

Kevin Larkin
Acting Forest Supervisor
Siuslaw National Forest,
3200 Jefferson Way,
Corvallis, OR 97331
ATTN: Katie Isacksen.

June 5, 2021

Dear Mr. Larkin:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment during the scoping phase in which the Siuslaw National Forest, Dunes National Recreation Area (ODNRA), is considering increasing the legal sound limits for Off Highway Vehicles on the Dunes.

We would like to provide you a little background for our comments.

We have lived in the Shorewood Area, adjacent to the southern end of the ODNRA just north of North Bend, for 33 years now. When we moved here in 1988, we do not remember any appreciable sound intrusion at all from ORV's or OHV's on the Dunes. In 1998 we moved about .75 mile further east, still within the Shorewood Area, and we can't remember any significant vehicles noise from the Dunes until about 2010 or so.

For the next few years the vehicle noise from the Dunes as we recollect, seemed to just center around holiday and special OHV event generally on weekends.

However, for the last 5 years, the level of OHV noise from the Dunes has proliferated to the point that it has severely intruded our peace and quiet here on our property. Weekends are especially bad, but vehicle noise is now occurring throughout the week as well, often from spring break until the Thanksgiving/Christmas holiday period at the end of the year.

Many times during the summer, the drone of vehicles is almost constant starting in mid morning and continuing through the entire day, often continuing until 10 or 11pm, or at times even later. During the "typical drone" of the day and evening, outrageously noisy vehicles also invade the privacy of our property.

We are certainly not sound experts and have a rather limited understanding of the actual sound of specific decibel levels you describe. But let us try to describe, as best we can, what it sounds like out here during the summer months in particular but now also at many other times of the year.

The constant up and down droning of OHV's on typical weekends is similar to if our neighbor about 500 feet down the road was running his weed wacker constantly, all day and into the night: the sound constantly changing up and down. Many times the noise of vehicles from the Dunes sounds like there are 5 or 6 weedwackers running simultaneously.

On especially busy weekends, and evenings, it would be like adding a leaf blower to the background noise in addition to the weed wacker.

When an outlaw vehicle (only way we can describe the unusually loud vehicle that sounds like there is no muffler at all, that we hear fairly regularly) it would be similar to our neighbor running his chainsaw (along with the other background noises coming from the weed wackers and the leaf blower).

Needless to say we now can not have an enjoyable dinner or glass of wine on our deck with this ongoing noise. There are times, when it affects our ability to have a normal, one on one conversation. It is an extreme invasion of our solitude, one of the main reasons we purchased our property. It adversely affects our quality of life.

During the heavy use times (more and more common the last two years) we have to keep our windows closed at night to be able to sleep. By the way, coincident to these high use times, there is the common sounds of the unenforced use of fireworks, which I assume are still illegal on federal lands, at night coming from the Dunes.

So, in our opinion, the proposal to actually INCREASE the allowable decibel levels of OHV's on the Dunes is outrageous. Isn't this like increasing the speed limit because people aren't following the current speed limits?

Even though we partially understand the idea of trying to coordinate 'some' of the standards with other agencies, we think that claim is a red herring. We suspect that the real reason that OHV's have not met the noise standards on the is Dunes because there has been inadequate enforcement.

We would like to know more about the specific level of enforcement out on the Dunes. We would like to know more about how often vehicles are tested and how well received such requests are. We would like to know the number of citations actually written, and typically what is the fine for these citations. Do OHV owners have to submit to decibel checks? We notice from your data that there is a very low level of adherence to the current noise requirements. How many tests are actually conducted? What is the monitoring rate of vehicles compared with the number of total vehicles on the Dunes? In other words, what percentage of vehicles are actually tested?

Without this information we can never really evaluate the need for this proposed change in the Siuslaw Forest's Plan.

We wonder if much of the OHV noise we hear may be coming from the dune slopes that face eastward toward the Shorewood subdivision. We think that closing some of these east facing slopes should be considered along with aggressively increasing the level of enforcement.

Even though the noise at our home is unacceptable, we are on the back side of the "Shorewood Dune system". Certain weather conditions (low clouds, no wind) can exacerbate the amount of noise that reaches us. We can only imagine the noise levels at some of the homes on the west side of the Shorewood subdivision, especially those in direct line of sight of the OHV activity.

We would suggest that in the process of your scoping, you hold a well advertised public meeting within the Shorewood Subdivision that would include all the residents up Marine Drive at least up to the northern outlet of North Bay Drive. This would also include those home up Kadora Drive. We suspect that many there are not aware of your proposal to increase the acceptable decibel levels of the Dunes.

Overall, we are in favor of enforcing the current decibel levels for OHV's on the Dunes in the current Forest Plan. We are not in favor of increasing the allowable decibel levels. We are not convinced that this makes sense and think the Forest's proposal is based on flawed and circuitous logic. At this point, we need more information on the level and result of enforcement actions before we would change our mind.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Larry and Sylvia Mangan
Private Landowners speaking on their own behalf

