DENNIS JORDAN
OSSA PRESIDENT

Oregon State Snowmobile Association
20354 Empire Ave, Ste. D9, Bend, OR 97703
(541) 797-6880

LISA MAHONEY
OSSA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Official Public Comment

Whitman Post-Fire Recovery Project (#446982)

November 11, 2026

RE: Public Comments – Whitman Post-Fire Recovery Project (#446982)

Dear District Ranger Aujero,

On behalf of the Oregon State Snowmobile Association (OSSA), I am submitting comments regarding the proposed Whitman Post-Fire Recovery Project on the Wallowa–Whitman National Forest.

OSSA represents snowmobilers throughout Oregon and works in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and local snowmobile clubs to maintain groomed winter trail systems and promote safe, responsible winter recreation.

We recognize the importance of post-fire recovery following the 2026 Anthony, Olive Butte, and McCully fires. We support efforts to address hazardous trees, restore forest health, reduce future wildfire risks, and repair damaged infrastructure.

However, we want to ensure that existing snowmobile trails, grooming operations, and winter recreation access are considered throughout the planning and implementation of this project.

OSSA respectfully requests consideration of the following:

1. Protection of Existing Snowmobile Trails and Grooming Routes

We request that the Forest Service identify any established snowmobile trails and grooming routes within or adjacent to the project area and evaluate how proposed activities may affect them.

Many designated winter recreation routes utilize existing Forest Service roads. Activities such as salvage logging, road reconstruction, timber hauling, and equipment staging could potentially interfere with these routes.

We ask that existing winter recreation opportunities be maintained wherever possible and that any necessary changes be coordinated with the affected snowmobile clubs.

2. Coordination of Logging and Hauling Activities

We request that logging, timber hauling, road maintenance, and other heavy equipment operations be scheduled to minimize conflicts with winter snowmobile use and grooming activities.

Where project activities involve roads used as groomed snowmobile trails, we ask that the Forest Service coordinate directly with OSSA and the affected clubs before scheduling operations that could interfere with winter access.

3. Road Closures and Winter Recreation Access

We request that the Forest Service carefully evaluate any proposed temporary or permanent road closures, reconstruction, or changes to access routes for potential impacts on snowmobiling.

Forest Service roads frequently serve as important connections between established snowmobile trails, parking areas, warming shelters, and other winter recreation facilities.

We ask that existing winter access be preserved wherever feasible and that affected user groups be consulted before decisions are made that could alter these connections.

4. Post-Fire Hazards and Trail Safety

We recognize that fire-damaged trees and unstable conditions may present safety concerns for winter recreationists and volunteer grooming operators.

We request that the Forest Service evaluate hazardous trees along established snowmobile routes and work with local clubs to identify areas requiring mitigation before winter grooming operations resume.

We also ask that any restrictions resulting from the Anthony, Olive Butte, and McCully fires be clearly communicated, including anticipated timelines for reopening affected roads and trails.

5. Coordination with Local Snowmobile Clubs

OSSA is reaching out to local snowmobile clubs, including Burnt River Snowmobile Club and Panhandle Snowmobile Club, to determine whether their established grooming routes or winter recreation areas overlap the proposed project boundaries.

We request that the Forest Service provide detailed project maps identifying treatment areas, proposed road work, timber hauling routes, and anticipated closures so that we can evaluate potential impacts.

We also ask that OSSA and affected clubs be included in future coordination as project planning and implementation move forward.

6. Maintaining Winter Recreation Opportunities

OSSA encourages the Forest Service to recognize snowmobiling as an important component of winter recreation and the local economy.

Oregon's snowmobile trail systems depend heavily on volunteer clubs and partnerships with federal land management agencies. Protecting established trail connections and maintaining access for grooming equipment are essential to the continued operation of these systems.

Our goal is to work collaboratively with the Forest Service to support responsible forest recovery while maintaining safe and reasonable access for winter recreation.

Conclusion

OSSA appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Whitman Post-Fire Recovery Project.

We support responsible efforts to restore areas affected by wildfire and recognize the challenges involved in managing these landscapes.

Our primary concern is ensuring that snowmobile trails, winter recreation access, and grooming operations are considered during project planning and implementation.

We respectfully request that the Forest Service address these concerns in its project analysis and implementation planning, provide opportunities for continued coordination, and notify OSSA of any proposed activities that could affect established winter recreation routes.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued partnership with Oregon's snowmobile community.

Sincerely,

Lisa Mahoney
Executive Director
Oregon State Snowmobile Association
Bend, Oregon