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Comments: Thank you for providing this opportunity to provide input on the upcoming USFS revision of the 1990 Land Management Plan for the Blue Mountains National Forests (Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests) in my home state of Oregon.

I am writing with the goal of emphasizing the importance of providing continued access to airstrips for both recreation and maintenance, and to request that aviation and airstrips be recognized and formally included in the plan. Inclusion will ensure safe, continued access to regional airstrips, including Reds Horse Ranch (68D), and others.

Since the 1930's, early in the history of aviation, both private and commercial aviation users have had beneficial access to these important Forests. This aviation access has allowed for minimal disturbance of forest land while providing both recreational and emergency access. Keeping our public lands accessible while also protecting them from abuse/overuse is key to ensuring the future of these public assets.

To ensure that these lands and forests remain for future generations to enjoy and benefit from, several aviation organizations worked collectively to assemble an Integrated Operations and Maintenance Plan on the Wallowa-Whitman Forest. This plan can serve as a template of each of the Blue Mountains Forests for safe, practical, minimally invasive, and cost-effective airstrip maintenance - shared responsibility for both maintenance and expenses makes sense, and engages the public in stewardship in a highly effective manner.

As components of the USFS nationwide transportation system, airstrips, roads and trails must all be considered in a new/revised management plan. The explicit inclusion of airstrips recognizes the critical role they play in the support of both 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.

By providing for more dispersed usage of the forests, airstrips minimize impact on the more road- and trail-accessible portions of these lands. Airstrips are generally on open meadows on level to gently-sloping terrain, and are most often used in good weather/daylight conditions, thus providing excellent habitat for wildlife. As a career scientist and educator, I am personally well aware of professionally conducted, peer-reviewed studies that conclude that aircraft noise - which is minimal from small, backcountry aircraft - has no detrimental effect on wildlife.

I ask that you add "Maintain Airstrips" and "Ensure Continued Public Airstrip Access" as discussion topics going forward, and ultimately as line items in the upcoming USFS revision of the 1990 Land Management Plan for the Blue Mountains National Forests in the Pacific Wonderland, Oregon.

Thank you most sincerely for this opportunity to make a public comment.

Vince Remcho