additional 1.5 hours to the other side of the bridge.

The legal description of the project is T10N, R10E, Section 31 SW ¼ at milepost 0.8 of the Red Hill Drive (Forest Service Road 16000000).

Purpose and Need for Action

The overall purpose of this project is to replace the Red Hill Bridge in order to provide efficient and economic access to National Forest System lands for management and recreational activities. In order to meet this purpose, there is an underlying need to build a bridge capable of withstanding a 100-year flood event while allowing fish passage and able to carry heavy vehicle traffic, such as fire engines and log trucks.

Proposed Action

The proposed replacement bridge design would be able to withstand a 100-year flood event with debris flow. The proposed location would be close to the old bridge site. The following design elements are being incorporated into the proposed action. Bridge would be single-lane spanning 120- to 140-feet across the floodplain;

- Bridge would have a 15-foot grade above the road, including approximately 10-feet of clearance for fish passage and debris flow;
- Bridge would be located 3-feet above the “mud line,” which is the top of the flow from the 2006 Flood Event;
- Raise approach fills to match proposed bridge grade and protect approach fills from



- erosion using fill and riprap material from commercial or Forest sources;
- Drainage structures would be added to accommodate overflow in the side channels; and,
- Design would include some channel manipulation up and downstream to restore the channel to pre-flood conditions.

The approaches to the bridge are located on private land to the south and Bonneville Power Administration lands to the north. Hood River County and Forest Service would be working with the land owners to perfect the easements for bridge construction as part of this project.

Construction would likely begin in June 2010 and be completed in early 2011. Construction would include clearing of flood debris, hazard trees, and any additional trees needed, drilling pile, placement of steel or concrete girders, deck and rail, placement of approach fills and approach rail, paving and signing.

Decision to be Made: The Hood River District Ranger will decide whether to replace the Red Hill Bridge and complete the associated restorative actions. The bridge work for this project will be analyzed under a categorical exclusion, category 31.12 4: "Repair and maintenance of roads, trails, and landline boundaries" (FSH 1909.15-2007-1, 31.12, 2/15/07). The easement work for this project will be analyzed under a categorical exclusion, category 31.12 7: "Sale or exchange of land or interest in land and resources where resulting land uses remain essentially the same" (FSH 1909.15-2007-1, 31.12, 2/15/07). The analysis for this project will be undertaken by an interdisciplinary team and documented in a project file. If it is determined that no extraordinary circumstances exist (see FSH 1909.15, Chapter 30.3), the proposed project may be documented in a Decision Memo. A decision on this project is expected by March 2010.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this proposal, please bring them to our attention by **January 30, 2009**. Send comments to Jennie O'Connor Card, 6780 Highway 35; Mt. Hood/Parkdale, OR 97041. For more information, you may contact Stewart Fletcher at (541) 352-6002 x616 or sfletcher@fs.fed.us. Electronic comments may also be submitted to comments-pacificnorthwest-mthood-hoodriver@fs.fed.us in a format such as an e-mail message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc).

Sincerely,

/s/ Daina L. Bambe

DAINA L. BAMBE
District Ranger