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First name: Karen

Last name: Logan

Organization:

Title:

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Objection to Blue Mountain Forest revision plan.

Roadless areas

Lack of detail on map

O D F & W green dots.

Access

Needed changes

Roadless areas

Roadless areas 203, 204, 205, 206, 207. 2023 all these areas have usable roads in them.

Many of the roads go to trail heads. Private property, mines, mushroom hunting, berry picking, hunting camps and patches of firewood that have been used for generations.

Area 2010 2025 2031 that are marked wilderness, have roads in them. Just one of the roads is the old wagon route from La Grande to Sumpter and there are two roads going to Two Color Lake and Bennett Peak.

Lack of detail

Lack of detail on the map makes it difficult to tell exactly where the areas are, without road numbers and other identifying characteristics such as campgrounds, lakes and rivers, the maps are too vague to be of much use. By your own admission at the public meeting, you started your inventory working from maps without the roads on them. Thus, distorting the definition of inventory which by all standards should be conducted. Inventory should be conducted on the ground showing all roads, rivers campgrounds and private property only once a true and accurate inventory is done can you tell if they meet the standards. Based on your own administrative rules as stated in the public meetings none of these areas qualify for the designation shown on the map

Because the detail is so lacking I can't tell for sure if the Old Auburn Road, Elk creek road and the 7225 road that connects the two roads are included in the roadless areas, specifically, road 7225 020 this road provides access to private property, and more than likely is part of the network of roads established for the township of Old Auburn.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

ODF&W has already placed large signs throughout the forest. establishing travel management using a green dot system. After a public meeting in Baker City, I showed forest supervisor a photo of the sign on Big creek, this area is closed April through Nov. I asked him if this was not travel management which he has stated

numerous times in public meetings was not part of the Blue Mountain Forest Plan. His answer was that ODF&W sign only applied if I was hunting that I could go anywhere I wanted without fear of prosecution. I asked the same forest supervisor the same question later at a FAFA meeting and received basically the same answer. Based on the research that I did, they are misinformed, and authority has been given to ODF&W to do travel Management on the Wallowa Whitman Forest.

We have repeatedly been promised that our forest would remain an open forest. It is clear the forest service has co-opted their responsibility out to ODF&W, Environmental groups, the Tribes and NOAA just to name a few.

Access

By restricting access, you are doing harm in many ways. The smaller the area we have for logging firewood cutting recreation, mining and hunting, the closer we are to the day that someone decides to implement a reservation system because of overuse.

Our forests are overgrown, and need logged these roadless areas will keep this from happening. Leading to more catastrophic fires.

Miners have already been adversely affected with some of them waiting over ten years for approval and they're still waiting. These minerals are critical to manufacturing and should not be held hostage to unreasonable regulation.

Changes Needed

Special interest groups have guided forest management for over 30 years resulting an overgrown forest more roadless areas that can't be used. Litigation that stops even the logging of critical areas such as the Baker City water shed. If the water shed burns it will result in tons of sediment feeding into streams that flow into the powder river. It will cost the city over 20 million dollars leaving us without a useable water shed for years.

If we continue down this same path no one wins catastrophic fires leave the soil bare for years, 1000 of wild animals are killed and those that have escaped have lost their natural habitat, and tons of sediment will clog the water ways.

Put contractors and loggers back to work in the forest with reasonable regulations. There was a time if a fire started it was all hands-on deck these people were already in the forest with crews and equipment. I am 100% certain that the first Dooley Mountain fire could of been put out. A local logging Co was working in the area when the fire started. The owner told me that the forest service because of regulation stopped him from using his crew and equipment to bring the fire under control. They instead waited until the next day and then it was too late.

ODF&W should not be allowed to limit where any of us go on the forest. ODF&W and NOAA are okay with roads being cut into virgin ground with 100s of tons of concrete poured and windmills that kill birds and insects. Example the windmills in the burnt River canyon along I84 between Baker City and Ontario. Just one section of the tower can weigh as much as 210 tons just think about what infrastructure had to be built to get it on top the ridge, all on a drainage that goes directly into the Burnt River. This and the introduction of wolves, and restrictions on hunting cougar and bear are having a greater impact on wildlife, than logging, using the area for recreation or hunting could ever have.

We know that the forest can't be made ADA compliant however not all of us are able to backpack or walk into the

areas to hunt, berry picking, mushrooming and firewood cutting. We are not asking for new roads just quit destroying the ones we have. If you have preferred roads that you would like us to use, maintain those roads and place new signs. People are like water and will follow the path of least resistance. The rest of the roads if no one is using them will close on their own. It is imperative that the forest remain completely an open forest without exception.

Our forest has a wealth of minerals and renewables that was used to benefit the counties providing tax revenues and jobs. We need to get back to that.

It is time to find as many people as possible that worked in the woods in the 60s and early 70s. Including forest service personnel and talk to them. They have a wealth of knowledge the kind you can't get from a book, but you better hurry we are losing them every day.

Start over with a new plan and mind set. This time start with how we can generate revenue and mitigate fire danger. Do your inventory on the ground first, take people with you that have worked logged, hunted, mined, fished, camped and cut wood in the area being evaluated. Having their input in the field will give you far better information than you will ever get in a public meeting. These people have a wealth of knowledge that you can't get from a book. Look at how private landowners manage their ground and talk with them. Go to congress and ask for help stopping the massive amount of litigation.

I have never talked with anyone that does not want a healthy forest. While we disagree on how we do that, there should be issues that we can all agree on. Our forest is not healthy. In our area there are too many trees per acre. The spotted Owl is still under attack, and the fires leave behind scorched earth. Our public lands have become a liability costing untold millions fighting fires. The policies of the last 30 years have not made the forest better or improved wildlife habitat. We need to come together and fix this more of the same will not work. There are plenty of examples of private ground that has active management that has proven to be more restraint to fire. providing grazing, clean water, logging and wildlife habitat. Look to them for examples of success.

Once a fire goes through an area we have nothing left to fight over and the resulting sediments that flows into the streams is NOAA's worst nightmare.

Working together we can fix this.