

# Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision—2014

## Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests



## Access

### In a Nutshell (Preferred Alternative)

- The Proposed Revised Forest Plan does not close National Forest System roads, designated off-highway vehicle or snowmobile trails, and areas to cross-country travel currently open to the public.
- The Proposed Revised Forest Plan provides strategic vision and guidance; additional site-specific evaluations, analysis and public involvement would be necessary to implement any activities on-the-ground.

### Definitions

**Suitability:** The Proposed Revised Forest Plan for the Blue Mountains identifies lands that are generally suitable for motorized recreation. Criteria for these determinations of suitability come from the National Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Rule and from local concerns voiced in community collaborative workshops.

**Road and Trails Access Desired Condition:** Road systems are safe and responsive to public needs and desires, are affordable and efficiently managed, have minimal effect on aquatic and terrestrial systems, and are in balance with available funding. Road density is at a level appropriate to avoid causing resource concerns. Administrative use supports Forest Service management objectives. Conflicts between user groups are minimized, and users take on appropriate challenges and risks.

### Document Sections

Discussion for forest Access can be found in the *Blue Mountains National Forests Proposed Revised Land Management Plan* in the following sections:

Part 1 – Vision: page 16

Part 1 – Vision: pages 60-63

Part 2 – Strategy: Scenic Byways and All-American Roads, page 84

Part 2 – Strategy: Nationally Designated Trails, page 85-86

Part 2 – Strategy: MA 3A, 3B, and 3C, pages 90-91

Part 2 – Strategy: “General suitability matrix for management areas,” page 97

Part 2 – Strategy: Objective Statements, page 106



for the greatest good

Access analysis can be found in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement in the following sections:

Vol. 1, Chapter 2 – Elements Common to the Action Alternatives, pages 24-40

Vol. 1, Chapter 3 – Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences: pages 63-81

Vol. 2, Chapter 3 – Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences, pages 414-415

Vol. 3, Appendix B – Methodology: page 317

## **FAQs**

### **How does the Proposed Revised Forest Plan address public access?**

The Proposed Revised Forest Plan includes desired conditions to provide motorized and non-motorized access that are compatible with the desired conditions and objectives for other resources. The Proposed Revised Forest Plan does not close National Forest System roads, designated off-highway vehicle or snowmobile trails, and cross-country travel currently open to the public. The Proposed Revised Forest Plan identifies areas that are suitable for the development of additional motorized access.

### **Does the Proposed Revised Forest Plan change winter motorized access?**

The 1990 Forest Plans generally allowed over-snow motorized vehicle use in all areas outside of designated wilderness. Under the Proposed Revised Forest Plans, the desired condition is that winter motorized use will continue in management areas 1B, 3B, 4A, 4B, and 5. The desired condition for use within wildlife corridors (MA 3C) is restricted to designated routes identified on a forest’s Motor Vehicle Use Map. Over-snow motorized vehicle use is prohibited in designated wilderness (MA 1A).

### **General Suitability Matrix for Management Areas 3A, 3B, and 3C**

<b>Use or Activity</b>	<b>Management Areas</b>		
	MA 3A	MA 3B	MA 3C
Motor vehicle use (summer) <sup>1</sup>	U	S	S
Motor vehicle use (winter)	U	S	S <sup>1</sup>
Road construction	U	U	S
Trail construction (for motor vehicle use)	U	S	S

S = designates use or activity as generally suitable

U = designates use or activity as generally unsuitable.

Footnote 1 = Indicates generally suitable applies only to use or activity on designated roads and trails and within designated areas.



### **Does the Proposed Revised Forest Plan close any roads?**

The Proposed Revised Forest Plan make no decisions to close roads. With the exception of wilderness areas, the 1990 Forest Plans for the Malheur and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests provide limited management direction to distinguish motor vehicle use allocations from nonmotorized use allocations. The 1990 Forest Plan for the Umatilla National Forest included detailed management direction related to motor vehicle use. Subsequent to the Umatilla 1990 Land Management Plan decision, each District on the Umatilla National Forest made Access and Travel Management Decisions leading to the production of a forestwide Motor Vehicle Use Map in compliance with 36 CFR 212.51, Subpart B and 36 CFR 261.13 of the Travel Management Rule.

### **How will the Proposed Revised Forest Plan relate to site-specific concerns (e.g. new trail locations)? How does Travel Management relate to the Proposed Revised Forest Plan?**

The Forest Plan provides strategic vision and guidance; however, additional site-specific evaluations would be necessary to implement any activities on-the-ground. As travel management will determine particular roads and trails on the Forest, it is a site-specific evaluation and is, therefore, separate from the Forest Plan.

### **How do Inventoried Roadless Areas relate to Forest Plan direction?**

Inventoried Roadless Areas, as established in the 2001 Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Rule (RACR), are allocated to varying management areas, with the majority being allocated to three primary management areas: 1A –Recommended Wilderness Area, 3A – Backcountry (non-motorized), and 3B – Backcountry (limited motor vehicle use). The desired conditions and standards and guidelines for these management area designations align with the regulations outlined in the Roadless Area Conservation Rule.

### **Are Backcountry Management Areas “de facto” wilderness:**

Management Areas 3A and 3B are to be managed in a primitive to semi-primitive condition, but for multiple uses. MA 3B allows motorized travel as portions of these backcountry areas have some roads. Many activities that are not allowed in designated wilderness areas would be allowed in these backcountry management areas. Uses allowed within the backcountry management areas (but excluded from wilderness) include structural wildlife habitat improvements; recreation facility improvements such as trail shelters, sanitary facilities and primitive campsites; and under certain conditions, special uses such as electronic sites. In addition, the use of mechanical equipment would be allowed in the maintenance and administration of lands in backcountry allocations.



**Additional Resource Information**

Considerations for identifying lands that are generally suitable for motorized recreation included criteria presented within the National Off-Highway Vehicle Rule and from local concerns identified in community collaborative workshops including:

- Effects on natural and cultural resources
- Public Safety
- Recreational opportunities and access needs
- Conflicts among users of national forest lands
- Need for maintenance and administration of roads, trails, and areas
- Availability of resources for maintenance and administration
- Conflicts among different classes of motor vehicles
- Effects of sound, emissions, and other factors
- Harassment of wildlife and significant disruption of wildlife habitats
- Speed, volume, composition, and distribution of traffic when looking at specific roads
- Valid and existing rights of access and use on roads and trails.

The following table is provided as advanced “errata” information. The table information presented on page 107 of the *draft* Blue Mountains National Forests Proposed Revised Land Management Plan included an error regarding roads and trails access, primarily in the form of incorrect wording. The information below presents the revised information as it was intended for inclusion in the draft plan.

<b>2.7 Roads and Trails Access</b>			
	<b>Malheur</b>	<b>Umatilla</b>	<b>Wallowa-Whitman</b>
Maintain the road system for safe and efficient travel and for the protection, management, and use of NFS lands. Where open motor vehicle route density exceeds desired conditions, implement route closures and/or decommissioning or consider designating routes for other uses (refer to 1.1 Watershed Function for road decommissioning/obliteration objectives).	Miles of road maintenance: 250 miles MLs 4/5 38 miles ML 3 1,025 miles ML 2 (annually)	Miles of road maintenance: 200 miles ML 4/5 200 miles ML 3 140 miles ML 2 (annually)	Miles of road maintenance: 90 miles MLs 4/5 170 miles ML 3 150 miles ML 2 (annually)

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