

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/30/2026 3:07:09 PM

First name: Milton

Last name: McClaskey

Organization:

Title:

Comments: 2026 Newberry Geothermal Consent to Lease Project Summary (#387325)

My family hikes and camps in the Deschutes National Forest, and I have a home in Deschutes County. I oppose the 2026 Newberry Geothermal Consent to Lease (Project #387325) as proposed and ask the agency to weigh the specific concerns below before any decision is finalized.

The Project Summary states that "The Deschutes National Forest is responding to a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) request to grant consent to lease approximately 29,477 acres of National Forest System lands nominated for geothermal exploration and development. This decision is an administrative action only; ..."while simultaneously listing an Environmental Assessment as the required analysis type. The notice cites no legal authority for the label and does not explain whether it restricts the public's right to object under 36 CFR Part 218 or narrows the basis for judicial review.

--The agency should publish the specific legal authority supporting it and explain in writing what effect, if any, it has on public participation rights.

The designation of an Environmental Assessment rather than an Environmental Impact Statement for consent to lease nearly 30,000 acres for geothermal exploration and development demands an explanation. Why does this fall below the EIS threshold given that geothermal development ultimately involves well drilling, road construction, concrete pads, pipelines - major support infrastructure that impacts and disturbs huge areas?

--The agency should prepare an EIS or publish a detailed pre-decisional significance analysis, supported by specific data, explaining why an EA is sufficient for an action of this size.

The complete description of the proposed action in the Project Summary applied to nearly 30,000 acres consists of a phrase: 'geothermal exploration and development'. If the public is to be able to understand and comment on the project and its environmental and cultural impacts the agency needs to provide information on potential well counts, road construction, pipeline corridors - the infrastructure that will come as a result - as well as estimated or projected water use.

--The agency should publish a full project description -- including all known and reasonably foreseeable activities and associated infrastructure.

I want this land managed responsibly and I want my kids to have it. These are not technical objections meant to obstruct a process. They are the minimum the public needs to participate meaningfully. I ask the agency to answer each of these points.