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Comments: Hi there,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Land Management Plans. As a resident of Northeast Oregon and a frequent user of these public lands, I appreciate the chance to provide input on their long-term management.

In addition to prioritizing protection of existing roadless areas within each Forest and safeguarding wildlife-movement corridors and other elements of landscape-level habitat connectivity with enforceable standards, I suggest incorporating night-sky considerations into these management plans. As DarkSky Oregon has demonstrated through its skyglow analyses and data from locally installed Sky Quality Meters (SQMs), Northeast Oregon retains a high-quality night-skyscape of the kind increasingly rare in the U.S. Comparatively minimally affected by light pollution, our region's night skies-including those over these expansive national forests-are a resource to be protected alongside clean water, intact habitat blocks and corridors, diverse forest stands (including old-growth), roadless backcountry, and the varied recreational opportunities we all cherish.

Light pollution negatively impacts wildlife (and human beings) by warping deep-rooted circadian rhythms, hampering bird migration, and generally degrading the dark nights with which Blue Mountain Province ecosystems evolved. Night-sky tourism has proven a lucrative industry, with stargazing and astrophotography enthusiasts traveling from around the world to areas such as ours that are only lightly impacted by skyglow-resulting in significant dollars spent on lodging, camping, dining, and other services in regional communities. Dark night skies confer not just ecological and economic benefits, but social ones as well, given they're fundamental qualities of the rural (and wild) environment local residents value.

Properly designed (downward-pointing, shielded, etc.) outdoor lighting on the Forests can provide adequate security for staff and visitors with minimal skyglow. I hope the use of these kinds of night-sky-friendly fixtures-and consideration of dark-sky tourism among the visitor activities these Forests are partly managed for, along with hunting, camping, angling, wildlife-viewing, etc.-will become part of these long-term plans.