

NEWS Release

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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Burns District Office

BLM

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BLM Announces Finding of No Significant Impact and Decision Record/Final Decision for the Steens Mountain Travel Management Plan Environmental Assessment

Hines, Oregon – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced today the public availability of the Finding of No Significant Impact and Decision Record/Final Decision for the Steens Mountain Travel Management Plan Environmental Assessment.

Currently there are approximately 556 miles of motorized routes open to the public within the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management Protection Area and this decision preserves the use of 555 miles. Two short roads accessing private lands are no longer available for public travel. Most routes historically used by grazing operators also remain open with limitations placed on some routes within the Steens Mountain Wilderness. The decision also designates 8 miles of Off-Highway Vehicle routes no longer recommended for use with full size vehicles.

The Finding of No Significant Impact, Decision Record/Final Decision, and corresponding maps are available at the BLM Burns District Office or on-line at www.blm.gov/or/districts/burns/plans/index.php. Questions on these documents should be directed to Mark Sherbourne, Natural Resource Specialist, at 541-573-4491.

Background: Sec. 111 of the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act directed BLM to complete a Resource Management Plan (RMP) within 4-years of enactment of the Act and include a Transportation Plan that addresses the maintenance, improvement and closure of roads and trails. The Transportation Plan in the RMP identified road maintenance levels, route categories, and provided many other specific decisions for known routes. The Transportation Plan also identified the need to complete the route inventory for the Cooperative Management Protection Area and use the information in a step down Travel Management Plan Environmental Assessment analysis. The inventory was done in 2004 and 2005. The Environmental Assessment process was completed in April 2007, leading to today's release of the Decision Record which completes the BLM's comprehensive Transportation Plan as required under the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act of 2000.

About BLM

The BLM manages more land – 258 million surface acres – than any other Federal agency. Most of this public land is located in 12 Western States, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1.8 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, and cultural resources on the public lands.

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