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Service

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# Record of Decision

## Off-highway Vehicle (OHV) Management Plan, including Forest Plan Admendment #17

**Mt Hood National Forest  
Clackamas, Hood River, Multnomah, and Wasco Counties**



**RECORD OF DECISION  
and  
FINDING OF NON-SIGNIFICANT FOREST PLAN AMENDMENT**

**Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Management Plan,  
Including Forest Plan Amendment #17**

U.S. Forest Service  
Mt. Hood National Forest  
Clackamas, Multnomah, Hood River, and Wasco Counties, Oregon

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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Roads constructed to support decades of timber harvesting on the Mt. Hood National Forest (the Forest) has created an extensive legacy road system, which spans approximately 3,383 miles. Maintaining this vast road system has largely been funded by Congressional appropriations for timber sales. However, as timber harvesting has been reduced from 370 million board feet in 1990 to about 25 million board feet today, road maintenance funding has dramatically reduced as well. While reduced timber traffic has reduced maintenance needs, the maintenance needs associated with recreation and weather have not decreased. With the continued deterioration of the Forest's transportation system coupled with greatly diminished finances, we have been forced to make difficult administrative decisions to reduce maintenance needs and associated maintenance standard levels.

In order to better manage the Forest's transportation system, we have embarked on several planning processes that address travel and access management. This project – aimed specifically at managing off-highway vehicles (OHV) – is just one of these planning processes. We have also embarked on an aquatic and terrestrial restoration planning process, in which we expect to review approximately 20 percent of the existing road system each year to identify roads to decommission, close or, in a few cases, invest in road improvements. Also, the Forestwide Roads Analysis (2003), which assessed the environmental risks, access needs, and costs of roads, will inform all decisions related to achieving a minimum road system needed for safe and efficient travel and for managing the Forest lands (FSH 7709.55, Chapter 20 (January 8, 2009)). In the end, these efforts, along with future efforts associated with Forest projects and programs, will systematically lead us to achieving our end goal of having a manageable, affordable, and responsible transportation system.

This decision focuses on OHV management across the Forest with the goal of designating roads, trails and areas for OHV use by class of OHV and time of year. The following principles were developed to guide the planning necessary to reach a decision to achieve this goal.

- The Forest will designate an OHV system that meets projected future access needs.
- The Forest recognizes that honoring relationships with other government agencies along with their particular interests and needs is a vital condition for the long-term success of managing OHV recreation on the Forest.
- The designated OHV system reflects that the Mt. Hood National Forest is not a key OHV recreation destination of choice by OHV enthusiasts in the Pacific Northwest.
- The safety of all visitors to the Forest, including motorized and non-motorized recreationalists, is a most important consideration in designating OHV roads, trails and areas.

## ***Purpose and Need for Action***

The purpose of this decision is to designate roads, trails and areas for OHV<sup>1</sup> use by class of OHV and time of year. By meeting this purpose, OHV use on the Forest will comply with 36 CFR Parts 212, 251, 261, and 295 – Travel Management; Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use; Final Rule [Federal Register Vol. 70, No. 216 (2005)]. The Final Rule states that the U.S. Forest Service “must strike an appropriate balance in managing all types of recreational activities. To this end, a designated system of roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use established with public involvement will enhance public enjoyment of National Forests while maintaining other important values and uses of NFS [National Forest Systems] lands” (page 68265).

In order for OHV use on the Forest to comply with the Final Travel Management Rule, there is the underlying need for:

- Designating and/or constructing appropriate OHV roads, trails, and areas on Mt. Hood National Forest to provide recreation opportunities;

<sup>1</sup> Off-highway vehicle (OHV) is defined as: “Any motor vehicle designed for or capable of cross country travel on or immediately over land, water, sand, snow, ice, ash, swampland, or other natural terrain” [Federal Register Vol. 70, No. 216 (2005), p. 68288]. OHV is also referred to as an all-terrain vehicle (ATV).

- Changing the current management direction in the Mt. Hood Land and Resource Management Plan to comply with the Final Travel Management Rule by designating roads, trails, and areas; and,
- Balancing recreation opportunities for OHV use with other recreational uses of the National Forest and natural resources as directed by the Mt. Hood National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.

The designation of OHV roads, trails, and areas (OHV systems) will enhance management of the Forest; sustain natural resource values through more effective management of OHV use; enhance opportunities for motorized recreation experiences; and preserve areas of opportunity for non-motorized travel and experiences.

## 2.0 DECISION

After careful review and consideration of the public comments and analyses disclosed in the Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Management Plan, including Forest Plan Amendment #17 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and project file, I have decided to select a modification of Alternative 3 as the Selected Alternative. Alternative 3 was used as the basis for describing the decision, which actually falls in-between Alternatives 3 and 4, to ensure NEPA sufficiency for analysis purposes. The decision rationale discussed in the following section describes the decision making process which considered all aspects of Alternatives 3 and 4. Alternative 3 is described in the FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.3.3, and Alternative 4 is described in the FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4. Both Alternatives 3 and 4 were identified as the Preferred Alternative in the Draft EIS that was released to the public. The components of the Selected Alternative are described below. Maps for the Selected Alternative are included Appendix 1.

### *Designated OHV Routes and Staging Areas*

The OHV systems included in the Selected Alternative are described below and summarized in Table 1. The Selected Alternative includes approximately 146 miles of designated OHV routes in four designated OHV systems.

- **LaDee Flats:** The Abbott Road (Forest Service Road 4610) east of North Fork Quarry is dropped from the Selected Alternative. All other routes proposed in Alternative 3 are included in the Selected Alternative. The Selected Alternative includes 25.4 miles of OHV routes.
- **McCubbins Gulch:** Alternative 3 is selected without any changes. The Selected Alternative includes 60.1 miles of OHV routes.
- **Mount Defiance:** Alternative 3 is selected without any changes. The Selected Alternative includes 5.5 miles of OHV routes.
- **Rock Creek:** Road 4860 is dropped north of the Rocky Butte Trail and Road 48960-140 to Badger Lake is dropped from the Selected Alternative. All other routes proposed in Alternative 3 are included in the Selected Alternative. The Selected Alternative includes 55.2 miles of OHV routes. In addition, the day-use area is extended to the north to correspond to the wildland urban interface submitted by Wasco County in the Selected Alternative.
- **Bear Creek, Gibson Prairie, Graham Pass, and Peavine:** These OHV systems were dropped from the Selected Alternative.

**Table 1.** Miles of OHV routes by class for each system in the Selected Alternative.

OHV System	OHV Class	Road Routes (miles)		Trail Routes (miles)		Total Route Miles by Location
		Convert to Trail	Motorized Mixed Use	Existing Trails	New Trail Construction	
LaDee Flats	Class I, II and III	4.2	9.2	0.0	0.3	25.4
	Class I and III	6.7	0.0	0.0	5.0	
McCubbins Gulch	Class I and III	7.3	3.2	25.6	0.7	60.1
	Class III	9.9	0.0	0.0	13.4	
Mount Defiance	Class I and III	0.0	5.5	0.0	0.0	5.5
Rock Creek	Class I and III	25.9	20.6	2.1	6.6	55.2
<b>Total Miles</b>		<b>54.0</b>	<b>38.5</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>26.0</b>	<b>146.2</b>

The Selected Alternative includes decommissioning (i.e., closed and removed from the Forest's transportation system) 17.4 miles of decision roads associated with the McCubbins Gulch (7.9 miles), LaDee Flats (5.2 miles), and Rock Creek (4.6 miles) OHV systems. These roads will be decommissioned because designating nearby routes will cause these roads to become a law enforcement or natural resource problem.

Three of the selected OHV systems include a staging area as shown in Table 2. The Mount Defiance OHV system does not include a staging area. A staging area for this system is provided by Hood River County in the adjoining OHV systems. All staging areas will allow dispersed camping and will serve as a trailhead for motorized recreation. McCubbins Gulch Campground will continue to be a staging area for this OHV location and will be the only developed campground; there will be no changes to the way this campground is currently managed. No improvements will be made to any staging areas, except potentially a bathroom facility as required by PDC RM-7. In the Selected Alternative, there are no nighttime restrictions on OHV trails or use. All OHV riders must follow State laws, including the use of headlights.

**Table 2.** Staging areas for Selected Alternative.

OHV system	Site Description	Legal Description	Size (Acres)	Parking Capacity
LaDee Flats	No Whisky Timber Sale Landing	T4S, R5E, Sec 20, NE1/4	1.0	30
McCubbins Gulch	McCubbins Campground	T5S, R10E, Sec 24, SW1/4	8.0	20
	McCubbins Day-Use Site	T5S, R10E, Sec 17, SE1/4	0.8	27
	Path Timber Sale Landing	T5S, R10E, Sec 24, NW1/4	1.1	32
Rock Creek	Post Point Quarry	T4S, R10E, Sec 26, NE1/4	4.1	130
<b>Total Area/Capacity Across Forest</b>			<b>15</b>	<b>239</b>

The Selected Alternative includes two additional components. First, the Selected Alternative includes one small OHV area (North Fork Quarry) in the LaDee Flats location. This OHV area is approximately four acres in size and is currently used by OHVs. This OHV area is in a disturbed rock quarry. The quarry is located on Road 4610-120. The legal description is T4S, R6E, Section 19, NE ¼, SE ¼. Post Point Quarry and North Fork Quarry may be needed for future management activities. PDC RD-6 states: "Allow temporary suspension of use of staging areas and designated OHV area, if necessary, where located in rock sources while rock resource operations are conducted" to avoid any conflicts.

Second, the Selected Alternative will create a day-use area within the general area of the Rock Creek location. This area imposes restrictions on campfires and overnight occupancy in a 4,307 acre area adjacent to Gate Creek Ditch in the vicinity of the Sportsman's Park community. This area was expanded in the Selected Alternative to include a revised Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) for Sportsman's Park, as defined by Wasco County. Analysis for the new day-use area is included in FEIS, Chapter 3, Section 3.1-Recreation.

### **General Forest Area**

The general forest area includes all remaining roads, trails and areas on the Forest, located in Clackamas, Multnomah, Hood River, and Wasco counties as well as small portions of Marion and Jefferson counties. No OHV use will be allowed outside of the designated routes, staging areas, and North Fork Quarry OHV area based on the direction in the Final Travel Management Rule. This will change the current implied OHV policy on the Forest from “open unless posted closed” to “closed unless designated open.” This does not change current policy for the National Forest road system: all licensed vehicles, including dual-sport motorcycles, are allowed on roads. Licensed vehicles exclude quads and three-wheeled vehicles. All designated routes will be depicted on the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM). The MVUM will be the new enforcement tool; all motorized recreationalists will need to consult the map to determine what routes are open. Routes will no longer be required to be posted as closed.

The implementation of this decision means that all routes or areas that are not designated will be considered unauthorized, and that the use of OHVs or any other motorized vehicle on those undesigned routes will be illegal based on the Final Travel Management Rule. Also, based on the Final Travel Management Rule, motorized cross-country travel will be prohibited except as specified for the purposes of dispersed camping, emergency fire suppression, search and rescue, law enforcement, military operations, and Forest Service administrative use, including uses authorized by permit such as firewood gathering.

### **Forest Plan Amendment**

The decision also includes a non-significant Forest Plan Amendment, which amends 22 standards and guidelines as well as the monitoring element for Off-Road Vehicle Use (Forest Plan, page 5-69 to 5-70). Under the existing Forest Plan, eleven standards and guidelines allow cross-country OHV use off designated routes (FW-447, FW-459, FW-465, A4-038, B1-077, B1-078, B1-079, B3-038, B11-037, C1-041, and C1-042). An additional nine standards and guidelines require areas closed to OHV use to be posted (FW-413, FW-483, FW-543, A3-006, A3-007, B1-082, B1-083, B5-001, and B5-002). These 20 standards and guidelines do not comply with the Final Travel Management Rule. As a result, this EIS proposes to amend the twenty standards and guidelines described in Table 3 to limit OHV use to designated routes, prohibit cross-country travel by OHVs, replace the enforcement tool to the MVUM, and to remove the requirement to post areas or roads as closed to OHV use.

The monitoring element for Off-Road Vehicle Use will be replaced with the Monitoring Framework outlined in FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.5 as part of the Forest Plan Amendment. The Monitoring Framework is more applicable to the actions proposed in the action alternatives and more accurately reflects the current Forest Service approach to monitoring. After implementation of this Forest Plan Amendment, only designated routes will be available for OHV use. All other roads, trails, and areas will be closed to OHV use, unless additional NEPA analysis is completed. This will be Amendment #17 to the Forest Plan. Section 3.16-Forest Plan Amendment analyzes the significance of this amendment.

**Table 3.** Changes to standards and guidelines for Forest Plan Amendment #17 for all action alternatives. Changes are shown in *italic* and strikethrough print. The changes limit OHV use to designated routes, prohibit cross-county travel, replace the enforcement tool to the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM), and eliminate the requirement to post areas or roads closed to OHV use.

Standard	Page	Standard and GUIDELINE	Amendment
FW-413 Transportation	4-95	Roads, areas and trails closed or restricted to recreational access shall be posted.	Roads, areas and trails closed or restricted opened to recreational access shall be posted: <i>designated on a map.</i>
FW-447 Transportation	4-97	Off-road vehicle trails should not incorporate open roads as part of the trail system.	<del>Off-road vehicle trails should not incorporate open roads as part of the trail system. All off-road (off highway) routes and trails shall be designated on a map.</del>
FW-459 Dispersed Recreation	4-98	Off-road vehicle (ORV) trails should not incorporate open roads as part of the trail system.	<del>Off-road vehicle (ORV) trails should not incorporate open roads as part of the trail system. All off-road (off highway) routes and trails shall be designated on a map.</del>
FW-465 Dispersed Recreation	4-99	Opportunities for ORV use should be available except where not allowed by management direction, and where determined to adversely impact land capability and resource values (see Appendix C, Travel and Access Management Guide, and see Forest Transportation System/Facilitates; Travel and Access Standards and Guidelines)	Opportunities for ORV use should <i>not</i> be available except where <del>not</del> allowed by management direction, and where determined to <i>not</i> adversely impact land capability and resource values (see Appendix C, Travel and Access Management Guide, and see Forest Transportation System/Facilitates; Travel and Access Standards and Guidelines)
FW-483 Wild & Scenic Rivers	4-102	Areas, roads and segments of rivers closed to vehicle use shall be posted.	Areas, roads and segments of rivers closed opened to vehicle use shall be posted: <i>designated on a map.</i>
FW-543 Visual Resource Management	4-106	Areas, roads and segments of rivers closed to vehicle use shall be posted	Areas, roads and segments of rivers closed opened to vehicle use shall be posted: <i>designated on a map.</i>
A3-006, A3-007 Research Natural Areas	4-147	Off-road vehicles (ORV) and non-motorized bicycle use shall be prohibited. RNAs shall be posted as closed to ORV and non-motorized bicycle use.	<del>Off-road vehicles (ORV) and non-motorized bicycle use shall be prohibited. RNAs shall be posted as closed to ORV and non-motorized bicycle use. Off-road motorized vehicle use shall not be permitted except on designated routes. Only existing roads or trails shall be designated on a map.</del>
A4-038 Special Interest Area	4-156	Recreational off-road vehicle use shall be prohibited except as noted in items 4 [A4-039] and 5 [A4-040], below.	Recreational off-road vehicle use shall be prohibited except as noted in items 4 [4-039] and 5 [A4-040]; below: <i>All off-road (off highway) routes and trails shall be designated on a map.</i>
B1-077, B1-078, B1-079 Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers	4-216	Within scenic and recreational river corridors, motorized use shall be limited. 1) Motorized vehicles shall be permitted only on open roads. 2) Off-road vehicles (ORV) may occur only on designated trails.	Within scenic and recreational river corridors, motorized use shall be limited. 1) Motorized vehicles shall be permitted only on open roads; 2) Off-road vehicles (ORV) may occur only on designated trails. All off-road (off highway) routes and trails shall be designated on a map.

Standard	Page	Standard and GUIDELINE	Amendment
B1-082, B1-083 Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers	4-216	Areas, roads and segments of rivers closed to vehicle use shall be posted. Administrative use of motorized vehicles shall be allowed in all river segments.	Areas, roads and segments of rivers closed opened to vehicle use shall be posted: <i>designated on a map</i> . Administrative use of motorized vehicles shall be allowed in all river segments.
B3-038 Roaded Recreation	4-232	Off-road vehicle use shall be encouraged on designated trails and/or areas.	Off-road vehicle use shall be encouraged on designated trails and/or areas: <i>All off-road (off highway) routes and trails shall be designated on a map.</i>
B5-001, B5-002 Pileated Woodpecker / Pine Marten Habitat Area	4-242	Off-road motorized vehicle use should not be permitted except on designated trails. All areas and rails closed to off-road vehicle use shall be posted.	Off-road motorized vehicle use should <i>shall</i> not be permitted except on designated trails routes. All areas roads and trails closed open to off-road vehicle use shall be posted: <i>designated on a map.</i>
B11-037 Deer and Elk Summer Range	4-280	Recreational motorized vehicle activity shall not be permitted except on open roads and designated parking areas.	Recreational motorized vehicle activity shall not be permitted except on open roads and designated parking areas: <i>All off-road (off highway) routes and trails shall be designated on a map.</i>
C1-041, C1-041 Timber Emphasis	4-294	Off-road vehicle (ORV) use should be encouraged. ORV use should be restricted within specific areas with conflicting resource objectives.	Off-road vehicle (ORV) use should be encouraged. ORV use should be restricted within specific areas with conflicting resource objectives: <i>All off-road (off highway) routes and trails shall be designated on a map.</i>
Monitoring Element: Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Use	5-69	<p>Are high quality ORV opportunities provided in areas which are suitable for ORV use and the needs, skills, and interests of users?</p> <p>Are the ORV opportunities provided effective in minimizing conflicts between user groups and safe for users and the general public?</p> <p>Are ORV opportunities being located, designated, and managed to minimize the negative effects (within acceptable limits) on key fish and wildlife species and sensitive habitats?</p>	<p>Replace all language with the following.</p> <p>Are OHV remaining on the designated system of routes?</p> <p>Are the trail widths being maintained or widened?</p> <p>Are the signs being maintained and followed?</p> <p>Is the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) being updated and distributed effectively on an annual basis?</p> <p>Is the selected alternative being implemented properly? Is the selected alternative having the intended effects?</p> <p>Are the project design criteria being implemented properly? Are the design criteria having the intended effect?</p>



### **Project Design Criteria and Monitoring Framework**

As part of this decision, the Project Design Criteria (PDC) contained in Appendix 2 will be implemented in order to minimize or eliminate the effects of designating OHV routes. As directed by PDC O-4 and O-7, the OHV routes and staging areas in the McCubbins Gulch, Rock Creek, and Mount Defiance areas will be closed for part of the year. McCubbins Gulch and Rock Creek designated OHV routes will be closed to protect deer and elk winter range from December 1 to April 1 (PDC O-4). Mount Defiance designated routes will be closed to protect deer and elk winter range from December 1 to May 15 (PDC O-7). PDC O-2, O-3, O-5, O-6, IP-3, and R-2 are dropped from the Selected Alternative because these apply to OHV systems that have been eliminated from this Alternative. Also, PDC O-8 has been added. This PDC states: "An implementation plan for each OHV system will be developed and approved by appropriate District Ranger." Lastly, this decision will implement the monitoring framework described in FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.5.

## **3.0 DECISION RATIONALE**

The overall purpose of this project is to comply with the Final Travel Management Rule (Travel Management; Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use; Final Rule). The Final Travel Management Rule provides a consistent framework for administrative units (i.e., national forests) to designate roads, trails, and areas open to motor vehicle use. The purpose of the rule is to "provide for a system of National Forest System roads, National Forest System trails, and areas on National Forest System lands that are designated for motor vehicle use. After these roads, trails, and areas are designated, including the class of vehicle and time of year, motor vehicle use not in accordance with these designations is prohibited by 36 CFR 261.12. Motor vehicle use off designated roads and trails and outside designated areas is prohibited by 26 CFR 261.13" (70 FR 62289). The Final Rule states that the U.S. Forest Service "must strike an appropriate balance in managing all types of recreational activities. To this end, a designated system of roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use established with public involvement will enhance public enjoyment of National Forests while maintaining other important values and uses of NFS [National Forest Systems] lands" (page 68265).

Overall, the current direction for motorized OHV recreation on the Forest does not meet the intent of the Final Travel Management Rule and a comprehensive look at OHV use across the Forest had not previously occurred until this project was undertaken. The Mt. Hood National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) contains the current OHV direction, which was developed in the 1980s as part of the forest planning process. Based on direction in the Forest Plan, the implied policy on the Forest is "open unless posted closed." The areas where cross-country travel is not prohibited were designated during the Forest Planning process when OHV use was much less popular. The OHV direction on the Forest has been adjusted over the years through Forest Orders which close specific roads, trails and area to motor vehicle travel. According to 36 CFR 261.50, a Forest Order may close an area to entry or may restrict the use of an area by applying any or all of the prohibitions authorized, including closing or restricting the use of National Forest System roads or trails. FEIS, Chapter 1, Table 1-3 contains a list of the current Forest Orders as of January 2009; a current list also is available at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/mthood/leo/forest-orders>. Only a limited number of the OHV routes were designated through an interdisciplinary or public process.

Before this decision, cross-county travel is not prohibited on 394,886 acres of forestland. This represents 36 percent of the Forest. An undetermined amount of this land is inaccessible due to physical barriers, such as rock outcrops, steep slopes, dense forest vegetation, rivers and streams. Cross-country OHV travel is prohibited on 695,684 acres of the Forest. On the acres where cross-county OHV use is prohibited, OHV use is permitted on designated roads and trails on 203,881 acres and all OHV use is prohibited on 491,803 acres.

In addition, current Oregon State Law allows OHVs to operate on any road open to the public, which is not paved (e.g., gravel or native surface roads), unless the landowner applies more stringent regulations. (For more information on current Oregon State Laws regarding Off-Road Vehicles; Snowmobiles; All-Terrain Vehicles go to: <http://www.oregon.gov/OPRD/ATV/links.shtml>.) To date, the Forest has closed individual roads to OHV use on a limited basis, but it has not approved any regulations across the Forest. As such, the Forest has allowed OHVs to use the majority of Level 1 and 2 gravel and native surface roads across the Forest. Although Level 1 roads are classified as closed roads, OHV use is permitted on these roads in areas where the land use allocation allows cross-country travel. Overall, this includes approximately 2,463 miles of roads. This represents 82 percent of all Level 1 and 2 roads across the Forest, which total approximately 3,021 miles. Also, this represents 73 percent of all Forest roads (Levels 1 through 5), which

total approximately 3,383 miles. OHV use is currently prohibited in designated wilderness areas, special interest areas, unroaded recreation areas, developed recreation sites, wild segments in Wild & Scenic River Corridors, and Bull Run Management Area.

The Forest recreation niche, which is a description or characterization of the distinct role the Forest plays in providing outdoor recreation opportunities, experiences and benefits, does not match the current permissible OHV use across the Forest. The Forest niche was developed involving public input in 2007. The recreation niche statement states that the Forest offers only a moderate opportunity for OHV recreation. The Forest is not known as a major provider of OHV recreation, and it is not a major OHV destination. It currently provides mostly “easier” and a few “more difficult” OHV roads and trails close to the Portland/Vancouver Metropolitan area. The niche setting that will be most compatible with designated OHV roads, trails, and areas is “neighbor-woods,” the vast, undeveloped forest area outside of wilderness, major highway corridors and significant rivers and lakes (U.S. Forest Service 2006). Achieving the desired balance between OHV opportunities and other recreation pursuits will be a balancing act.

Although the Forest is not a major OHV destination, this premise must be balanced with the remarkable growth of OHV use in the United States. During the first US National Recreation Survey in 1960, OHV recreation was not a reportable activity. OHV use today, however, is among the fastest growing outdoor activities. Nationally, the number of people (16 years of age or older) who report participating in OHV sports is over 44 million. Annual OHV sales more than tripled between 1995 and 2003 (sales have leveled off since 2003). Total OHV ownership of newly purchased and previously purchased machines increased 174 percent between 1993 and 2003, from fewer than three million to more than eight million vehicles. More than twice as many OHV enthusiasts own three- and four-wheel OHVs than own motorcycles (Cordell 2008). These trends are shown in the sales of OHVs in the local communities. During 2006 in Clackamas, Hood River, Multnomah, Wasco, Washington and Clark Counties, 2,999 four-wheel OHVs were sold. During the first six months of 2007, 2,666 vehicles were sold by the same dealerships (Gardner 2007).

Despite these national trends, the percent of Forest visitors that report OHV participation as either their primary or secondary use in the Mt. Hood National Forest is considerably lower than the national average. Nationally, about 2.5 percent of the 205 million annual recreation visits to National Forests involve participation in OHV use as the primary activity. About 3.1 percent nationally reports OHV use as a secondary activity (English, Kocis and Hales 2004). These data are considerably below the average percent participation for Oregon overall (22.2 percent participation) as reported in the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (Cordell, Betz, Green and Stephens 2008). The methodology for this study and these conclusions is discussed in FEIS, Chapter 3, Section 3.1-Recreation.

With these social components in mind, I carefully considered the issues and concerns raised by those who participated and commented in this planning process. Also, I considered eight alternatives; four were analyzed in detail and four were considered but eliminated from detailed study for reasons stated in the FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.7. I wanted my decision to incorporate five objectives:

- A decision that is legally defensible, socially responsive, and environmentally sound;
- A decision that can be supported by the County Commissioners in Multnomah, Clackamas, Hood River, and Wasco Counties;
- A decision aligned with the District Ranger’s intent for recreational use on each district;
- A decision that acknowledges motorized OHV recreation use as a legitimate use of National Forest System lands and acknowledges the magnitude of change in the existing conditions for the OHV users; and,
- A decision that makes provisions for and sets the stage for future decisions to consider additional areas for OHV recreation as well as to modify or eliminate OHV use.

The following sections describe my rationale for the selected alternative as well as my rationale for not selecting Alternatives 1, 2, and 4 or Alternative 3 without modifications.

## 3.1 Rationale for Selected Alternative

The Selected Alternative best addresses the social components and objectives described in Section 3.0-Decision Rationale by simultaneously meeting the Purpose and Need for Action and the Forest recreation niche. The Selected Alternative incorporates elements from Alternatives 3 and 4 as described below.

### **Common Elements Alternatives 3 and 4**

Alternatives 3 and 4 represent the public discussion on OHV use on the Forest that has resulted from this planning process. The public discussion occurred during the public scoping period in 2007 as well as the public comment period in 2009. The common elements of these two alternatives are as follows.

- Both alternatives meet the overall purpose of this project to designate roads, trails and areas for OHV use by class of vehicle and time of year. By meeting this purpose, OHV use on the Forest will comply with the Final Travel Management Rule. Similarly, designating OHV routes in both alternatives meet the underlying needs for action to: 1) designate and/or construct OHV roads, trails and areas (as appropriate) on the Forest to provide recreation opportunities; and 2) change the current management direction in the Forest Plan to comply with the Final Travel Management Rule.
- These alternatives were developed using input from the public scoping comments as well as the results of the interdisciplinary preliminary effects analysis.
- The primary concerns raised by the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (CTWS) are addressed in both alternatives. Based on consultation with CTWS, the routes in the Peavine system do not include routes to the south of the Warm Spring River and add additional routes to the west in Alternative 3; and all routes in Peavine are dropped in Alternative 4.
- Both Alternatives 3 and 4 address the primary concerns raised by Wasco County Commissioners in the Rock Creek OHV system. Alternative 3 only includes one access route within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) and increases the mileage to the west as well as increases the size of the day-use area in the WUI. Alternative 4 drops all routes within the WUI portion of the Rock Creek OHV system, including an access route from Sportsman's Park.
- The PDC to reduce or eliminate potential impacts that OHVs may cause are included in Alternatives 3 and 4. PDC define a set of conditions or requirements that an activity must meet to avoid or minimize potential effects on sensitive resources.

### **Differences Between Alternatives 3 and 4**

The Purpose and Need for this project includes an underlying need to balance recreation opportunities for OHV use with other recreational uses of the National Forest and natural resources as directed by the Forest Plan. This underlying need directly addresses the guidance provided in the Final Travel Management Rule that the U.S. Forest Service "must strike an appropriate balance in managing all types of recreational activities. To this end, a designated system of roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use established with public involvement will enhance public enjoyment of National Forests while maintaining other important values and uses of NFS [National Forest System] lands." Although Alternatives 3 and 4 provide a more balanced approach to recreation opportunities on the Forest than the existing conditions, the overall balance point and the approach to achieving the balance differ. The different balance points in the two alternatives result from numerous on-the-ground differences between the two alternatives. These differences are summarized below.

- Alternative 3 proposes OHV systems at eight locations on the Barlow (3), Hood River (3), and Clackamas River Ranger Districts (2), while Alternative 4 proposes OHV systems at three locations on Barlow (2) and Clackamas River (1) Ranger Districts.
- Alternative 3 added routes that were proposed by the public during the scoping period in order to increase motorized recreation across the Forest. Additional routes are designated in the Bear Creek, LaDee Flats, McCubbins Gulch, Peavine, and Rock Creek proposed systems. Also, two additional OHV systems were designated. The

Graham Pass proposed system adds the existing Rho Ridge motorized trail and an adjoining system of gravel roads and Mount Defiance adds a system of gravel roads that access existing Hood River County OHV routes. Alternative 3 proposes OHV routes on 326 miles of roads and trails.

- Alternative 4 dropped proposed OHV systems or reduced the number of routes within the proposed systems based on scoping comments, government-to-government consultation and concerns that arose during the interdisciplinary process. OHV systems were eliminated at the Bear Creek, Peavine, Gibson Prairie, Graham Pass, and Mount Defiance locations. Alternative 4 proposed OHV routes on 96 miles of roads and trails.
- Bear Creek proposed OHV system is expanded in Alternative 3 by adding motorized mixed use and convert roads to trails, and is dropped in Alternative 4 to minimize the potential environmental effects associated with new trail construction.
- Gibson Prairie proposed OHV system in Alternative 3 provides access to a larger OHV system on private and Hood River County lands to the north. This system is dropped in Alternative 4 to address wildlife concerns raised by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife as well as concerns associated with the previous illegal trail construction. Dropping this proposed system also eliminates any potential user conflicts with the Long Prairie Range Allocation permittee.
- The Abbott Road (Forest Service Road 4610) east of North Fork Quarry in the LaDee Flats proposed OHV system is eliminated in Alternative 4 to address concerns associated with managing the transportation system and providing adequate law enforcement coverage. This section of the Abbott Road was expanded to include Class II OHVs in Alternative 3.
- Alternative 3 for McCubbins Gulch expands the existing system by including the single-track trails to the west and east. These additional routes are not included in Alternative 4. Both alternatives modify the Proposed Action to “clean up” some user-created routes.
- Alternative 3 for Peavine addresses concerns raised by the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs as well as some of the natural resource concerns by dropping the routes to the south of the Warm Springs River and adding additional routes to the west. In Alternative 4, the Peavine proposed OHV system is dropped to address potential fisheries and wildlife effects as well as concerns associated with the proximity to the Pacific Crest Trail.
- Alternative 3 proposes to decommission 35 miles of roads, and Alternative 4 proposes to decommission 12 miles of roads.

### ***Rationale for Selecting Specific Routes at Each Location***

These similarities and differences provide the decision space for making specific decisions at each proposed OHV location. The rationale for the specific decisions at each of the eight proposed OHV systems proposed in Alternative 3 is discussed below.

- **LaDee Flats:** Abbott Road (Forest Service Road 4610) east of North Fork Quarry and the Round Wolf Pit staging area are dropped. Abbott Road presents unique challenges for law enforcement because of its remoteness and narrow road prism. Abbot Road is not included because the Forest does not have the resources, particularly law enforcement resources, to manage increased transportation on the road or potential encroachments into the Salmon-Huckleberry Wilderness and Roaring River Wilderness areas. Access to Round Wolf Pit staging area was via Abbot Road, so it is no longer accessible to OHVs. All other routes were incorporated in the Selected Alternative, given the current popularity and proximity to the Portland metro area of this system for motorized OHV recreation.
- **McCubbins Gulch:** McCubbins Gulch currently is the only designated OHV system on the Forest and receives a lot of use. The current system is maintained with the help of the Mt. Scott Motorcycle Group. This group requested that the Forest review the additional routes to the east and west, and has agreed to help maintain the existing system as well as the additional routes that will be added under Alternative 3 in partnership with the Forest Service. Since no significant environmental, tribal, or social concerns resulted from these additional routes, they were incorporated in the Selected Alternative.

- **Mount Defiance:** The OHV routes proposed under Alternative 3 provide access to existing Hood River County OHV routes. The proposed OHV routes utilize existing gravel roads. The analysis of the use of these gravel routes did not reveal any significant environmental or social concerns. Since these routes provide connectivity with the County system and did not cause any natural resource damage, they were incorporated into the Selected Alternative.
- **Rock Creek:** Road 4860 is dropped north of the Rocky Butte Trail in order to eliminate a dead-end route. Also, Road 4860-140 to Badger Lake is dropped from the Selected Alternative. That route is dropped because, like Abbot Road, Road 4860-140 presents unique challenges for law enforcement because of its remoteness, length, and condition. This proposed OHV system, including the elimination of the route to Badger Lake, represents a compromise between Wasco County and the residents at Sportsman's Park. All other routes were incorporated in the Selected Alternative, given the current popularity of this system for motorized OHV recreation.

In addition, the day-use area is extended to the north in the Selected Alternatives to correspond to the wildland urban interface submitted by Wasco County. The increase in the day-use area better meets the original intent of the day-use area to buffer private lands and add an extra measure of fire protection.

- **OHV systems Dropped from Selected Alternative:** The remaining proposed OHV systems were dropped from the Selected Alternative to address specific natural resource concerns and to meet the intent of the Forest recreation niche. The niche statement suggests that the Forest should offer only a moderate opportunity for OHV recreation. The Forest is not known as a major provider of OHV recreation, and it is not a major OHV destination.
  - Gibson Prairie and Graham Pass: Sedimentation resulting from the use of proposed routes could potentially affect Lower Columbia River steelhead and its critical habitat, a listed fish species under the Endangered Species Act. To avoid these potential conflicts, these two OHV systems were eliminated from the Selected Alternative.
  - Peavine: Eliminating OHV use in this location avoids concerns related to the wildlife winter range habitat and drinking water source for the town of Estacada as well as concerns raised in government-to-government consultation with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.
  - Bear Creek: Constructing a new 39.3-mile OHV system in addition to the routes already constructed and incorporated into the Selected Alternative is not compatible with the Forest recreation niche as described above.

### **Implementation of Decision**

The Selected Alternative dramatically changes OHV access across the Forest. All cross-country OHV travel is prohibited, compared to current use which allows cross-county travel on approximately 395,000 acres. OHV travel on roads will be permitted on 38.5 miles, compared to 2,463 miles of roads where OHVs are currently permitted. OHV travel on trails increases from 28 miles to approximately 108 miles, including roads that will be converted to OHV trails. Also, the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) will be the definitive new tool for law enforcement; all motorized recreation will need to consult the map to determine what routes are open. Routes will no longer be required to be posted as closed. Based on these changes, this decision is a socially historic decision for Mt. Hood National Forest.

As such, both OHV users and non-OHV users alike need to recognize that adjustments to this decision will need to be made in the future. Travel management planning on the Forest, including OHV management, is an iterative process with this planning process representing a significant basis for future decisions. Implementation of this decision will surely lead to the identification of future issues or concerns that have not arisen in the planning process or that were not fully considered, which will require me or another Line Officer to reconsider components of this decision. Changes to the current OHV technology and vehicle types also may cause components of this decision to be re-visited. Any future considerations implementing this decision will require environmental analysis and public involvement under the National Environmental Planning Act (NEPA).

In addition to the NEPA requirements, any future changes to OHV routes will need to be published on the MVUM, which is subject to the requirements of the Final Travel Management Rule. The Final Travel Management Rule only allows motor vehicles on designated roads, trails and areas, and directs that routes be designated on a MVUM. The MVUM will display the roads, trails and areas designated for motor vehicle use (licensed and non-licensed vehicles) by vehicle class and, if appropriate, time of year. The map format is standardized nationally to facilitate user compliance and reduce variation between National Forests. It is a single purpose map necessary for the enforcement of motor vehicle use. The map will be produced in accordance with the Forest Service “Motor Vehicle Use Map Production Guide” (originally published June 2006; updated in April 2009). Based on Regional Direction, the MVUM “is to be updated and published annually. The initial publication should be as soon as practical after making Forest travel management decisions. Updated motor vehicle use maps shall be published annually in January” (R6 Guidelines, 9/6/2006). When the maps are updated each year, changes to the designated OHV routes or Forest Road system will be incorporated. Prior to publishing any changes, the routes or roads will have to be changed through a NEPA decision.

Also, the Final Travel Management Rule requires that “the public shall be allowed to participate in the designation of National Forest System roads, National Forest System trails, and areas on National Forest System lands and revising those designations” (Federal Register Vol. 70, No. 216 (2005), page 68289). Also, “advance notice shall be given to allow for public comment, consistent with agency procedures under the National Environmental Policy Act, on proposed designations and revisions” (page 68289). Emergency closures under Forest Orders do not require public involvement, if the Line Officer finds that “motor vehicle use on a National Forest System road or National Forest System trail or in an area on National Forest System lands” is causing resource damage or threatening public health and safety (page 68289).

As part of this decision, I am adding an additional Project Design Criteria that states: “An implementation plan for each OHV system will be developed and approved by appropriate District Ranger.” It is my expectation that each District Ranger will work with the affected members of the public to address any issues that arise through the development of the implementation plans or through additional NEPA. When the District Rangers are implementing this decision, it is my expectation that they will continue to operate under the guiding principles stated in the Section 1.0-Introduction as well as under the Decision Framework outlined in FEIS, Chapter 1, Section 1.8. The factors that influenced this decision and will continue to influence future decision include:

- How well the alternative meets the purpose and need for action;
- Potential effects of designating roads, trails and areas for OHV use to the environment;
- Balancing of recreation opportunities for OHV use with other recreational uses of the National Forest and natural resources as directed by the Mt. Hood National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan; and,
- Resulting route density of OHV routes across the Forest.

## **3.2 Rationale for Not Selecting the No Action Alternative (Alternative 1)**

I considered, but did not select the No Action Alternative (Alternative 1) which maintains the current management direction. Based on direction in the Forest Plan, the implied policy on the Forest is “open unless posted closed.” The current law enforcement mechanism is signing an area as closed to OHV use. In order to enforce the closures, the sign must be posted and visible. Only a limited number of the OHV routes were designated through an interdisciplinary or public process. OHV use is occurring on a majority of roads because this use is not prohibited by State of Oregon regulations or Forest Service regulations. The areas where cross-country travel is not prohibited resulted from the Forest Planning process when OHV use was much less popular. This alternative does not include project design criteria or designated staging areas, nor does it include a Forest Plan Amendment or a MVUM. Alternative 1 does not meet the purpose and need for action for this project and it does not meet the intent of the Final Travel Management Rule.

### 3.3 Rationale for Not Selecting the Proposed Action (Alternative 2)

I considered, but did not select the Proposed Action Alternative (Alternative 2), which focuses on designated trails, roads, and areas for OHV use within six proposed locations. All Mt. Hood National Forest System lands were considered by the Forest Service and members of the public during a two-year long dialogue with the public as described in the Alternative Development Process (FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.1). The proposed OHV systems that resulted from this dialogue were designed to provide a balance between providing recreational opportunities and protecting natural resources. Overall, this alternative allows OHV use on 73 miles of road and 148 miles of trail. The six locations considered in Alternative 2 are: Bear Creek, Gibson Prairie, LaDee Flats, McCubbins Gulch, Peavine, and Rock Creek (see FEIS, Appendix A, Alternative 2 OHV Proposal Overview Map).

The public discourse during the scoping process revealed two generally opposing views of the Proposed Action, which were used to develop Alternatives 3 and 4 (described in the following sections). In addition, discussions with the regulatory agencies, tribal governments, and county governments during the government-to-government consultations as well as the interdisciplinary process revealed social and environmental concerns with some of the routes and systems proposed in Alternative 2 which were addressed in Alternatives 3 and 4. For example, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (CTWS) expressed concern about the routes designated in the Peavine under Alternative 2 as well as concerns related to trespassing, law enforcement, wildlife (deer and elk habitat), water quality, and increased fire hazard with the routes proposed in Alternative 2. As another example, analysis by the interdisciplinary team members revealed negative impacts to Federally listed Endangered Species Act fisheries species associated with the proposed routes for Gibson Prairie in Alternative 2. As such, Alternatives 3 and 4 better address the issues that arose during the government-to-government process as well as the interdisciplinary process.

Additionally, I decided to use the NEPA process to continue the social dialogue on this project by selecting Alternatives 3 and 4 as the Preferred Alternative in the DEIS. The discussions revealed that Alternatives 3 and 4 better met the intent of the social components and objectives described in Section 3.0-Decision Rationale. Since Alternatives 3 and 4 better address the resource concerns and social components of the decision, the OHV routes proposed in Alternative 2 were not selected for implementation.

### 3.4 Rationale for Not Selecting Alternative 4

I considered, but did not select Alternative 4, which focuses on designated trails, roads, and areas for OHV use within three proposed locations. Alternative 4 considered all scoping comments and government-to-government consultation that recommended dropping a proposed OHV system or reducing the number of routes within a proposed system. This alternative reduces the OHV routes included in the LaDee Flats and McCubbins Gulch proposed OHV systems and eliminates all OHV use in the Bear Creek, Gibson Prairie, Graham Pass, Mount Defiance, and Peavine proposed systems. Overall, Alternative 4 allows OHV use on 20 miles of roads and 70 miles of trails. The three locations considered in Alternative 4 are: LaDee Flats, McCubbins Gulch and Rock Creek (see FEIS, Appendix A, Alternative 4 OHV Proposal Overview Map).

Elements of Alternative 4 are discussed in the ROD in Section 3.0-Decision Rationale and ROD Section 3.1-Rationale for Selected Alternative. Alternative 4 provides limited motorized recreation opportunities across the Forest. Although this alternative meets the Purpose and Need for Action, I have concluded that it does not best meet the underlying need to balance recreation opportunities for OHV use with other recreational uses of the National Forest and natural resources as well as the Selected Alternative. Striving to meet the appropriate balance in managing all types of recreational activities is a challenge, especially given the current use on the Forest and the magnitude of change that will result from this decision. In order to continue to provide motorized OHV recreation opportunities on the Forest and to acknowledge the magnitude of change, I have decided not to implement Alternative 4 because it does not provide the level of motorized recreation opportunities to meet my desired balance of recreation opportunities across the Forest.

## 3.5 Rationale for Not Selecting Alternative 3 without Modifications

I considered, but did not select Alternative 3 without modifications, which focuses on designated trails, roads, and areas for OHV use within eight proposed locations. This alternative considered additional motorized routes proposed by the public during the scoping comment period. Alternative 3 designates additional routes in the Bear Creek, LaDee Flats, McCubbins Gulch, Peavine, and Rock Creek proposed systems. Although the proposed OHV routes in the Gibson Prairie area decrease, the routes in Alternative 3 provide access to a larger OHV system on private and Hood River County lands to the north. In addition, two additional locations are added to this alternative. The Graham Pass proposed system adds the existing Rho Ridge motorized trail and an adjoining system of gravel roads, and Mount Defiance adds a system of gravel roads that access existing Hood River County OHV routes. Overall, Alternative 3 allows OHV use on 130 miles of roads and 196 miles of trails. The proposed OHV systems considered in Alternative 3 are: Bear Creek, Gibson Prairie, Graham Pass, LaDee Flats, McCubbins Gulch, Mount Defiance, Peavine, and Rock Creek (see FEIS, Appendix A, Alternative 3 OHV Proposal Overview Map).

Elements of Alternative 3 are discussed in the ROD in Section 3.0-Decision Rationale and ROD-Section 3.1-Rationale for Selected Alternative. Alternative 3 provides the second-greatest opportunity for motorized OHV recreation across the Forest compared to the other alternatives. Although this alternative meets the Purpose and Need for Action, it does not best meet the underlying need to balance recreation opportunities for OHV use with other recreational uses of the National Forest and natural resources as well as the Selected Alternative. Striving to meet the appropriate balance in managing all types of recreational activities is a challenge, especially given the current use on the Forest and the magnitude of change that will result from this decision. I believe the appropriate balance between motorized and non-motorized recreational opportunities lies between the Alternatives 3 and 4, as represented by the Selected Alternative.

As described in ROD Section 3.0-Decision Rationale, the Forest recreation niche statement states that the Forest offers only a moderate opportunity for OHV recreation. The Forest is not known as a major provider of OHV recreation, and it is not a major OHV destination. It currently provides mostly “easier” and a few “more difficult” OHV roads and trails close to the Portland/Vancouver Metropolitan area. I believe that Alternative 3 without modifications does not meet this niche statement because of the miles of OHV routes provided and types of OHV systems proposed. As such, I have decided not to implement Alternative 3 without modifications because it does not provide the level of motorized recreation opportunities to meet my desired balance of recreation opportunities within the recreation niche towards which the Forest is striving (see FEIS, Chapter 1.4).

## 4.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and U.S. Forest Service policy, public and other government agency involvement was initiated early in the environmental analysis process and continued through the completion of this EIS.

### 4.1 Early Public Involvement

During the development of the project, the Mt. Hood National Forest Projects & Plans website contained potential OHV routes and requested public comment. The website announcement was posted from July 2005 until September 2008. The announcement included maps of seven potential areas and requested the following.

*The Forest has identified a number of areas that have potential for the development of trail systems. Forest personnel are asking for help in proposing trail routes in these areas, identifying concerns, identifying other areas that might be suitable for OHV trails construction, and in generating volunteer support from organizations interested in working on maintenance and monitoring use.*

Alternative 2, the Proposed Action, was developed over a two year period and included dialogue from a diverse public. The public dialogue included two public workshops, and OHV enthusiasts, environmental organizations, State government offices, and interested individuals all participated in the process. The public workshops were held in March 2005 where members of the public helped to identify potential OHV roads, trails and areas across the



Forest as well as the opportunity to comment on the preliminary designations on the Forest's website. Using this information, recreational specialists across the Forest developed a preliminary proposed action. The preliminary proposed action was shared with the public at two open houses held in Sandy, Oregon and Hood River, Oregon on May 30-31, 2007. The information from the open houses was used to develop the Proposed Action (Alternative 2) and to begin the NEPA process.

## 4.2 Scoping Process

Scoping is an integral part of the environmental analysis process. Scoping includes refining the Proposed Action, identifying the preliminary issues, and identifying interested and affected persons. The results of scoping are used to: 1) identify public involvement methods; 2) refine the issues; and 3) explore alternatives to the Proposed Action and their potential effects.

The scoping process began when the project was included in the quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions distributed by the Forest beginning in November 2006. A Notice of Intent (NOI) requesting public comment was published in the Federal Register on August 27, 2007. Information on the proposal was posted on a project website (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/mthood/projects/>), and provided via direct mailing to approximately 870 individuals, organizations, agencies, businesses, recreational residence owners, and local and tribal governments.

The Forest Service received approximately 375 comments through this process. All issues identified through the scoping process were divided into three categories: key issues, resolved issues or tracking issues. Key issues are those that are within the scope of the Proposed Action and suggest the need to consider different actions or project design criteria. Key issues as used in this EIS are those that are used to formulate alternatives, affect the design of alternative components, prescribe PDC, or describe environmental effects. Key issues are identified as such due to their geographic distribution, duration of effects, intensity of interest by the public, or resource area conflict. Alternatives 3 and 4 were designed to address the key issues. Resolved issues are issues identified by the public that have been mitigated through the development of PDC. Tracking issues are those that have been determined to be relevant, but are not used to formulate alternatives. These issues often describe minor or consistent consequences among alternatives considered in detail. These issues usually are addressed through adherence to standards and guidelines, appropriate laws and regulations, or as covered by the PDC. Tracking issues are generally of interest or concern to the public, and are tracked throughout the document. These issues are discussed in the FEIS, Chapter 1, Section 1.10. All scoping comments and mailing lists are available in the project file, located in the Mt. Hood National Forest Headquarters Office in Sandy, Oregon.

Due to the complexity of this project, additional public involvement steps were taken to solicit public input during the analysis phases. An update letter was mailed to approximately 650 addresses, including all respondents to the scoping letter. Also, meetings were held with governmental agencies and tribal governments to discuss the project in greater detail. Lastly, the proposed action was presented to groups upon request. The presentation was made to Northern Oregon Motorcycle and ATV Club (NOMAC), Sportsman's Park Homeowners Associations, and Columbia Gorge Off-Road Association (CGORA). The presentation was posted on the Forest website as well.

## 4.3 Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Public Meetings

Issues identified from the scoping process were used to guide the completion of the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Off-highway Vehicle (OHV) Management Plan, including Forest Plan Amendment #17*. The full DEIS or short summary was distributed to 863 individuals, (organizations, and other agencies on August 28, 2009. The Notice of Availability of the DEIS was published in the Federal Register on August 28, 2009 (Volume 76, Number 66, page 44358) and initiated a 60-day public comment period that ended on October 28, 2009.

In addition to the mailing, the U.S. Forest Service hosted two open houses on September 15, 2009 in Portland and September 16, 2009 in Hood River. A press release announcing the release of the DEIS and these public meetings was distributed to local newspapers on August 28, 2009. Announcement of the public meetings and public comment period appeared as a legal notice in *The Oregonian* on August 28, 2009. Approximately 50 members of the public attended each public meeting.

During the public comment period, there were 829 comment letters received. An additional 66 comment letters were received after the comment period ended. The Forest Service reviewed and analyzed all public comments received to determine whether to: 1) modify existing alternatives; 2) develop new alternatives; 3) supplement, improve or modify the analysis; or 4) make factual corrections. All substantive comments that were received and the U.S. Forest Service response to each comment are included in FEIS, Appendix I. All changes or modifications to the DEIS resulting from public comments have been included in the FEIS. All public comment letters are available in the project record located in the Mt. Hood National Forest Headquarters Office in Sandy, Oregon.

## **5.0 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

The FEIS considered eight alternatives, four were analyzed in detail and four were considered, but eliminated from detailed study for the reasons stated in FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.7. A detailed description of the four alternatives analyzed in detail can be found in the FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1-Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative, Section 2.3.2-Alternative 2 – Proposed Action, Section 2.3.3-Alternative 3, and Section 2.3.4-Alternative 4. A comparison of these alternatives by proposed routes, staging areas, major components of alternatives, purpose and need, desired future condition, and issues can be found in the FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.6. The four alternatives considered in detail are summarized below.

### **5.1 Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative**

The Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative represents the current conditions. The current OHV direction was developed in the 1980s as part of the forest planning process. Based on direction in the Forest Plan, the implied policy on the Forest is “open unless posted closed.” The current law enforcement mechanism is signing an area as closed to OHV use. In order to enforce the closures, the sign must be posted and visible. This alternative allows OHV use on 2,463 miles of gravel and native surface roads, 49 miles of motorized trails, and 394,886 acres of forestland. This alternative provides the greatest opportunities for motorized recreation. Maps in FEIS, Appendix A show the cross-country areas, roads and trails where OHV use is not prohibited for each Ranger District on the Forest. Alternative 1 does include one designated OHV staging area (McCubbins Gulch Campground); however, rock quarries and pits are often opportune staging areas. There are 61 rock quarries in the Forest. The average quarry size was conservatively estimated to be two acres with a parking capacity of 60 vehicles. As such, alternative 1 “staging areas” have the parking capacity for 3,660 vehicles. This alternative does not include project design criteria or a Forest Plan Amendment. Overall, Alternative 1 does not meet the purpose and need for action for this project and it does not meet the intent of the Final Travel Management Rule.

### **5.2 Alternative 2 – Proposed Action**

Designated OHV Routes and Staging Areas: Overall Alternative 2 proposes to designate OHV use on 73 miles of road and 148 miles of trail. OHVs would be permitted only on the routes and areas designated by this alternative. Six locations are considered in Alternative 2 are: Bear Creek, Gibson Prairie, LaDee Flats, McCubbins Gulch, Peavine, and Rock Creek. Table 4 summarizes the proposed OHV routes for this alternative.

**Table 4.** Miles of OHV routes proposed by class for each system in Alternative 2

OHV System	OHV Class	Convert to Trail	Motorized Mixed Use	Existing Trails	New Trail Construction	Total Route Miles by Location
Bear Creek	Class III	0	0	0	39.1	39.1
Gibson Prairie	Class I	1.8	5.1	4	4.3	15.2
LaDee Flats	Class I, II, and III	5.4	19.1	0	0.4	38.9
	Class I and III	4.5	0	0	1.2	
	Class II	0	8.3	0	0	
McCubbins Gulch	Class I and III	4.7	8.8	32	0	50.6
	Class III	0	0	0	5.1	
Peavine	Class I, II, and III	19.6	15.2	0	3	37.8
Rock Creek	Class I and III	14.6	16.7	2.1	6.2	39.6
<b>Total Miles</b>		<b>51</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>221</b>

In addition to designating 221 miles of OHV routes, Alternative 2 includes the following components:

- Alternative 2 proposes to decommission approximately 13 miles of roads that would otherwise become a law enforcement or natural resource problem after the OHV routes are designated.
- Each proposed system includes a staging area as described in FEIS, Chapter 2, Table 2-9. The staging areas would be a day-use area that serves as a trailhead for motorized recreation. McCubbins Gulch Campground would continue to be the staging area for this OHV location.
- Alternative 2 includes one small OHV area (North Fork Quarry) in the LaDee Flats location. This proposed OHV area is approximately four acres in size and is currently used by OHVs. This OHV area is in a currently disturbed rock quarry. The quarry is located on Road 4610-120. The legal description is T4S, R6E, Section 19, NE ¼, SE ¼.
- Alternative 2 would create a day-use-only area within the general area of the Rock Creek location. Campfires and overnight occupancy in would be restricted in a 3,533 acre area adjacent to Gate Creek Ditch in the vicinity of the Sportsman's Park community.
- All new trails proposed for construction as well as road-to-trail conversions would be open to non-motorized users.
- All designated routes would be depicted on the MVUM. The MVUM designates the roads, trails, and areas open to motor vehicle use on an administrative unit or a Ranger District of the National Forest System.
- No OHV use would be allowed outside of the designated routes, staging areas, and North Fork Quarry OHV area (4-acres) based on the direction in the Final Travel Management Rule. Cross-county OHV use would be prohibited.
- All Project Design Criteria described in FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.4 and the Monitoring Framework described in FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.5 would be implemented.

Forest Plan Amendment: Under the existing Forest Plan, eleven standards and guidelines allow cross-country OHV use off designated routes (FW-447, FW-459, FW-465, A4-038, B1-077, B1-078, B1-079, B3-038, B11-037, C1-041, and C1-042). An additional nine standards and guidelines require areas closed to OHV use to be posted (FW-413, FW-483, FW-543, A3-006, A3-007, B1-082, B1-083, B5-001, and B5-002). These 20 standards and guidelines do not comply with the Final Travel Management Rule. In addition, the monitoring element for Off-Road Vehicle Use (Forest Plan, page 5-69 to 5-70) would be replaced with the Monitoring Framework outlined in FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.5 as part of the proposed Forest Plan Amendment. The FEIS proposes to amend these twenty standards

and guidelines (Table 3) to limit OHV use to designated routes, prohibit cross-country travel by OHVs, replace the enforcement tool to the MVUM, and to remove the requirement to post areas or roads as closed to OHV use. In addition, the proposed Forest Plan Amendment for Alternative 2 includes six additional standard and guidelines (FEIS, Chapter 2, Table 2-14) that restrict OHV use on existing roads and trails (A3-040, A4-039, A7-024, A9-039, B6-036 and B6-037). No new trail construction would be permitted in these Land Use Allocations. After implementation of this Forest Plan Amendment, only designated routes would be available for OHV use. All other roads, trails, and areas would be closed to OHV use, unless additional NEPA analysis is completed. This would be Amendment #17 to the Forest Plan.

### 5.3 Alternative 3

Designated OHV Routes and Staging Areas: Alternative 3 proposes to designate OHV use on 130 miles of roads and 196 miles of trails. OHVs would be permitted only on the routes and areas designated by the selected alternative. The eight proposed OHV systems considered in Alternative 3 are: Bear Creek, Gibson Prairie, Graham Pass, LaDee Flats, McCubbins Gulch, Mount Defiance, Peavine, and Rock Creek. Table 5 summarizes the proposed OHV routes for this alternative.

**Table 5.** Miles of OHV routes proposed by class for each system in Alternative 3.

OHV System	OHV Class	Convert to Trail	Motorized Mixed Use	Existing Trails	New Trail Construction	Total Route Miles by Location
Bear Creek	Class III	3	7.5	0	28.8	39.3
Gibson Prairie	Class I and III	0.1	4.5	0	0.3	4.9
Graham Pass	Class I, II, and III	0	50.6	0	0	63.2
	Class III	0	2.2	10.4	0	
LaDee Flats	Class I, II, and III	4.3	17.9	0	0.3	42.0
	Class I and III	14.5	0	0	5	
	Class II	0	0	0	0	
McCubbins Gulch	Class I and III	7.3	3.2	25.6	0.7	60.1
	Class III	9.9	0	0	13.4	
Mount Defiance	Class I and III	0	5.5	0	0	5.5
Peavine	Class I and III	28.9	11.6	0.2	8.9	49.6
Rock Creek	Class I and III	25.9	26.6	2.1	6.6	61.2
<b>Total Miles</b>		<b>94</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>326</b>

In addition to designating 326 miles of OHV routes, Alternative 3 includes the following components:

- Alternative 3 proposes to decommission approximately 35 miles of roads that would otherwise become a law enforcement or natural resource problem after the OHV routes are designated.
- Six proposed systems include a staging area as described in FEIS, Chapter 2, Table 2-18. The Gibson Prairie and Mount Defiance proposed OHV systems do not include a staging area. Staging areas for these areas are provided by Hood River County in the adjoining OHV systems. All staging areas would allow dispersed camping and would serve as a trailhead for motorized recreation. McCubbins Gulch Campground would continue to be the staging area for this OHV location and would be the only developed campground.
- Alternative 3 (similar to Alternative 2) includes one small OHV area (North Fork Quarry) in the LaDee Flats location.
- Alternative 3 (similar to Alternative 2) would create a day-use area within the general area of the Rock Creek location.

- All new trails proposed for construction as well as road-to-trail conversions would be open to non-motorized users.
- All designated routes would be depicted on the MVUM. The MVUM designates the roads, trails, and areas open to motorized vehicles on an administrative unit or a Ranger District of the National Forest System.
- No OHV use would be allowed outside of the designated routes, staging areas, and North Fork Quarry OHV area (4-acres) based on the direction in the Final Travel Management Rule. Cross-county OHV use would be prohibited.
- All Project Design Criteria described in FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.4 and the Monitoring Framework described in FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.5 would be implemented.

Forest Plan Amendment: Alternative 3 includes a Forest Plan Amendment replacing the 20 standards and guidelines that do not comply with the Final Travel Management Rule. These are described under Alternative 2 and Table 3. In addition, the proposed Forest Plan Amendment for Alternative 3 includes two additional standard and guidelines (FEIS, Chapter 2, Table 2-22) that restrict OHV use on existing roads and trails (A4-039 and A9-039). No new trail construction would be permitted in these Land Use Allocations. After implementation of this Forest Plan Amendment, only designated routes would be available for OHV use. All other roads, trails, and areas would be closed to OHV use, unless additional NEPA analysis is completed. This would be Amendment #17 to the Forest Plan.

## 5.4 Alternative 4

Designated OHV Routes and Staging Areas: Overall Alternative 4 proposes to designate OHV use on 26 miles of roads and 70 miles of trails. OHVs would be permitted only on the routes and areas designated by the selected alternative. The three proposed OHV systems considered in Alternative 4 are: LaDee Flats, McCubbins Gulch and Rock Creek. Table 6 summarizes the proposed OHV routes for this alternative.

**Table 6.** Miles of OHV routes proposed by class for each system in Alternative 4.

OHV System	OHV Class	Convert to Trail	Motorized Mixed Use	Existing Trails	New Trail Construction	Total Route Miles by Location
LaDee Flats	Class I, II, and III	4.2	9.2	0	0.1	25.2
	Class I and III	6.7	0	0	5	
McCubbins Gulch	Class I and III	7.3	0	25.6	0.7	33.6
Rock Creek	Class I and III	15.1	16.9	2.1	3.2	37.3
<b>Total Miles</b>		<b>33</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>96</b>

In addition to designating 96 miles of OHV routes, Alternative 4 includes the following components:

- Alternative 4 proposes to decommission approximately 12 miles of roads that would otherwise become a law enforcement or natural resource problem after the OHV routes are designated.
- All proposed systems include a staging area as described in FEIS, Chapter 2, Table 2-26. Staging areas would serve as a trailhead for motorized recreation and would be closed to dispersed camping. McCubbins Gulch Campground would continue to be the staging area for this OHV location and would be the only developed campground.
- Alternative 4 (similar to Alternative 2) includes one small OHV area (North Fork Quarry) in the LaDee Flats location.
- All new trails proposed for construction as well as road-to-trail conversions would be open to non-motorized users.

- All designated routes would be depicted on the MVUM. The MVUM designates the roads, trails, and areas open to motor vehicle use on an administrative unit or a Ranger District of the National Forest System.
- No OHV use would be allowed outside of the designated routes, staging areas, and North Fork Quarry OHV area (4-acres) based on the direction in the Final Travel Management Rule. Cross-county OHV use would be prohibited.
- All Project Design Criteria described in FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.4 and the Monitoring Framework described in FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.5 would be implemented.

Forest Plan Amendment: Alternative 4 includes a Forest Plan Amendment replacing the 20 standards and guidelines that do not comply with the Final Travel Management Rule. These are described under Alternative 2 and Table 3. No other standards and guidelines are amended under this alternative. After implementation of this Forest Plan Amendment, only designated routes would be available for OHV use. All other roads, trails, and areas would be closed to OHV use, unless additional NEPA analysis is completed. This would be Amendment #17 to the Forest Plan.

## **6.0 FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

After consideration of the discussion of environmental consequences (FEIS, Chapter 3), I have determined that the Selected Alternative is consistent with the intent of the Forest Plan's long-term goals and objectives. Also, we have determined that the Selected Alternative is consistent with other laws and regulations, as outlined in the FEIS. Discussion of the laws and regulations are provided in the FEIS, Chapter 3, Section 3.15 and Section 3.16 as well as Appendix D.

### **6.1 Consistency with Final Travel Management Rule**

The Travel Management; Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use; Final Rule (Final Travel Management Rule) was released by the U.S. Forest Service on November 9, 2005 (Federal Register, Vol. 70, pgs. 68264-68291). The new travel management rule revised regulations 36 CFR parts 212, 251, 261, and 295 to require designation of roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use on all national forests. The Final Rule provides a consistent framework for administrative units (i.e., national forests) to designate roads, trails, and areas open to motor vehicle use, by class of vehicle, and if appropriate, by time of year. The purpose of the rule is to "provide for a system of National Forest System roads, National Forest System trails, and areas on National Forest System lands that are designated for motor vehicle use. After these roads, trails, and areas are designated, including the class of OHV and time of year, motor vehicle use not in accordance with these designations is prohibited by 36 CFR 261.13 (70 FR 62289). The rule directed that designated routes will be identified on a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM). The Final Rule provides a framework for decisions which will improve opportunities for sustainable motorized recreation, better protection of the environment, increased public safety, and ample high-quality access to National Forest System lands.

The overall purpose for this project is for OHV use on the Forest to comply with the Final Travel Management Rule. The Selected Alternative designates roads, trails, and areas open to motor vehicle use, by class of OHV, and by time of year as described in Section 2.0-Decision. The Final Travel Management Rule requires: "In designating National Forest System roads, National Forest System trails, and areas on National Forest System lands for motor vehicle use, the responsible official shall consider effects on National Forest System natural and cultural resources, public safety, provision of recreational opportunities, access needs, conflicts among uses of National Forest System lands, the need for maintenance and administration of roads, trails, and areas that would arise if the uses under consideration are designated; and the availability of resources for that maintenance and administration" (36 CFR 215.55, page 68289). In addition, there are specific criteria for designating trails, areas and roads, as well as rights of access and wilderness and primitive areas. All these criteria were analyzed in the FEIS, Chapter 3, Environmental Consequences and the impacts of these designations were considered in this Decision. In addition, this planning process included public involvement and coordination with Federal, State, county, other local governmental entities and tribal governments as required by 36 CFR 212.52 and 212.53. Lastly, the FEIS and Record of Decision (ROD) incorporate a monitoring framework which meets the requirements discussed in 36 CFR 212.57. As such, the Selected Alternative is fully consistent with the Final Travel Management Rule.

## 6.2 Consistency with National Forest Management Act

All designated OHV routes will occur on National Forest Systems (NFS) lands under the Selected Alternative. All activities that will occur on NFS lands as described in this ROD and accompanying FEIS are in compliance with the relevant management requirements set forth in the National Forest Management Act (36 CFR 219).

### 6.2.1 Consistency with Forest Plan Direction

The designation of OHV routes on NFS lands under the Selected Alternative is consistent with the Mt. Hood National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement (USDA Forest Service, 1990a), Record of Decision (USDA Forest Service, 1990c), and the accompanying Land and Resource Management Plan (USDA Forest Service, 1990b), as amended. The applicable Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines are listed in FEIS, Appendix D: these include forestwide standards as well as standards for all Management Areas, except the Bull Run Management Area. These Management Areas are:

A2 (Wilderness)	A3 (Research Natural Areas)
A4 (Special Interest Areas)	A5 (Unroaded Recreation)
A6 (Semi-Primitive Roaded Recreation)	A7 (Special Old Growth)
A8 (Northern Spotted Owl Habitat Area)	A9 (Key Site Riparian)
A10 (Developed Recreation)	A11 (Winter Recreation Area)
A12 (Outdoor Education Area)	A13 (Bald Eagle Habitat Area)
B1 (Designated Wild, Scenic, Recreational River)	B2 (Scenic Viewshed)
B3 (Roaded Recreation)	B4 (Pine-Oak Habitat)
B5 (Pileated Woodpecker/Pine Marten Habitat)	B6 (Special Emphasis Watershed)
B7 (General Riparian Areas)	B8 (Earthflow)
B9 (Wildlife/Visual Area)	B10 (Deer and Elk Winter Range)
B11 (Deer and Elk Summer Range)	B12 (Backcountry Lakes)
C1 (Timber Emphasis)	

The Selected Alternative is fully consistent with the goals and objectives for all Management Areas. For more information, see FEIS, Appendix D.

### 6.2.2 Finding of Non-Significant Amendment

The Forest Plan amendment was developed consistent with procedural requirements of the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) (36 CFR 219). This decision is a non-significant amendment to the Mt. Hood National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. The Forest Service Manual (FSM 1926.51 and 1922.52) provide specific direction for determining the significance of a forest plan amendment.

The minor changes to the standards and guidelines A4-038, B1-077, B1-078, B1-079, B3-038, B11-037, C1-041, and C1-042 limit OHV use to designated routes and prohibits cross-county travel. Only designated routes would be available for OHV use; all other roads and trails in the Land Use Allocations would be closed to OHV use, unless additional NEPA analysis is completed. The minor changes to the standards and guidelines A3-006, A3-007, B1-082, B1-083, B5-001, and B5-002 replace the enforcement tool to the Motor Vehicle Use Map and no longer requires areas or roads closed to OHV use to be posted. The minor changes for standards and guidelines A4-039, A7-024, A9-039, B6-036 and B6-037 would also restrict OHV use; no new OHV trail construction or cross-county travel would be permitted. All changes are in accordance with the Final Travel Management Rule (Travel Management; Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use; Final Rule [Federal Register, Vol. 70, pgs. 68264-68291]).

None of these changes would alter any of the multiple use goals or objectives and current management activities outlined in the Forest Plan for Research Natural Areas (A3), Special Interest Areas (A4), Special Old Growth (A7), Key Site Riparian (A9), Wild Scenic and Recreational Rivers (B1), Roaded Recreation (B3), Pileated Woodpecker/

Pine Martin Habitat Area (B5), Special Emphasis Watershed (B6) Deer and Elk Summer Range (B11), and Timber Emphasis (C1). To the extent that OHVs may adversely affect the multiple use goals of these management areas, however, limiting OHVs to the designated routes and prohibiting cross-county travel would contribute to achieving multiple use goals.

The minor change to the Forestwide standard and guidelines (FW-447, FW-459, and FW-465) would not change the overall intent of the standard, it just clarifies that OHV use would be limited to designated routes and cross-county travel would be prohibited. The minor change to the Forestwide standard and guidelines (FW-413, FW-483, and FW-543) would not change the overall intent of the standard, it just replaces the enforcement tool to the Motor Vehicle Use Map and no longer requires areas or roads closed to OHV use to be posted. Therefore, there would be no change in the multiple use goals of protecting transportation, dispersed recreation, or wild and scenic rivers across the Forest.

Lastly, the Monitoring Plan for Off-Road Vehicles is updated with the Monitoring Framework to reflect the intent of the Final Travel Management rule. Completing the EIS provides a Forestwide analysis of the OHV opportunities across the Forest as directed by two of the items in the Monitoring Plan. The remaining item focuses on balance which is included in the Monitoring Framework. As such, the new Monitoring Framework does not change the overall intent of the Monitoring Plan.

This amendment will take effect as of the signing of this Decision and will apply to all OHV travel and cross-country motorized travel (unlicensed and licensed vehicles) across the Forest. These amended standards and guidelines will be applicable to proposed and future designation of OHV routes.

I believe this decision to authorize a Forest Plan amendment to limit OHV use to designated roads, trails and areas; prohibit cross-country travel by OHVs; close existing off-road areas; and remove the requirement to post areas or roads as closed to OHV use is consistent with the intent of the Forest Plan. Based on my review of the Forest Plan and the analysis disclosed in the FEIS (Chapter 3, Section 3.16), I have determined that this is a non-significant Forest Plan amendment under NFMA on the basis of the criteria outlined in FSM 1926.51-Changes to the Forest Plan That Are Not Significant. This Forest Plan amendment is required to make this project as well as the Forest OHV policy comply with the Final Travel Management Rule.

### **6.2.3 Northwest Forest Plan Consistency**

I have determined that the Selected Alternative is consistent with the Standards and Guidelines for the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) Record of Decision (USDA and USDI, 1994), including the subsequent decisions regarding the Aquatic Conservation Strategy and Survey and Manage.

The project is consistent with the Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) objectives, as described in the 1994 NWFP Record of Decision on page B-10. FEIS, Chapter 3, Section 3.7 provides an analysis to determine if this project will restore, maintain or degrade the aquatic environment as described by the ACS objectives. The Selected Alternative will decommission 17.4 miles of roads which would restore areas to a more natural sediment regime that is less chronic and more episodic in nature, as well as provide some benefits to floodplain connectivity, riparian reserves and decreasing the drainage network associated with the roads (see FEIS, Appendix H, Range of Natural Variability). Removing stream crossings and associated road fill would open up more connectivity while installation of waterbars and other drainage features would hydrologically “disconnect” roads from streams. Benefits may be noticeable at the 7<sup>th</sup> field sub-watershed scale but unlikely detectable at the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> field scale. Road decommissioning may cause some minor short-term sediment introduction during implementation leading to loss of some pool quality, but would provide long-term benefits as areas revegetate and sediment is moved through the system. Also, the Selected Alternative prohibits cross-country OHV travel on approximately 394,886 acres of National Forest land. It is expected that eliminating cross-country travel will restore a more natural sediment regime in areas that have this use around stream channels, wetlands and lakes. Benefits would likely be noticeable at the 5<sup>th</sup> field watershed scale. All ACS indicators for water quality, habitat access, habitat elements, channel conditions and dynamics, flow/hydrology, and watershed conditions would be improved as described or maintained.



Also, I have considered the existing condition of riparian reserves, including the important physical and biological components of the fifth-field watersheds and the effects to riparian resources. I find that the selected alternative is consistent with riparian reserve standards and guidelines, and will contribute to maintaining or restoring the fifth-field watersheds over the long term (see FEIS, Chapter 3, Sections 3.3 and 3.4).

The project is consistent with the Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines (USDA and USDI, 2001). Surveys for wildlife species were conducted according to protocol in locations where habitat was present and new trail construction was proposed. No habitat for botanical Survey and Manage species was present in the OHV locations, so surveys were not needed. The presence of two aquatic species under Survey and Manage was assumed. For the terrestrial and aquatic species known or assumed to be present within the project area, I have decided that the appropriate measures as described in Chapter 3 of the FEIS will be applied (see FEIS, 3.4.1, 3.5.2, and 3.6.2).

### **Forest Plan Amendments**

The Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) requires that amendments to Forest Plans “be reviewed by the Regional Interagency Executive Committee [REIC] to assure consistency with the objectives of these standards and guidelines” (NWFP, page E-18). Forest Plan amendments that do not impact NWFP Standards and Guidelines do not require REIC review. FEIS, Appendix D lists all of the applicable NWFP Standards and Guidelines for this project. All of these standards and guidelines are analyzed in Chapter 3 of this EIS, and none of standards and guidelines requires an amendment as part of this project. All the requirements for the riparian reserves are met through the Selected Alternative, as required by the project design criteria and analyzed in Section 3.7-Aquatic Conservation Strategy. Project design criteria W-6, W-7, and W-8 explicitly address trail construction, cross-country trail, and stream crossings within riparian reserves. As such, the Forest Plan Amendment only proposes changes to the Mt. Hood National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and does not propose any changes to any other plans, including the Northwest Forest Plan.

## **6.3 Consistency with National Environmental Policy Act**

Regulations for NEPA (40 CFR 1500 to 1508; FSH 1909.15) were followed in preparing this EIS. The range of alternatives was adequate to understand and analyze significant public issues. The Selected Alternative adopts all practical means to avoid and/or minimize adverse effects to the environment. The PDC, as described in FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.4, describes the measures the U.S. Forest Service expects to take to further reduce the risk of adverse effects during implementation.

I am choosing the Selected Alternative given the consideration of cumulative effects addressed throughout FEIS, Chapter 3. FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.2 addresses the assumptions and analysis framework for the environmental consequences, including cumulative effects that are disclosed in the FEIS. This is consistent with the Guidance on Consideration of Past Actions in Cumulative Effects Analysis provided by the Council on Environmental Quality (June 24, 2005).

## **6.4 Consistency with Endangered Species Act, as amended and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act**

Details regarding the species found within the overall project area and the potential effects of the proposed activities on those species and their habitats are discussed in FEIS, Chapter 3, Section 3.4-Fisheries and Section 3.5-Wildlife. All alternatives are consistent with the Endangered Species Act, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and the requirements of the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region Regional Forester Sensitive Species list.

A Biological Evaluation (BE) / Biological Assessment (BA) was prepared for wildlife impacts and is available in the project file located at the Mt. Hood National Forest headquarters in Sandy, Oregon. For Northern Spotted Owls, the effects determination for the Selected Alternative from *disturbance* for several of the known sites is May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect due to the proximity of the roads and trails to the known spotted owl nest sites. Effects to *Critical*

Habitat are May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect due to the potential loss of snags from danger tree removal. Snags are a primary constituent element but the amount of loss would be extremely low from a habitat standpoint. The effects call for *habitat modification* for this project is May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect the northern spotted owl or its habitat. Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFW) was initiated on this project on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009. The USFW issued a biological opinion on February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009, which concluded that the project is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the northern spotted owl and that the project is not likely to adversely modify spotted owl critical habitat. The full title of the Biological Opinion is: “Biological Opinion Regarding the Effects of Implementing the Travel Management Plan’s OHV Systems on the Northern Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*) and its Critical Habitat Proposed by the Mt. Hood National Forest.” The reference number for the Biological Opinion is 13420-2010-F-0035.

A BE and BA also was prepared assessing impacts to listed fish species and designated critical habitat. The effects determination for the Selected Alternative is No Effect for all threatened and endangered fish species found in the project area. Also, the Selected Alternative will Not Adversely Affect any Essential Fish Habitat. As such, formal consultation is not required on this project for aquatic species.

Analysis for Sensitive Species is contained in FEIS, Chapter 3, Section 3.4-Fisheries, 3.5-Wildlife and 3.6-Botany. This project will have a May Impact Individuals or Habitat, but will not likely contribute to a trend towards Federal listing or loss of viability to the population or species or No Impact for all sensitive species found in the project area.

## 6.5 Consistency with National Historic Preservation Act

Details regarding the heritage resources found within the overall project area and the potential effects of the proposed activities on those resources are discussed in FEIS, Chapter 3, Section 3.8-Heritage Resources. State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) consultation has been conducted for the Rock Creek, McCubbins Gulch, LaDee Flats, and Mount Defiance OHV systems as summarized below.

- Rock Creek: SPHO concurred with our finding of “no effect” on any known cultural resources. Also, SHPO concluded that no further archeological research is needed.
- McCubbins Gulch: SHPO concurred with our finding of “no effect” on any known cultural resources. Also, SHPO stated that no further archeological research is needed with this project; however, two known sites should continue to be monitored for potential future effects.
- LaDee Flats: SPHO concurred with our finding of “no effect” on any known cultural resources. SHPO stated that the known sites should continue to be monitored for potential future effects, and that further subsurface testing will occur prior to road closure at one site.
- Mount Defiance: Consultation for the Mount Defiance OHV system was completed under the Programmatic Agreement among the USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region (Region 6), the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Oregon State Historical Preservation Office regarding Cultural Resources Management in the State of Oregon by the USDA Forest Service (2003). A finding of “no effect” was made under the Programmatic Agreement. As required by the Monitoring Framework described in FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.5, a heritage resources monitoring plan that focuses on at-risk historic sites in order to measure effects of OHVs on these sites will be developed. The plan also will include monitoring in areas within the route system with high concentrated use, high site density or high value sites (Priority Heritage Assets). In addition, the PDC described in FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.4, “significant heritage resources within the project Area of Potential Effects (APE) would be provided an appropriate degree of protection to preserve/conservate their values” (HR-1).

## 6.6 Consistency with Other Laws and Regulations

My decision is consistent with all other current laws, regulations and policies guiding designating OHV routes and other management activities on National Forest System lands. This includes, but is not limited to: Safe Drinking Water Act; Clean Water Act; Wild and Scenic River Act; Wilderness Act; Invasive Plant Management; and Executive Orders 11644, 11988, 11989, 11990 and 12898. Specific findings and rationales required by law follow.

### **6.6.1 Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act**

The Selected Alternative will meet and conform to the Clean Water Act as amended in 1982 and Safe Drinking Water Act as amended in 1996 (FEIS, Chapter 3, Section 3.3). The Clean Water Act requires States to set water quality standards to support the beneficial uses of water. The Act also requires States to identify the status of all waters and prioritize water bodies whose water quality is limited or impaired. For Oregon, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) develops water quality standards and lists water quality limited waters. Under the Safe Drinking Water Act, the DEQ and Oregon Health Division is required to delineate the groundwater and surface water source areas which supply public water systems, inventory each of those areas to determine potential sources of contamination, and determine the most susceptible areas at risk for contamination. This project will meet and conform to these Acts through the implementation of the PDC (FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.4).

### **6.6.2 Wild and Scenic River Act and Wilderness Act**

The Selected Alternative will meet and conform to the 1968 Wild and Scenic Rivers Act as well as the 1964 Wilderness Act, 1984 Oregon Wilderness Act, and 2009 Omnibus Public Land Management Act (FEIS, Chapter 3, Section 3.13). The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act calls for maintaining the free-flowing character of the designated rivers and protecting their “outstandingly remarkable values.” Outstandingly remarkable values are values or opportunities in a river corridor that are directly related to the river and which are rare, unique or exemplary from a regional or national perspective. The 1964 Wilderness Act established the National Wilderness Preservation System to ensure that parts of the United States would be preserved and protected in their natural condition. A wilderness area is defined, in part, as an area that generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man’s work substantially unnoticeable. The Wilderness Act places responsibility upon the administering agency for preserving the wilderness character of the area. The Act specifically prohibits motor vehicles, motorized equipment and mechanical transport in all wilderness areas (Public Law 88-577, Sec. 4 (c) Prohibitions of Certain Uses). None of the OHV routes would be within designated wilderness areas. Also, the impacts of OHVs, including potential effects of noise in wilderness areas and Wild and Scenic River Corridors, are fully analyzed and disclosed in the FEIS. These effects are summarized in FEIS, Chapter 3, Table 3-125.

### **6.6.3 Executive Orders 11644 and 11989: OHV Use on Public Lands**

The issue of increasing OHV use on public lands, and its associated resource impact concerns and public conflicts, has existed since the issuance of Executive Order 11644 in 1972 (Federal Register, Vol. 37, pg 2877), as amended by Executive Order 11989 in 1977 (42 Federal Register, Vol. 42, pg 26959). The Executive Order states: “The widespread use of such vehicles on the public lands – often for legitimate purposes but also in frequent conflict with wise land and resource management practices, environmental values, and other types of recreation activity – has demonstrated the need for a unified Federal policy toward the use of such vehicles on the public lands.” The purpose of this Executive Order was “to establish policies and provide for procedures that will ensure that the use of off-road vehicles on public lands will be controlled and directed so as to protect the resources of those lands, to promote the safety of all users of those lands, and to minimize conflicts among the various uses of those lands.” The Final Travel Management Rule builds upon these Executive Orders. The Selected Alternative as well as the planning process for this project complies with these Executive Orders as described in Section 6.1-Consistency with Final Travel Management Rule and by meeting the purpose and need for action.

### **6.6.4 Executive Orders 11988 and 11990: Flood Plains and Wetlands**

These orders are applicable to riparian areas found within the project area. Designated OHV routes within riparian areas are summarized in FEIS, Chapter 2 for each alternative, and are discussed in FEIS, Chapter 3, Sections 3.3-Water Quality and 3.4-Fisheries. The environmental effects are consistent with the standards and guidelines for the Mt. Hood National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended (see FEIS, Appendices D). In addition, the OHV routes will be implemented using the PDC (FEIS, Chapter 2, Section 2.4). No adverse effects are anticipated to occur to wetlands and floodplains with any alternatives, including the Selected Alternative.

## 6.6.5 Executive Order 12898: Environmental Justice

Executive Order #12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations*, directs Federal agencies to address effects accruing in a disproportionate way to minority and low income populations. FEIS, Chapter 3, Section 3.14-Socio-Economic, Civil Rights, and Environmental Justice discusses the potential impacts of this project on these groups. The study area's disproportionately high numbers of minorities, Hispanic and Latino people, and people living in poverty, trigger an environmental justice analysis. A review of the alternatives, however, demonstrates that the economic effects are negligible for the entire population. There are no effects to jobs and income in the impact area studied and OHV use generates a small portion of the overall jobs and income, less than 1%. Therefore, the impacts are similar for the groups identified by the Environmental Justice Executive Order. In terms of social effects, none of the alternatives would have a disproportionate affect on any minority or low-income community as the travel management decisions are spread throughout the forest and do not cause any adverse environmental effect to any particular community.

## 6.6.6 Invasive Plants Management

Details regarding the invasive plants found within the overall project area and the potential effects of the proposed activities on those resources are discussed in FEIS, Chapter 3, Section 3.6-Botany. By considering the prevention of invasive plant introduction, establishment and spread of invasive plants, the planning process is consistent with the Pacific Northwest Invasive Plant Program Preventing and Managing Invasive Plants Record of Decision issued in 2005 and the Site-Specific Invasive Plant Treatments for Mt. Hood National Forest and Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area in Oregon, including Forest Plan Amendment #16 Record of Decision issued in 2008. A noxious weed risk assessment was prepared for this project.

# 7.0 ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

In accordance with Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, I am required to identify the alternative or alternatives that can be considered environmentally preferable (40 CFR Part 1505.2 (b)). The environmentally preferable alternative is defined by CEQ as the alternative that promotes national environmental policy as expressed in NEPA Section 101. The environmental preferable alternative is not necessarily the alternative that will be implemented, but is ordinarily the alternative that causes the least damage to the physical and biological environment, and best protects, preserves, and enhances historical, cultural, and natural resources. For this project, I believe Alternative 4 is the environmentally preferable alternative for reasons discussed because it designates the fewest miles of OHV routes.

# 8.0 ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW (APPEAL) OPPORTUNITIES

Portions of this decision are subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215, and portions of this decision are appealable under the Optional Appeal Procedures of the 2000 Planning Rule (formerly designated as 36 CFR Part 217). Under 36 CFR Part 215, an appeal may be filed on the portion of this decision that designates OHV roads, trails, and areas (see Section 2.0-Decision). Under the Optional Appeal Procedures of the 2000 Planning Rule, an appeal may be filed on the decision to amend the Mt. Hood National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) to be in conformance with the Travel Management Rule (see Section 2.0-Decision, Forest Plan Amendment and Table 3). The Optional Appeal Procedures of the 2000 Planning Rule (Optional Appeal Procedures) are available online at <http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/applit/includes/PlanAppealProceduresDuringTransition.pdf>. The appeal procedures pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215 are available online at <http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/applit/36cfr215.htm>.

### *Appeals of Decision to Designate OHV Roads, Trails, and Areas under 36 CFR 215*

Only individuals or organizations who submitted comments or expressed an interest in the project during the comment period may appeal. Any appeal of this portion of the decision must be in writing and fully consistent with the content requirements described in 36 CFR 215.14. A written appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeal Reviewing Officer (the Regional Forester) within 45 days of the date of publication of the legal notice regarding this decision in *The Oregonian* newspaper.

Send appeals to:

Mary Wagner, Regional Forester  
USDA Forest Service  
ATTN: 1570 Appeals  
P.O. Box 3623  
Portland, OR 97208-3623

The street location for those submitting hand-delivered appeals is 333 SW First Avenue, Portland, Oregon. The office hours are: 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Appeals may be e-mailed to: [appeals-pacificnorthwest-regional-office@fs.fed.us](mailto:appeals-pacificnorthwest-regional-office@fs.fed.us). Electronic appeals must be submitted as part of an actual e-mail message, or as an attachment in plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Microsoft Word (.doc) only. E-mails submitted to e-mail addresses other than the one listed above, or in formats other than those listed or containing viruses will be rejected. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to an electronic message, a verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature is one way to provide verification. Any written appeal, including attachments must be postmarked or received (via regular mail, fax, e-mail, hand-delivery, express delivery, or messenger service) within 45 days of the date of the publication of the legal notice. The publication date of the legal notice in *The Oregonian* newspaper is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal (§215.15(a)). Those wishing to appeal should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

For further information regarding these appeal procedures, contact the Mt. Hood National Forest, Environmental Coordinator, Michelle Lombardo at (503) 668-1796 or [mlombardo@fs.fed.us](mailto:mlombardo@fs.fed.us).

**Appeals of Decision to Amend the Forest Plan to be in Conformance with the Travel Management Rule under the Optional Appeal Procedures**

Other than Forest Service employees, any person or any non-Federal organization or entity may appeal. Any appeal of this portion of the decision must be in writing and fully consistent with the content requirements described in Section 9 of the Optional Appeal Procedures. A written appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeal Reviewing Officer (the Regional Forester) within 45 days of the date of publication of the legal notice regarding this decision in *The Oregonian* newspaper.

Send appeals to:

Mary Wagner, Regional Forester  
USDA Forest Service  
ATTN: 1570 Appeals  
P.O. Box 3623  
Portland, OR 97208-3623

The street location for those submitting hand-delivered appeals is 333 SW First Avenue, Portland, Oregon. The office hours are: 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Appeals may be e-mailed to: [appeals-pacificnorthwest-regional-office@fs.fed.us](mailto:appeals-pacificnorthwest-regional-office@fs.fed.us). Electronic appeals must be submitted as part of an actual e-mail message, or as an attachment in plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Microsoft Word (.doc) only. E-mails submitted to e-mail addresses other than the one listed above, or in formats other than those listed, or containing viruses will be rejected. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to an electronic message, a verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature is one way to provide verification. Appeals may also be faxed to (503) 808-2339. Any written appeal, including attachments must be postmarked or received (via regular mail, fax, e-mail, hand-delivery, express delivery, or messenger service) within 45 days of the date of the publication of the legal notice. The publication date of the legal notice in *The Oregonian* newspaper is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal (Section 8(a)(2)). Those wishing to appeal should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

For further information regarding these appeal procedures, contact the Mt. Hood National Forest, Environmental Coordinator, Michelle Lombardo at (503) 668-1796 or [mlombardo@fs.fed.us](mailto:mlombardo@fs.fed.us).

## 9.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

If no appeals are filed, implementation of this decision will occur no sooner than 45 days, plus five business days, after publication of the Notice of Availability of this ROD in *The Oregonian*, Portland, Oregon (the official newspaper of record). If an appeal is received, the project may not be implemented for 15 days after the appeal decision (90 days after the publication of the Notice of Availability). Implementation will be carried out as described in the preceding sections.

## 10.0 CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact Michelle Lombardo, Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Management Plan EIS Team Leader, Mt. Hood National Forest, 16400 Champion Way, Sandy, OR 97055; (503) 668-1796 (phone); (503) 668-1432 (fax); mlombardo@fs.fed.us. Additional information also is available on the project website at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/mthood/projects/>.



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GARY L. LARSEN  
Forest Supervisor  
Mt. Hood National Forest

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Date

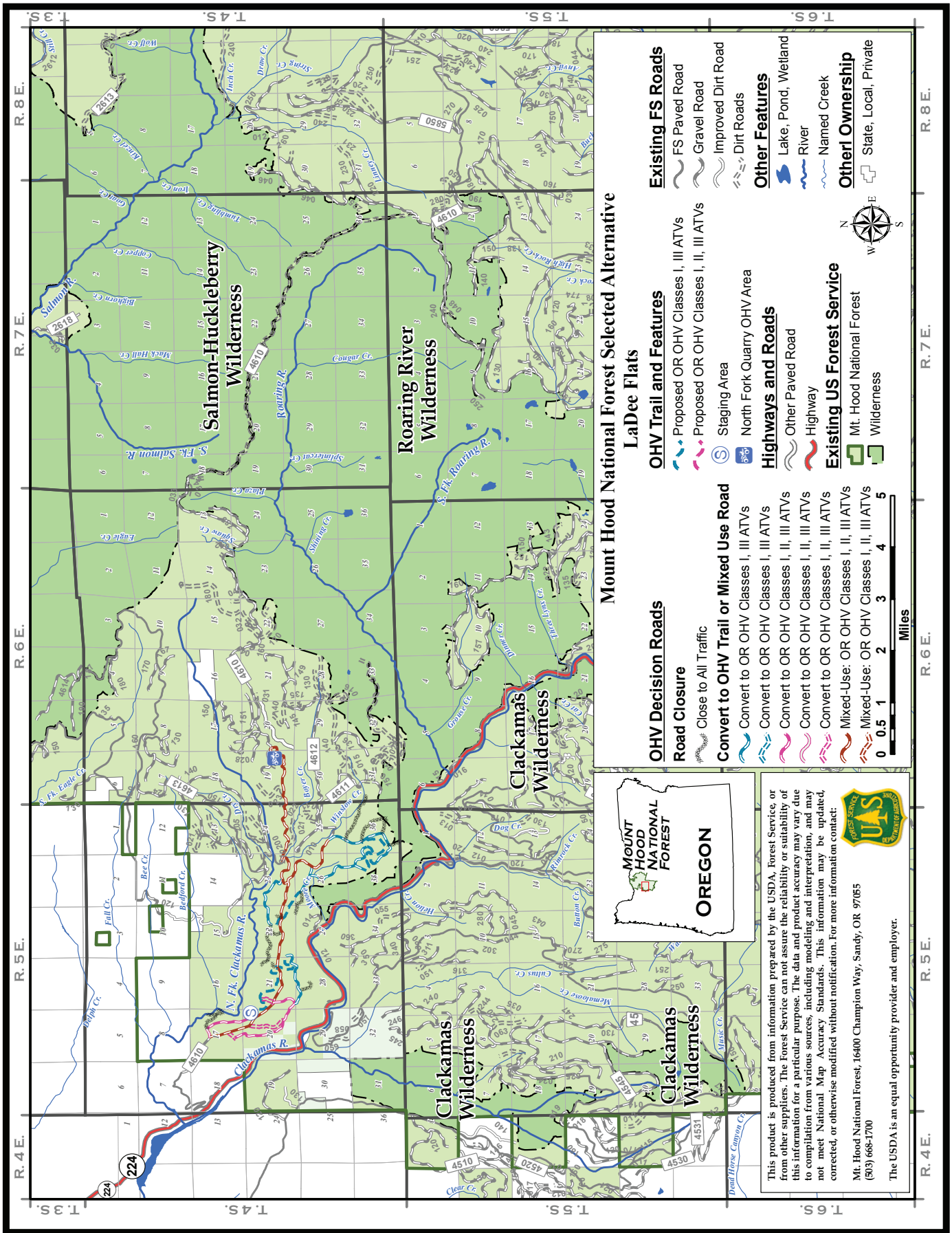
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# **APPENDIX 1 – MAPS FOR SELECTED ALTERNATIVE**



**Mount Hood National Forest Selected Alternative LaDec Flats**

- OHV Decision Roads**
  - Road Closure
  - Convert to OHV Trail or Mixed Use Road
  - Convert to OR OHV Classes I, III ATVs
  - Convert to OR OHV Classes I, II, III ATVs
  - Convert to OR OHV Classes I, II, III ATVs
  - Convert to OR OHV Classes I, II, III ATVs
  - Convert to OR OHV Classes I, II, III ATVs
  - Mixed-Use: OR OHV Classes I, II, III ATVs
  - Mixed-Use: OR OHV Classes I, II, III ATVs
- OHV Trail and Features**
  - Proposed OR OHV Classes I, III ATVs
  - Proposed OR OHV Classes I, II, III ATVs
  - Staging Area
  - North Fork Quarry OHV Area
- Highways and Roads**
  - Other Paved Road
  - Highway
- Existing US Forest Service**
  - Mt. Hood National Forest
  - Wilderness
- Existing FS Roads**
  - FS Paved Road
  - Gravel Road
  - Improved Dirt Road
  - Dirt Roads
- Other Features**
  - Lake, Pond, Wetland
  - River
  - Named Creek
- Other Ownership**
  - State, Local, Private



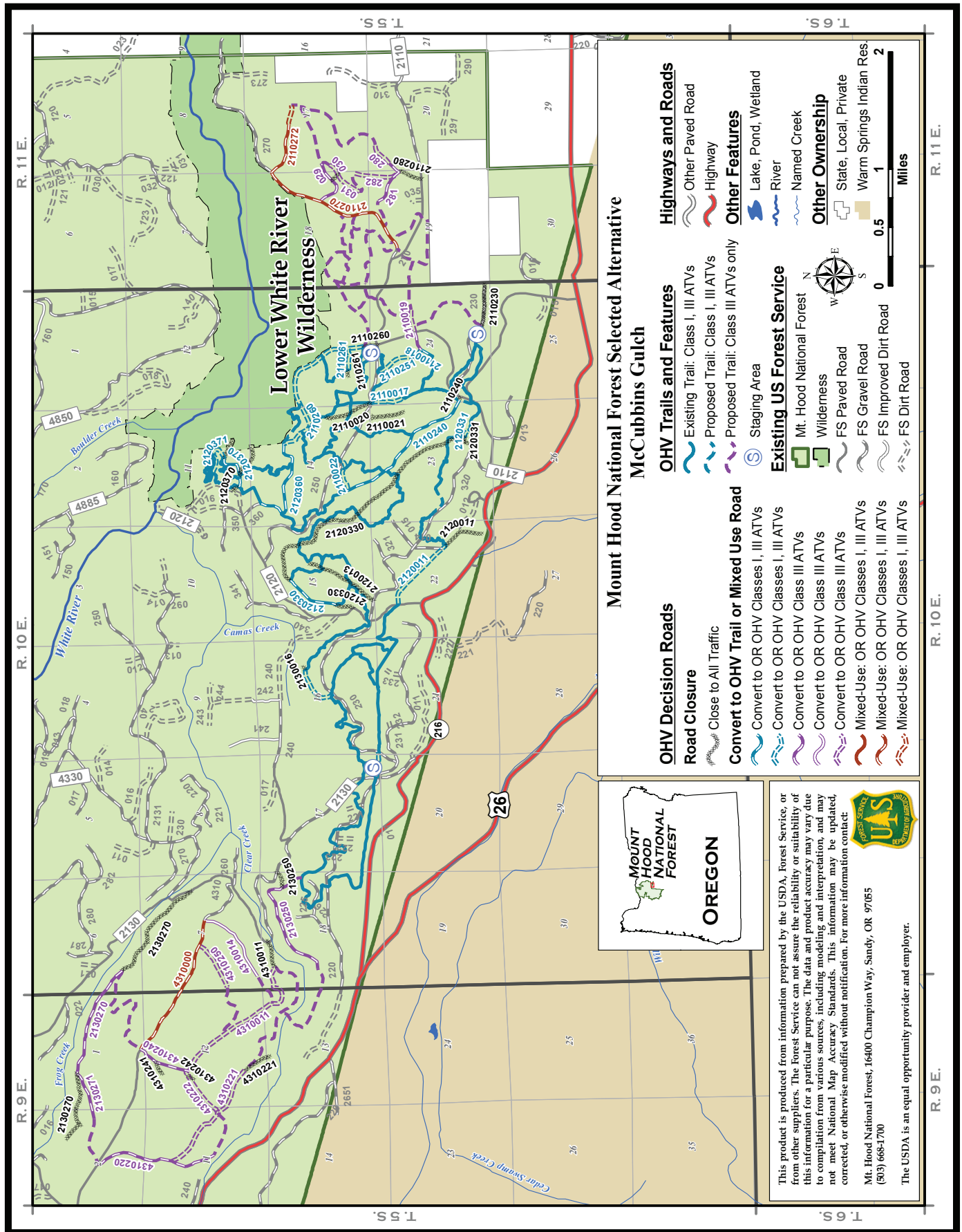
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**Mount Hood National Forest Selected Alternative  
McCubbins Gulch**

- |   |                                     |                           |
|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>OHV Decision Roads</b>                     | <b>OHV Trails and Features</b>      | <b>Highways and Roads</b> |
| <b>Road Closure</b>                           | Existing Trail: Class I, III ATVs   | Other Paved Road          |
| Close to All Traffic                          | Proposed Trail: Class I, III ATVs   | Highway                   |
| <b>Convert to OHV Trail or Mixed Use Road</b> | Proposed Trail: Class III ATVs only | <b>Other Features</b>     |
| Convert to OR OHV Classes I, III ATVs         | Staging Area                        | Lake, Pond, Wetland       |
| Convert to OR OHV Classes I, III ATVs         | <b>Existing US Forest Service</b>   | River                     |
| Convert to OR OHV Class III ATVs              | Mt. Hood National Forest            | Named Creek               |
| Convert to OR OHV Class III ATVs              | Wilderness                          | <b>Other Ownership</b>    |
| Convert to OR OHV Class III ATVs              | FS Paved Road                       | State, Local, Private     |
| Mixed-Use: OR OHV Classes I, III ATVs         | FS Gravel Road                      | Warm Springs Indian Res.  |
| Mixed-Use: OR OHV Classes I, III ATVs         | FS Improved Dirt Road               |                           |
| Mixed-Use: OR OHV Classes I, III ATVs         | FS Dirt Road                        |                           |



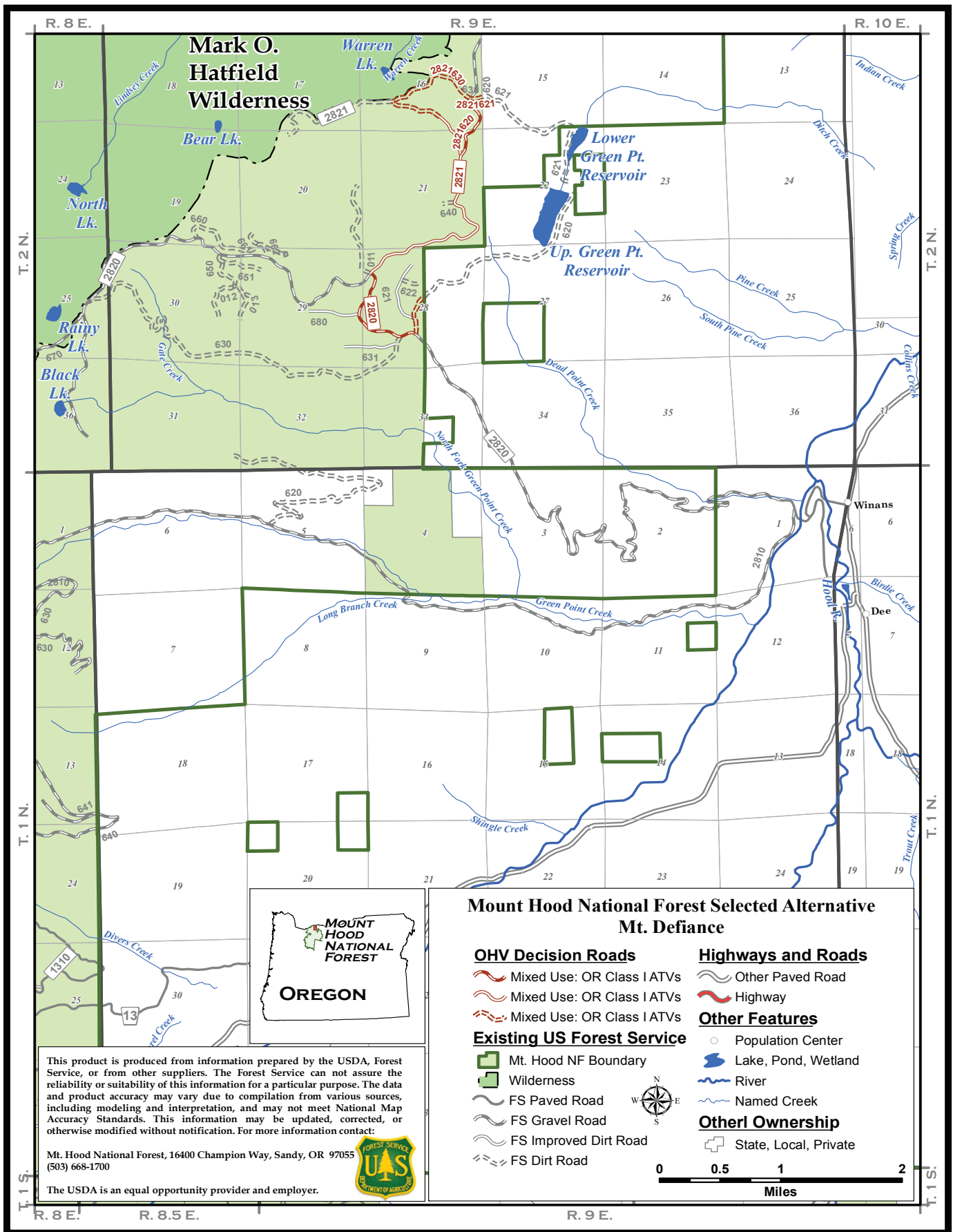
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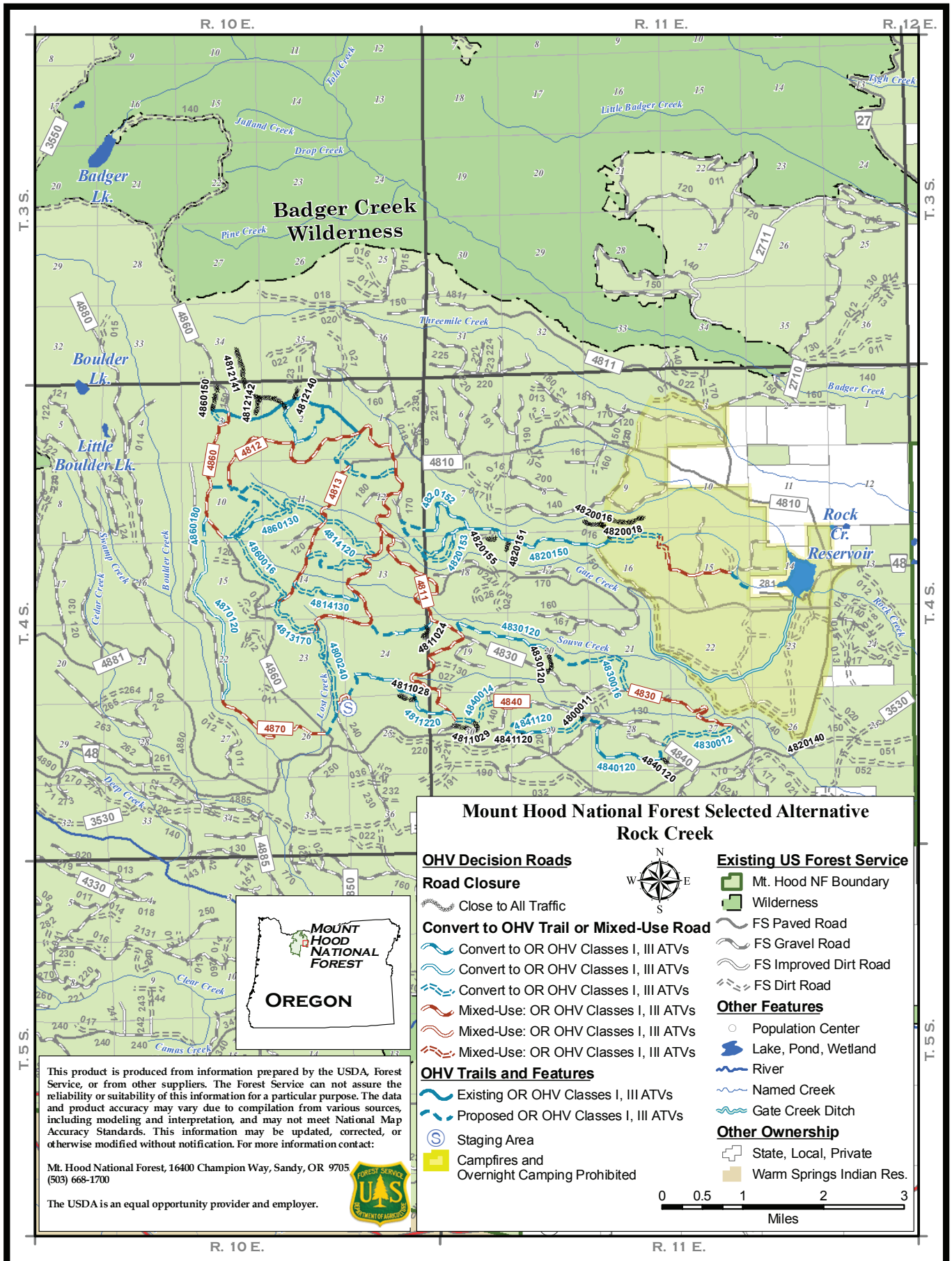


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R. 9.E. R. 10.E. R. 11.E.







## APPENDIX 2: PROJECT DESIGN CRITERIA

Project design criteria (PDC) were developed to reduce or eliminate potential impacts off-highway vehicles (OHV) may cause. PDC define a set of conditions or requirements that an activity must meet to avoid or minimize potential effects on sensitive resources. All PDC are required for both all action alternatives. PDC are not optional and are incorporated in the effects analysis.

### **OHV Routes (Seasonal Restrictions, Rerouting, Implementation)**

- O-1: Roads converted to trails will be designated as OHV trails and maintained to trail standards, rather than road standards.
- O-4: McCubbins Gulch and Rock Creek designated routes will be closed to protect deer and elk winter range from December 1 to April 1.
- O-7: Mount Defiance designated routes will be closed to protect deer and elk winter range from December 1 to May 15.
- O-8: An implementation plan for each OHV system will be developed and approved by appropriate District Ranger.

### **Recreation Management**

- RM-1: Develop and implement a sign plan for all designated OHV routes that includes measures to mitigate motorized-mixed use on forest roads. Post signs on designated OHV routes indicating appropriate vehicle classes.
- RM-2: Feature loop routes, and minimize dead end routes during route design.
- RM-3: Design and build trails to standard using guidelines from the Forest Service Handbook 2309.18, Trails Management. These guidelines provide for visitor safety and help prevent resource damage.
- RM-4: Use curvilinear design for new trails to decrease rider speed, increase user interest and challenge, and minimize the number of trees to be removed during construction.
- RM-5: Locate new trails in ways that discourage and minimize off-trail travel access.
- RM-6: Where feasible, utilize existing openings for staging areas.
- RM-7: Provide restroom facilities, as usage warrants, at designated OHV staging areas.
- RM-8: Target shooting is prohibited in all OHV staging areas.
- RM-9: OHV trails are open to other (non-motorized) trail users unless posted otherwise.
- RM-10: ATV stickers are required for all Class I, II and III OHV on designated National Forest routes.

### **Roads**

- RD-1: All motorized mixed-use roads within the designated OHV locations should be signed to notify the user that there are OHV using the route and that all users must “share the road.”
- RD-2: Routes should be maintained to provide the appropriate stopping sight distance based on posted speed limit or prevailing speed within the designated OHV locations.

- RD-3: The Forest Service may restrict OHV access and/or commercial use on routes to reduce risks during commercial haul or Special Events.
- RD-4: Encourage the daytime use of headlights/taillights, if so equipped, in all areas.
- RD-5: Planned road/trail intersections will be located based on site-specific examination for risk. Existing road/trail intersections should be analyzed for safety and appropriate action taken.
- RD-6: Allow temporary suspension of use of staging areas and designated OHV area, if necessary, where located in rock sources while rock resource operations are conducted.
- RD-7: All roads proposed to be closed to all traffic will be actively obliterated<sup>1</sup> within sight distance from the designated OHV route. The remaining length of decommissioned road should be left in hydrologically stable condition. Actions to achieve hydrologic stability could include, but are not limited to, culvert removal, water bar, and ditch cleaning.
- RD-8: Decommission the following roads within the Bear Creek location under Alternatives 2 and 3: 1630-620, 1630-630, 1630-640, 1630-650, and 1630-660.
- RD-9: For the Bear Creek designated routes, remove all culverts and maintain the trail standards for all roads proposed to be converted to OHV trails (Alternative 3).
- RD-10: Fish passage barrier culverts on roads proposed to be closed should be removed.
- RD-11: Review individual Motorized Mixed Use Reports for identified site specific hazards and recommendations prior to implementation, and implement the measures as appropriate.

### **Law Enforcement**

- LE-1: Forest Service Law Enforcement should coordinate with County Sheriffs' Offices that currently receive state OHV funding to plan for OHV emphasis patrols.
- LE-2: Plan and schedule for increased patrols during high use periods that can be utilized and implemented by Forest staff.
- LE-3: Employees and equipment should be readily identifiable as Forest Service personnel and equipment to provide for compliance and violation prevention efforts.
- LE-4: Increase public awareness of designated OHV routes through field contacts with forest visitors.
- LE-5: Coordinate volunteers with Forest employees for OHV emphasis patrols on All Terrain Vehicles (ATV), motorcycles, and/or 4X4 trucks.

### **Public Awareness and Education**

- EDU-1: Maintain the Forest web page with OHV information including the most current version of the MVUM.
- EDU-2: Annually update the MVUM incorporating information from the public and changes in resource conditions.
- EDU-3: Use interpretive signing at trailheads or staging areas, meet/make presentations to OHV clubs and other user groups, and publish/distributes brochures, as appropriate, to promote heritage resource protection goals.

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<sup>1</sup> Road obliteration will be done using active (i.e., mechanical) methods. Active obliteration will require work, such as slope rehabilitation and culvert removal. Any drainage structures to be removed or treated, such as culverts, bridges, or fords, must be accomplished in such a way that restores natural drainage. Additionally, a barrier closure device or feature (i.e., berm, gate, or guardrail) may be constructed at the beginning to deter vehicle access.



- EDU-4: A contact number for spills of hazardous materials will be provided in OHV education pamphlets and education signs at staging areas. Preventing spills and contamination will be included into the rider education program.
- EDU-5: In accordance with the Mt. Hood National Forest Invasive Plant Prevention Measures, develop and distribute informational materials at key locations (e.g., campgrounds, picnic areas, parking lot/staging areas, trailheads, boat launches, Visitor Centers, and District Offices). Information should include “tips” for recreation users on ways to minimize the risk of introducing or spreading invasive plants, and a contact name or agency.

### **Wildlife Management**

- WM-1: Trail construction and maintenance (activities requiring motorized equipment, i.e., chain saw use) should be restricted to avoid impacts to landbirds, elk, deer, and spotted owls, as determined by a qualified wildlife biologist.
- WM-2: Avoid removing any trees with existing cavity nesting holes. Consider replacement of lost nesting habitat by installing artificial nesting habitat near the project area.
- WM-3: If a raptor or Northern spotted owl nest is found, then OHV trail construction should minimize the loss of young birds.
- WM-4: Trees felled for trail construction and maintenance will be retained in place, or near the site, for forest floor users. Down logs cut to open a trail will have the section of log remain on site and not sectioned if possible. Down logs will not be designated for firewood cutting.

### **Invasive Plants**

- IP-1: OHV routes and OHV staging areas will be managed for invasive plants according to the *Mt. Hood Site Specific Invasive Plant Treatment* Record of Decision and Final Environmental Impact Statement (2005).
- IP-2: Use native species unless it can be shown that they will not successfully establish. The use of native plant materials should also extend to using nursery grown native shrub and tree seedlings and to making field transplants.

### **Soil and Erosion Control**

- S-1: When a road or trail section is realigned, the old route should be concurrently decommissioned and properly drained. Preventing future use of the abandoned route is a primary goal.
- S-2: Route locations should take advantage of existing constructed features such as abandoned roads, utility corridors, and access roads to use previously disturbed areas.
- S-3: A comprehensive erosion control plan should be developed and will include measures such as “Minimize soil erosion by controlling drainage and runoff; and by minimizing areas of cut and fill. Drainage structures should be constructed in fall so they are fully operational by the time wet weather arrives.”
- S-4: Monitor areas of cut and fill to identify any remaining stability problems that develop over time. Some sites may require additional level of erosion control. This will be an ongoing project and should be planned for early and often during the first snowmelt period following construction.
- S-5: When using heavy equipment to build or maintain routes, use care to not blade fine materials off the road or trail. This creates the “berm” problems and the fine dirt is necessary for a usable tread.
- S-6: In the LaDee Flats location, close sections not identified on trail system to allow native revegetation establishment.

- S-7: Install appropriate erosion control measures in areas within at least 25 feet of stream crossings, wetlands, seeps and springs on designated OHV routes (roads and trails).
- S-8: Salvage topsoil to an appropriate depth (usually about 6-inches) from construction sites (e.g., routes, parking lots) and stockpile for use in reclamation. Scarify compacted areas prior to re-vegetation efforts.

**Water Resources**

- WR-1: All routes and staging areas should be located and designed to minimize erosion, sedimentation, and hazardous materials from leaching into surface waters. Minimize erosion from OHV routes by designing and maintaining proper drainage structures with adequate spacing of water bars especially before stream crossings.
- WR-2: For construction related activities, fueling of gas-powered machinery should not occur within 150-feet of any live waters, without extra protective measures, to maintain water quality.
- WR-3: If piling and burning are needed, then it should be done at least 100-feet away from surface water with as little disturbance as possible.
- WR-4: Stream crossings on new construction or reconstruction routes should be designed to prevent the restriction of expected flood flows. Perennial streams should have bridge crossings. All new crossings over fish bearing streams should incorporate stream simulation designs.
- WR-5: Establish fords only in stream segments that will not cause sedimentation or stream bank erosion. These conditions are generally where the stream channel is comprised of bedrock, boulders or cobbles and the bank slopes are low, dry, and stable. It may be necessary to harden approaches to minimize sedimentation and erosion. Fords will not be permitted in fish bearing or perennial streams.
- WR-6: Minimize soil surface compaction and disturbance in Riparian Reserves. Only allow use of heavy construction equipment in this environment during periods when the soil is least susceptible to compaction or rutting.
- WR-7: When possible, schedule construction activities within Riparian Reserves during dry periods or low water periods.
- WR-8: Discourage off-trail OHV use in Riparian Reserves and at stream crossings by the use of barriers or other methods. Special emphasis should be given to Key Site Riparian areas.
- WR-9: Existing road and trail crossings on fish bearing streams should be upgraded to provide unimpeded fish passage.
- WR-10: All in-water OHV route construction and maintenance will occur during the appropriate Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) in-water work window.
- WR-11: Dispose of spoils/fill materials in stable areas and away from stream channels.
- WR-12: Wetlands, seeps and springs should be avoided where possible during final trail location or when not possible utilize construction techniques to avoid resource damage.

**Heritage Resources**

- HR-1: Significant heritage resources within the project Area of Potential Effects (APE) will be provided an appropriate degree of protection to preserve/conservate their values. Protection measures will be developed in consultation with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), appropriate Tribes, and, if necessary, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP).

- HR-2: For proposed new construction, in order to protect heritage resources, the site should be avoided if possible. Travel routes with the potential to adversely affect significant heritage resources will be rerouted or realigned away from the resources. Distances will vary depending on the nature of the individual resource, local topography, and vegetation density.
- HR-3: For prehistoric sites primarily characterized by surface exposures of lithic artifact material in an existing trail tread or wheel track, site “hardening” methods may be employed as a protective measure. Normally, geotextile fabric and fill will be used to stabilize eroding surfaces and exposed cultural deposits within site boundaries. Depth of fill will be determined by slope and soil conditions.
- HR-4: To reduce threat of artifact theft and motorized vehicle damage to heritage resources adjacent to but outside designated travel routes, barricades and vegetative screening should be employed as a protective measure.
- HR-5: Where avoidance or site hardening of heritage resources is not feasible, measures will be developed to reduce adverse effects. Such measures may include archaeological data recovery, and will be developed in consultation with SHPO, appropriate Tribes, and ACHP.

**Wildland Fire**

- WF-1: Measures for reducing the potential for human-caused fires during elevated fire danger levels (High to Extreme) will be implemented (e.g., trail closures, campfire restrictions, increased signing).
- WF-2: OHV will be compliant with State and Forest Service laws, regulation and standards. (e.g., spark arrestors).

**Range**

- R-1: Install cattle guards or appropriate devices (avoid using non self-closing gates) where OHV trails cross range allotment fencing.

**Road Decommissioning<sup>2</sup>:**

- DM-1: Ensure that an experienced professional fisheries biologist, hydrologist or technician is involved in the design of road decommissioning and/or culvert removal/replacement projects. The experience should be commensurate with technical requirements of a project.
- DM-2: Follow the appropriate Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) guidelines for timing of in-water work. Exceptions to the ODFW in-water work windows must be requested by the Forest or its contractors, and subsequently approved by ODFW.
- DM-3: Project actions will follow all provisions and requirements (including permits) of the Clean Water Act for maintenance of water quality standards as described by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.
- DM-4: All equipment used for restoration work shall be cleaned and leaks repaired prior to entering the project area. Remove external oil and grease, along with dirt, mud and plant parts prior to entering National Forest system lands. Thereafter, inspect equipment daily for leaks or accumulations of grease, and fix any identified problems before entering streams or areas that drain directly to streams or wetlands. This practice does not apply to service vehicles traveling frequently in and out of the project area that will remain on the roadway.
- DM-5: Spill Prevention Control and Containment Plan (SPCCP) – The contractor will be required to have a written SPCCP, which describes measures to prevent or reduce impacts from potential spills (fuel, hydraulic fluid, etc). The SPCCP shall contain a description of the hazardous materials that will be used, including inventory, storage, handling procedures; a description of quick response containment supplies that will be available on the site (e.g., a silt fence, straw bales, and an oil-absorbing, floating boom whenever surface water is present.).

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<sup>2</sup> These PDC apply only to the roads that will be actively decommissioned as part of this project.

- DM-6: All trucks used for refueling shall carry a hazardous material recovery kit, including absorbent pads to be used during refueling if that occurs in the project area. Any contaminated soil, vegetation or debris must be removed from National Forest System Lands and disposed of in accordance with state laws.
- DM-7: Refuel mechanized equipment at least 150 feet from water bodies or as far as possible from the water body where local site conditions do not allow a 150-foot setback to prevent direct delivery of contaminants into water.
- DM-8: Absorbent pads will be required under all stationary equipment and fuel storage containers.
- DM-9: Dispose of slide and waste material in stable sites out of the flood prone area. Waste material other than hardened surface material (asphalt, concrete, etc) may be used to restore natural or near-natural contours.
- DM-10: Trees that need to be felled during project implementation should be directionally felled, where feasible, away from the road prism and into the surrounding forest. Trees will not be bucked and will be left undisturbed to the extent possible.
- DM-11: Prior to implementation of any road decommissioning, culvert removal, or culvert replacement invasive plant surveys should be performed at the project site(s). If any invasive plants are found on or near roads, the full extent of the invasion should be determined by surveying off road to the extent that it is reasonable to assume the invasive species may have spread. The invasive plant infestations should then be mapped and weed site reports completed. Depending upon the seriousness of the weed invasion, as determined by a trained botany or noxious weed coordinator, recommendations for treatment of the weed site(s) will be made and an updated Noxious Weed Risk Analysis and Mitigation Report will be prepared.
- DM-12: Inspect active gravel, fill, sand stockpiles, quarry sites, and borrow material for invasive plants before use and transport. Treat or require treatment of infested sources before any use of pit material. Use only gravel, fill, sand, and rock that is judged to be weed free by District or Forest weed specialists.
- DM-13: Place sediment barriers prior to construction around sites where significant levels of fine sediment may enter the stream directly or through road ditches. Maintain barriers throughout construction.
- DM-14: For road decommissioning projects within riparian areas, re-contour the road prism to mimic natural floodplain contours and gradient to the greatest degree possible.
- DM-15: Drainage features used for stormproofing projects should be spaced to disconnect road surface runoff from stream channels.
- DM-16: Minimize disturbance of existing vegetation in ditches and at stream crossings to the greatest extent possible.
- DM-17: Conduct activities during dry-field conditions—low to moderate soil moisture levels.
- DM-18: Restore the stream channel and banks to original pre-road (natural) contours as much as possible when culverts are removed from the road prism.
- DM-19: When removing a culvert from a non-fishing bearing stream, aquatic specialists shall determine if culvert removal should follow design criteria outlined below in the Culvert Replacement section. Culvert removal on fish bearing streams shall adhere to the Culvert Replacement design criteria.

**Culvert Replacement:**

- C-1: Follow stream simulation design requirements for all new stream crossings (i.e. match, to the degree possible, stream width, slope, and substrate conditions with up and downstream conditions).

- C-2: Rip Rap – The use of riprap is permissible above bankfull height to protect the inlet or outlet of new culverts or open-bottomed arches. If the use of riprap is required for culvert stability, then additional analysis may be required to ensure that the structure is not undersized. Riprap may only be placed below bankfull height when necessary for protection of abutments and pilings for bridges. However, the amount and placement of riprap around the abutments and/or pilings should not constrict the bankfull flow.
- C-3: Grade Control Structures – Grade control structures are permitted to prevent headcutting above or below the culvert or bridge where natural channel re-grading is not desired. Grade control typically consists of boulder structures that are keyed into the banks, span the channel, and are buried in the substrate.
- C-4: Road Dips – Where applicable, incorporate road dips into stream crossing design, to ensure catastrophic flood events will transport overflow back into the stream channel instead of onto the road bed.
- C-5: Structures containing concrete must be cured or dried before they come into contact with stream flow.
- C-6: When removing woody debris from the road-crossing inlet, place the debris downstream of the road crossing.
- C-7: In streams where fish are present above and/or below the culvert a fish collection and removal procedure shall be implemented prior to dewatering (see below) and construction. The project area shall remain isolated using block nets or some other means during the construction period.
- C-8: Dewater Construction Site: The preferred method for replacing a culvert involves dewatering the construction site to minimize impacts to water quality and fish populations. Upstream of the isolated construction area, divert flow around the construction site with a coffer dam (built with non-erosive materials) and an associated pump or a by-pass culvert. Pumps must have fish screens and be operated in accordance with NMFS fish screen criteria (NMFS 1995). Dissipate flow energy at the bypass outflow to prevent damage to riparian vegetation or stream channel. If diversion allows for downstream fish passage (i.e., is not screened), place diversion outlet in a location to promote safe reentry of fish into the stream channel, preferably into pool habitat with cover. When necessary, pump seepage water from the de-watered work area to a temporary storage and treatment site or into upland areas and allow water to filter through vegetation prior to reentering the stream channel.
- C-9: Stream Re-watering: Upon project completion, slowly re-water the construction site to prevent loss of surface water downstream as the construction site streambed absorbs water and to prevent a sudden increase in stream turbidity. Monitor downstream during re-watering to prevent stranding of aquatic organisms below the construction site.

In addition to these PDC, additional measures may be taken by the Forest to prevent OHV from entering restricted areas and to prevent cross-country travel. For example, implementation of the proposed Palomar Pipeline project would include development of an OHV blocking plan to prevent OHV from travel along the proposed pipeline. The blocking plan would look at site-specific crossings to determine the best approach to prevent OHV use. Examples of methods that may be used include: boulders, berms, gates, visual marking, downed woody debris, and rough road access.



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