

News Release

Umatilla National Forest

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

The Heppner Ranger District will host three public meetings in mid-December to discuss the five alternatives developed for the West End OHV Project Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) announced Tom Mafera, Heppner District Ranger. The Draft EA is expected to be available for public review the week of December 15th.

Public meetings are scheduled for:

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
December 17,	6:00 – 8:00 pm	Heppner Ranger District Office, Heppner, OR
December 18	5:00 – 7:00 pm	Wheeler County Family Service Center, Fossil, OR
December 22	5:00 – 7:00 pm	Senior Center, Monument, 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 the alternatives and discuss how the public’s comments helped to guide us in alternative development. We’ll also go over our timelines and the Draft EA 30-day public comment period, said Mafera. The District plans to leave ample time on the agenda for questions and discussion.

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 will be available at the District Office at 117 South Main Street in Heppner, OR the week of December 15, 2008. The Draft EA will also be 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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