

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/3/2026 7:00:00 AM

First name: B.

Last name: Ward

Organization:

Title:

Comments: See Attached. Thank you. B. Ward

Ella Rowan and IDT members;

April 3, 2026

After a brief review of this project, I have the following comments for you and your IDT consideration. The first part of my comments are the same as I commented on for the Ochoco USFS North Slope Vegetation Mgt. Project. I suggest particular note be taken regarding both projects and the evaluation the existing and proposed road system;

1. Proposed Action

* the proposed action has a lot of excellent proposed actions, regarding a landscape having a sizeable amount of dead trees and small pole trees. I assume a lot of this public land is on north and east slopes, generally having more moisture.

* On slopes facing west and south, care should be taken when harvesting or doing other treatments, that these actions won't result in vegetative change not desirable. (An example of this would be to look at south facing slopes where trees once grew, but are now juniper and other non-pine species. I'm referring to the area on the way up to the old USFS ranger station by the junction that goes to Walton lake).

1. Travel Management; The proposed action is excellent in using existing roads and only creating new routes after a Best Practices review is done by Fish and Hydro. Specialists. I suggest the IDT also invite a Soils and Vegetation specialists, Travel management person, a person who is part of your road maintenance crew and also a Recreation Planner.

2. This team would be better prepared to look at temporary new roads, look at past USFS roads once on your travel management system, but were closed and rehabilitated.

In addition, this is an excellent time to also look at the forest motorized and non-motorized trail systems.

This review process should not be short changed. Forest harvest of trees using the final road system is also an excellent tool for eventually closing, or retaining roads, depending on this IDT review of each road used as part of this proposed project. Time spent doing this review will result in long-term benefits to resource and recreation mgt.

4., Fire access to public lands should also be considered, so a fire staff person focused on fire access should also be invited to review and be involved in this IDT road use analysis.

Last, any prescribed fire actions need to review the After Action Review of the Maxwell fire, that burned thousands of private land acres adjacent to USFS lands. I have friends that were on this wildfire and remember its effects well.

1. Private & BLM land adjacent to USFS land also need to be part of this planning effort, especially adjacent private land owners.

Comments specific to the Upper Trout and Bridge Creek vegetation Project;

Travel Management; Road Use, Maintenance, Construction and Closure;

1. This project also includes broad actions regarding maintenance and reconstruction of roads and use of the material site; all excellent actions that bide well to the broad view of your IDT.
2. When finally determining to close roads and trails, one method that has worked quite well on BLM lands is to camouflage road entrances and using closed road signs, with the long term goal of having these closed road entrances becoming and blending in with the existing landscape, so the public land user doesn't know a road even existed.
3. If time permits, go to the North Fork WSA on BLM lands and see this result on some the roads that extended down the north side canyons of the North Fork Crooked River. Using boulders is effective, but it also advertises that a road was once here and may be viewed by a limited number of motorized public users as a challenge to find a way to other parts of the closed road. Begin with the end in mind.
4. This document hopefully will be written so the USFS road engineer can go forward and implement proposed road management actions. I'm hopeful this EA will also do that, which will save Work months and \$\$\$\$.
5. Like the North Slope EA, it's important the IDT take time to invite and work with adjacent land owners and other local, state and federal agencies, especially along the upper trout creek and bridge creek areas. Early involvement and even adjustment in this proposal will result in long-term partnerships, and/or long term understandings between different agencies. Thanks for opportunity to comment. B.Ward.

Visual Resources is value to be wisely retained with limited effects. The project says 260 miles (other parts say 238 miles/67 acres?) so affected area, 600 feet wide...really? The USFS has an excellent method of inventorying visual viewsheds. I doubt if the seen area is only 600 feet. Perhaps in narrow canyons with tall trees in the foreground... In other views, I suspect the viewshed expands. This part of the project should be reviewed.

Proposed actions within the upper trout and bridge creek areas need to be mapped and public sensitivity to these seen areas identified. The project says about 30 miles of riparian habitat.

Actions within these sensitive viewsheds should have short term effects.

For example, BLM public lands along Highway 97 have had forest thinning projects in seen areas along this highway, but effects were short term, due to winter pile burns or removal of slash for chip wood. So, projects can occur in these sensitive viewsheds, it requires more careful management actions. Any existing or proposed roads, even temporary near waterways should receive a higher level of review.