

Preliminary Issues

for the BLM's EA for the proposed transfer to DSL of the Deschutes Market Road parcel and a few excerpts from comment letters

Effects on historic road / Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

- This is the last intact portion of the Huntington Wagon Road. This remnant piece of history needs to be preserved and protected. There is something about walking where the pioneers walked--on a trail and not on some highway or through some development--that brings a connection unlike any other with the past. I'm surprised, that with Oregon's support of archaeological preservation, that the transfer of this property with the goal of developing it is even being considered.
- This property should be preserved for the historic wagon road that passes through it..
- The historic value and cultural significance will be undermined with yet another huge development ... in Deschutes County.
- Anything surrounding [the Historic Huntington Trail] would be in detriment to the existing nature of the trail.
- Important mitigations [if the parcel is transferred] should include protections to the historic Huntington Road. This is a very fragile historic site and artifacts have been found dozens of feet on either side of the road. At least 100 feet on each side of the road's length should be protected permanently.

Effects on public land recreation and scenic resources

- This area...is a delight for residents [of nearby private land] and visitors alike. Changing the environment in this area with construction and vehicles will eliminate the natural conditions and abundance of scenic solitude.
- This parcel has been our hunting ground for years.
- The land is used daily by the public for many purposes. Most are using the land for hiking and running their dogs. Some are using it for horse back riding. When we have out of town guests we take them on the [Huntington] trail. Visitors are amazed at the history so close within walking distance of our home and the old growth juniper. The wild flowers are especially beautiful in late June through July.
- It is quiet and beautiful.
- This area, with the current prohibitions against firearms and motorized travel, provides one of the best areas we've seen for the public to easily view hard-to-see wildlife and Central Oregon's natural features. We know of no similar areas that are as easily accessed and as rich in natural resources.
- The area is very similar in quality to the Badlands, but is closer for the residents of Bend and Redmond to access.
- We need open spaces especially in view of the continuous development that seems to occur in this region.
- I wish that you could go with us on one of our daily morning walks with our dogs to see the old growth junipers with their bright green lichen growth and the lava rock pressure ridges. Each tree and mossy rock has their own unique character.
- Geocaching is a popular activity in the area.

Effects on wildlife

- The area teems with wildlife, is a refuge for them.

- This land is every bit as unique as the Badlands. However, it has much more environmental ...significance, with the old growth juniper, large number of owls and hawks, ..[and] one of the few remaining deer habitats for several miles.
- Examples of wildlife we have personally observed on the parcel in May/June 2008 include nighthawk, mated pair of great horned owls with chicks (also in 2006 and 2007), bald eagle, peregrine falcon (2 observations), deer with fawns, coyote. And there have been fresh signs of badger, porcupine, marmot, ...several types of mice, rats, jackrabbits, brush cottontail, chipmunks, etc. We also think we've seen pygmy rabbits.
- Fauna reside on and near several large lava formations between the Huntington Road and the Boonesborough development. This is important foraging, nesting and breeding space and should be protected as it is now. Suggested mitigation would be to permanently preserve these formations plus 30-50 feet surrounding them, and ensure animal runways between at least the largest several of these formations.
- Deer have established migration trails that are heavily used each winter. Most of the trails we've watched traverse the section between the Huntington Road and Boonesborough development with other trails lying between the Huntington Road and eastern section boundary.
- We have come across elk tracks and it is common to see antelope, deer, porcupines, gopher snakes, pack rats and rabbits. The most common birds are blue birds, robins, meadow larks, flickers and doves.

Effects on water, air, noise

- We already have water issues regarding our wells in the area, and where is the water coming from for the 1580 acres?
- Any kind of development off this land would cause noise pollution, air pollution, visual pollution and probably water pollution in the irrigation canal.

Effects on livestock grazing

- One value not listed is the occasional grazing that has been permitted.

Effects on social & economic values; and general or unspecified effects

- One other issue not to develop this land is the fire danger. Routes out of the existing subdivision would become even more congested.
- A very wide buffer should be left around any existing privately owned property.
- We moved to the Boonesborough area 12 years ago and did so specifically for the spaciousness, the silence and all the beautiful wildlife here...if this acreage were to be selected by the DSL for trade it would ruin our way of life and the lives of over 250 of our neighbors.
- There would be unnecessary road development and an increase in motor vehicle use.
- We believe the State of Oregon would also [if the parcel is transferred from BLM] be good neighbors that would continue to protect the community and neighbors with similar high regard. However, we are considerably un-nerved by the potential for subsequent land transfers that would probably not have a similar outlook for the protection of our lands and would most likely and eventually sell it to the highest bidder who would subsequently divide into another development.
- Development and increased people living in area would lead to increased strain on roads, school system, and emergency services.