



File Code: 1950/2300/7700/7700

Date: February 14, 2008

Dear Stakeholder,

The Umatilla National Forest, Heppner Ranger District is seeking scoping comments on the proposed West-End OHV project. In accordance with the November 2, 2005 Travel Management Rule the Heppner Ranger District will develop a system of roads, trails and areas designated for off-highway vehicle (OHV) travel within the project area. You may visit www.fs.fed.us/r6/uma/recreation/westend_ohv/index.shtml for more information about the Travel Rule and a detailed map of the project area.

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). This project is located in Morrow, Wheeler, and Grant Counties, Oregon in Township 6 South, Ranges 24, 25, and 26 East; Township 7 South, Ranges 24, 25, 26, and 27 East; Township 8 South, Ranges 25, 26, and 27 East; WM surveyed. It consists of about 91,000 acres located in portions of the Upper Rock Creek, Wall Creek, and Lower John Day River-Kahler Creek watersheds.

The Heppner Ranger District has developed a proposed action based on information received during the past 18 months of public and agency involvement. We have worked hard to ensure that those who use and value this area were involved in the development of the proposal. We have placed project information on the web and distributed three separate newsletters to people hunting and camping in the project area as well as mailing this information to all who have requested to be involved in projects of this type. In addition we provided opportunities for individuals to attend three separate open houses within the local communities that surround the project area. This gave many of you a chance to talk with myself or representatives from the Umatilla National Forest to let your thoughts and ideas be heard.

I received comments through e-mails, telephone calls, letters, and personal contact. It became apparent the opinions and comments would be as diverse as those who responded. Here is a sample of some of the comments we received:

- We think that this is one of the greatest designated unrestricted open areas that should remain this way!
- We believe having a designated trail system is a legitimate use of our National Forest and I can't think of a better way to enjoy the outdoors.



- Manage the west end like the east end. No OHVs on closed roads and no cross country travel.
- Close all seasonal roads and trails 5 months of the year [July thru December] to all motorized equipment, no exceptions.

We would like to continue the public involvement process as we consider options for the management of this area. We have scheduled three public meetings to give you a chance to meet with us. All public meetings will begin at 7:00 pm. with a presentation of how we derived at this proposal, a description of the proposed action, and what your next steps are if you would like to stay involved in the development of this project. The presentation will be followed by a question and answer session. Meeting dates have been set for March 4, 2008 in Heppner, March 5, 2008 in Monument, and March 6, 2008 in Fossil. If you would like further information on any of these meeting dates please contact the Heppner Ranger District Office at the number listed below.

You are invited to review the attached description and map of the proposed project. We are interested in hearing what you think about the proposed action. Your comments will be useful as we consider alternatives to this proposal. Please contact me using one of the methods listed below.

Instructions for Making Comments:

We want to be aware of and responsive to any issues, comments, or concerns you may have specific to this project. Your comments will be most helpful in the development of alternatives to the proposed action if received by March 14, 2008. Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral, and electronic comments concerning this action are acceptable. Written comments should be submitted to Tom Mafera, District Ranger, PO Box 7, Heppner, Oregon 97836. The office is located at 117 South Main, Heppner, Oregon. Business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Comments can be faxed to (541) 676-2105. Electronic comments should be submitted as part of the actual e-mail message or as an attachment in Microsoft Word, rich text format, or portable document format only and sent to comments-pacificnorthwest-umatilla-heppner@fs.fed.us. If you choose to contact us by phone the number is (541) 676-9187.

Note about Comments:

Please note that comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and are available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who only submit anonymously will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Part 215. Additionally pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27 (d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that under FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the

request is denied, the agency will return the submission (within 10 days) and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address.

If you would like further information about the project, please contact Lori Seitz, Project Team Leader, Heppner Ranger District, PO Box 7, Heppner OR 97836, phone (541) 676-9187.

Thank you for your interest in our programs and for your participation in the process. We look forward to receiving your ideas and comments.

Sincerely,

THOMAS E. MAFERA
District Ranger