

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/19/2022 7:00:00 AM

First name: Mike

Last name: Totey

Organization: Oregon Hunters Association

Title: Conservation Director

Comments: RE: Oregon Hunters Association comments on the [ldquo]North Fork Crooked River Forest Resiliency Project[rdquo]

The Oregon Hunters Association (OHA) is a sportsmen[rsquo]s conservation organization with 10,000

members in 26 chapters across Oregon. OHA values our National Forests as a public place to hunt and recreate, and as a valuable asset providing habitat for the wildlife we care about. As such, the management and access of these lands are of critical importance to OHA. We have been engaged in numerous projects to improve and protect habitat conditions, and we value our partnership with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). We are providing comments and input on the North Fork Crooked River Forest Resiliency Project Environmental Assessment (EA).

OHA is a proponent of active forest management to restore and maintain habitat, improve forest resiliency, and to manage use of those areas. Public access to public lands is of critical importance to us. Access and travel management must be done in a thoughtful and strategic manner to allow for reasonable public access, access for management operations, and protect wildlife.

In the project plan, one of the purposes is to improve habitat security for big game by reducing motor vehicle traffic through high-value habitat patches. Reductions in motor vehicle traffic can be accomplished through a variety of mechanisms. Decommissioning road, closing roads to public traffic, and use of seasonal closures. Currently, seasonal closures are used through a [ldquo]green dot[rdquo] traffic management program. OHA supports the existing green dot system as identified by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, including Forest Service Roads 300 and 700. Additionally, these [ldquo]green dot[rdquo] or open roads can be closed to public use during other periods of the year (winter range and fawning/calving seasons) to reduce disturbance to big game and other wildlife. We believe this current system meets the intent of the project goals, and allows for reasonable public access.

OHA is in support of managing stand densities through both commercial and noncommercial. We believe that with appropriate thinning prescriptions, the Forest can improve the resiliency and health of the forest, while providing for needed habitat improvements.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Mike Totey

Conservation Director

Oregon Hunters Association