

OI hunter access road review – 8/24/06

A review of roads left open at request of Idaho Bird Hunters, Idaho Wildlife Federation and other hunter organizations, or closed based on the Owyhee Initiative negotiations. Based on maps compiled by Russ Hueghins of IBH and IWF for Idaho Conservation League, starting with a Dec. 13, 2001 meeting at the request of John McCarthy of ICL and many subsequent meetings between OI representative and hunters. Maps referred to are the BLM 1:100,000 topographical maps

100 percent of hunter requests met:

- Glens Ferry map
- Sheep Creek map
- Murphy map

Triangle map

- 1.5 mile of Shoofly Canyon road closed.
- All other roads in hunter request, at least 150 miles, left open.
- Public access to road one mile up-canyon in Shoofly Canyon gained through private lands in OI land exchange.
- Public access gained at Pole Creek Wilderness, where today there is a locked gate, through public right-of-way and conservation easement on private lands, also part of hunter request.
- OI did not gain public access through private lands near Deep Creek, as requested by hunters, because the land owner was not interested and will keep gates locked.
- Five additional public land access rights-of-way gained by OI – leading off Mud Flat Road, across private lands or through land exchanges. Three near North Fork Wilderness, one at Little Jacks Wilderness and one at Wilson Pasture.

Riddle map

South Fork Owyhee

- Close three roads, covering about 8 miles, which were requested open by hunters, will be closed by OI.
- Keep open three roads, covering about 8 miles and leading into the Owyhee Wilderness toward the canyon rims, will remain open, also part of the hunter request.
- Keep open two additional roads running along the boundary of the South Fork section of the Owyhee Wilderness, about 30 miles of road, providing access to the canyon rim at 1.5 to 2 miles from a road in most cases and 3 miles from a road at the most. Also part of hunter request.
- South Fork crossing at 45 Ranch left open, also part of hunter request.

North side Owyhee River

- Close about 3 miles of road to Red Canyon, which hunters requested open.
- Keep open about 25 miles of boundary roads in north side of Owyhee Wilderness, also part of hunter request.

- Keep open the Crutcher Crossing road, about 10 miles, as a bisecting cherry stem, also part of the hunter request.
- Close about 17 miles of roads and routes on Dickshooter Ridge between Battle and Deep Creeks, where livestock grazing is eliminated and all motorized use will be banned, which hunters requested open.
- Open more than additional 50 miles of boundary or cherry stem roads, including access to Garat, Wylies, Rickards, Bald Mountain, Deep Creek, Battle Creek, and Ryan Pasture, all part of hunter request.
- Five additional public access rights-of-way gained by OI -- leading to the Owyhee River Wilderness, across private lands or through land exchanges.

All roads mapped open in the OI are open to all users. Open roads are part of the legislation, same as wilderness boundaries, and can not be changed or closed except by another act of Congress or higher powers above.

Hunters are closed out of about 29.5 miles of road in the OI, or about 30 miles of road they requested to stay open, with majority or 17 miles in Dickshooter Ridge.

More than 500 miles of roads requested by hunters to remain open will remain open.

Two locations in Owyhee County would be more than 4 miles from a road in the Owyhee-Bruneau Wilderness – Dickshooter Ridge and Lookout Butte plateau. No location in Owyhee County is more than 4 miles from a road today. One location would be more than 5 miles from a road in the Owyhee Bruneau Wilderness – Lookout Butte plateau next to the Oregon border.

The public secures rights-of-way in seven locations across private lands and an additional access to 12 parcels of lands now private, which will expand public lands by 2,619 acres through land exchanges, in OI legislation. Public access is retained through any public lands exchanged to private interests.

Road access and other mapping issues were negotiated in the OI by conservationists, ranchers, recreationists, outfitters, and hunters, including John McCarthy, conservationist; Grant Simonds, outfitter and hunter; Dick Trudeau, recreationist and hunter; and Frank Bachman, rancher and hunter. Consultations were made with Idaho Fish and Game Department staff, other hunters and ranchers, other conservationists. Hunters may not have gotten 100 percent of what they wanted, but they were included and their interests were addressed.

A hunting organization with a long history in the Owyhees and in wildlife conservation, Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, will join the OI board.

John McCarthy
8/24/06