



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Fish and Wildlife

Prineville Field Office
East Region
2042 SE Paulina Hwy.
Prineville, OR 97754
(541) 447-5111
FAX (541) 447-8065
www.dfw.state.or.us



May 15, 2020

Slater Turner, District Ranger
Lookout Mountain Ranger District
Ochoco National Forest
3160 NE Third Street
Prineville, OR 97754

RE: Draft Environmental Assessment for the Ochoco Wild Horse Management Plan

Dear Mr. Turner,

As the agency mandated with management of Oregon's fish and wildlife (ORS 496.012), the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) is responding to your request for comments on the Ochoco Wild Horse Management Plan (Plan) Draft Environmental Assessment (EA). Once finalized, the Plan will replace the current management document for the Ochoco wild horse herd published in 1975.

The Department generally supports the Ochoco National Forest's (Forest) selection of Alternative 2 as its preferred Alternative. By reducing the current Appropriate Management Level (AML) from 55-65 wild horses to 12-57, Alternative 2 strikes an ecological balance between the habitat needs of the Forest's wild horses and its fish and wildlife species.

In addition, the Department recommends the following be included in the final Plan:

- Proposed criteria for selection of gather sites.
- Additional details regarding ecological monitoring of impacts to both upland and riparian sites for each Alternative and their connection to Forest Standard & Guidelines.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have questions or want information that the Department can provide, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Sara Gregory
Wildlife Habitat Biologist
Deschutes Watershed District
sara.c.gregory@state.or.us
541-388-6147

cc: Bruce Eddy – ODFW East Region Manager
Mike Harrington – ODFW Deschutes Watershed Manager
Greg Jackle – ODFW Ochoco District Wildlife Biologist
Brett Hodgson – ODFW Deschutes District Fish Biologist