

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/29/2018 6:09:56 PM

First name: Valerie

Last name: Rapp

Organization:

Title:

Comments: The unexpected popularity of Blue Pool certainly needs management attention. I visited the trailhead recently and saw license plates from half a dozen states-and this was on a week-day in April. I've heard stories about the crush of visitors and vehicles on summer weekends. I applaud the district for giving the area additional management attention.

I was glad to see the addition of the trailhead toilets. They were greatly needed and will help protect the trailhead area from human waste and toilet paper.

The upper McKenzie River is a designated Wild and Scenic River (Rapp, 1992b). The Blue Pool trailhead, trail, and Blue Pool itself are all within the Wild and Scenic River Segment B, defined as extending from a point 100 feet downstream from Carmen Dam to the maximum pool at Trail Bridge Reservoir (Rapp, 1992b, p. I-2). This segment is designated as a Recreational River.

The Forest Service is required to manage the area according to the management guidelines of the Wild and Scenic River Management Plan (Plan) (Rapp, 1992b). The Plan anticipated that use would rise on the McKenzie River Trail, more sanitation facilities would be needed, and signage might increase (Rapp, 1992b, p. II-4).

My specific scoping comments are:

*The purpose and need, item #2, of the Environmental Assessment for the Blue Pool parking lot project (EA) should read, "Reduce impact to natural resources at trailhead, in order to maintain the outstandingly remarkable values recognized by the Wild and Scenic River designation."

*I agree that a parking lot is needed to protect the outstandingly remarkable values, reduce the current impact of roadside parking, and accommodate visitors. However, unlimited accommodation of growing use may not be the answer to managing Blue Pool's popularity. Managing use, not just accommodating use, also needs to be considered.

*The EA should have a second action alternative to the proposed approximately 96-space parking lot. The second action alternative should look at a smaller parking lot, combined with management actions to restrict use, such as a day-use fee or maximum numbers allowed at one time.

*The EA must ask: Is the level of use that goes with a 96-space parking lot still consistent with the Roaded Natural recreational experience this area is supposed to provide, and consistent with protection of the outstandingly remarkable values of the Wild and Scenic McKenzie River (Rapp, 1992a, p. IV-4)? The Roaded Natural river corridor social attributes are described as "moderate evidence of sights and sounds of others moderate use occurs-contacts with others is expected and occasionally continual, some chance for isolation; opportunities for challenge in a natural environment but less expectation of risk" (Rapp, 1992a, p. IV-4).

*If the level of use exceeds, or is likely to exceed, Roaded Natural levels, management of use must be considered. Proposed management would be most effective if the Forest Service can budget at least some staff time at Blue Pool trailhead, or if a partnership with a user group can be found, and volunteers help with visitor outreach and management.

*I agree that additional bathroom facilities by the parking lot, dedicated parking spots for emergency responders, additional signage, and a permanent gate on the 740 road will improve safety and the visitor experience for the Blue Pool area.

I am curious about the funding for the proposed parking lot. Is the funding actually available, or is it tentative? Is the funding required to be used only for a parking lot? Or does the district have the flexibility to use some of the funding for a smaller parking lot, and use the savings for other management actions such as staffing on summer weekends? Answering this question in the EA and decision notice will help people understand the constraints that the district must operate within, in its decisionmaking.

References Cited

Kenops, Darrel L. 1992. Decision Notice. In: Rapp, Val. 1992. Upper McKenzie River Environmental Assessment. USDA Forest Service: Eugene, Ore.

Rapp, Val. 1992a. Upper McKenzie River Environmental Assessment. USDA Forest Service: Eugene, Ore.

Rapp, Val. 1992b. Upper McKenzie River Management Plan. USDA Forest Service: Eugene, Ore.