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First name: Greg

Last name: Hughes

Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Greg Hughes, and I am a pilot and Oregon resident. I am writing to request that aviation and airstrips be recognized and formally included in the Blue Mountains Forest Plan.

Inclusion of airstrips and aviation activities in this plan will ensure safe, continued access to regional airstrips, including Reds Horse Ranch (68D), among others.

Please consider the following points for inclusion in the plan, and feel free to reach out to me personally if it would be helpful to discuss.

Historic Use:

* Both commercial and private aviation activity has historically occurred on these forest lands continuously since the 1930s. Please consider adding "aviation" to the list of approved activities.

Management and Maintenance:

* Aviation organizations, such as the Recreational Aviation Foundation, have established Airstrip Integrated Operations and Maintenance Plans on the Wallowa-Whitman Forest. This plan can be replicated on each Blue Mountains Forest for airstrip maintenance. This is a strong example of cost-effective public/private partnering between the government and interested aviation groups to maintain the airstrips, saving USFS significant funds.

Transportation Infrastructure:

* Airstrips are a key and longstanding component of the USFS nationwide transportation system, as are the roads and trails, and should be considered as such in any management plan

* Airstrips support Federal and State land management activities, wildfire operations, recreational and hunting use, emergency evacuation, access to private in-holdings and commercial ventures that support the local economy.

Objectives:

* Please add "Maintain Airstrips" to this list.

Dispersed Usage:

* Airstrips provide locations for dispersed backcountry recreation.

Aesthetics:

* Airstrips appear as open meadows on level terrain, and offer habitat for wildlife.

Effect on Wildlife:

* Scientifically peer-reviewed studies show that aircraft noise has no detrimental effect on wildlife.

