

News Release

Umatilla National Forest

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Public Meetings on the West-End OHV Project Rescheduled District to Host Meetings in Fossil, Monument and Heppner

Heppner District Ranger, Tom Mafera has rescheduled the three West-End Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) public meetings in Fossil, Monument and Heppner that were canceled in mid-December due to adverse weather conditions. These public meetings are being held to review and discuss the five alternatives developed for the West-End OHV Project Area Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and are scheduled for:

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
January 8	5:00 – 7:00 pm	Wheeler County Family Service Center, Fossil, OR
January 12	5:00 – 7:00 pm	Senior Center, Monument, OR
January 13	5:00 – 7:00 pm	Heppner Ranger District Office, Heppner, OR

“We’ll start each meeting with a short presentation on where we are in the process and how we got here,” said Ranger Mafera. “Then we’ll review each alternative and discuss how the public’s comments helped to guide us in alternative development. We’ll also go over our timelines, the Draft EA 30-day public comment period, and leave ample time on the agenda for questions and discussion,” said Mafera.

The Heppner District initiated the West End OHV project in response to the 2005 Travel Management Rule; Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use. The rule calls for the designation of roads, trails and areas open to motorized travel to provide better opportunities for sustainable motorized recreation and high-quality access for all users while protecting natural and cultural resources, increasing public safety and reducing effects on big game.

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Designated routes for motorized travel are already in place on most of the Umatilla National Forest. The Forest's one exception is the 91,000-acre West-End OHV Project Area which is generally open to Class I and Class III OHVs for off-road travel. The West-End OHV Project Area is located on the west side of the Heppner Ranger District and includes all Forest Service lands west of Forest Road 22 (Morrow County Road 670/Grant County Road 3). No decisions will be made concerning private or county lands.

"We've worked hard to ensure that those who use and value this area are involved in this process," said Mafera.

A copy of the West End OHV Project Area Draft Environmental Assessment is available at the District Office at 117 South Main Street in Heppner, OR. The Draft EA is also available online at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/uma/projects/readroom/>.

More information about the West End OHV Project can be found on the Umatilla National Forest website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/uma/> or by contacting Janet Plocharsky, Heppner District Planner at 541-676-2148.

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