

Fivemile-Bell Project Request for Proposals

**Tahkenitch Lake Watershed
Central Coast Ranger District-ODNRA
Siuslaw National Forest**

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Interested in a unique management possibility in the temperate rainforest of the Coast Range of Oregon? Does the cry of red-tailed hawks, the bugle of Roosevelt Elk, the explosion of waterfowl taking flight, and the muffled sound of water dripping from the moss covered maples of this temperate rain forest beckon you? Does partnering with the US Forest Service to manage public land for the benefit of all appeal to you? If so, please read on and discover more about the Fivemile-Bell project opportunities.

This prospectus outlines the process and details for submitting proposals to operate and manage facilities in the Fivemile and Bell Creek drainages northeast of Tahkenitch Lake on the Central Oregon Coast. The Forest Service acquired the Fivemile-Bell tract in order to restore bottomland habitat important for the recovery of coho salmon and to benefit other fish and wildlife species. Included as part of the acquisition are several structures – two barns, three bridges, and wooden fences – that are still in good physical condition. The Forest Service wants to retain the buildings at the site and allow some kind of public use. However, without some form of partnership that maintains the structural integrity and safety of these facilities, the Forest Service may need to have them dismantled.

Why an RFP?

Due to the site's remote location the Forest Service is unsure what types of operations are economically feasible and what interest exists from potential cooperators. The Forest Service is therefore seeking proposals from private individuals and organizations on how best to use and maintain the existing facilities. If you are interested please read this RFP thoroughly and consider submitting a proposal.

When preparing your proposal, we strongly encourage creativity and innovation. We are willing to consider a wide variety of uses as long as they are constructive, productive, and positive for our customers and resources. For instance, although the most likely instrument to convey management to a private entity might be through the issuance of a special use permit using the existing authorities of the Granger-Thy Act, please consider submitting proposals that may use other authorities such as cooperative agreements, cost-share agreements, and contracts.

Organization of this Prospectus

We have attempted to write a prospectus in a manner that is easy to read and understand, and is organized so that you, as a prospectiv

Section 3 will set some **sideboards** to proposals by listing conditions and constraints the Forest Service has over the management of the facilities.

Section 4 describes the **application process** that needs to be followed when submitting your proposal. It is important that all aspects of your proposal be completed to the best of your ability. We don't want to lose the opportunity to implement a great idea because of a lack of adequate information.

Section 5 will outline the **rating process** through which proposals will be rated to determine the use of the area and which proposal is most qualified. It should be noted that the concepts of operation contained in each proposal will remain linked to the person or company submitting it, and no attempt will be made to mix-and-match one person's ideas to another person's business acumen or to the Forest Service. In other words, if you pencil out a great idea, and it is the one chosen for implementation, you will be the one selected to implement that idea.

Appendix A contains vicinity **maps** of the area. **Appendix B** contains selected **photographs** of the existing facilities. **Appendix C** contains financial statement **forms** FS-6500-24 and FS-6500-25. Also included is a compact disc containing the documented results of the "Pulse" described in Section 2 of this document.

If you have any questions regarding this request for proposals, or if you need more information, please feel free to contact Karen Bennett, Soil and Water Program Manager at (541) 750-7101, or Paul Burns, District Fisheries Biologist at (541) 902-6953. We also encourage you to share this RFP with other groups that may have an interest in this project.

Section 1 Area Overview

Location and Access – The Fivemile-Bell tract is located along Fivemile and Bell Creeks northeast of Tahkenitch Lake on the central Oregon coast. The tract lies in Douglas County between Florence and Reedsport. The tract consists of 640 acres of land of which approximately 550 acres are upland forest and 90 areas are bottomlands. The tract is contiguous with other Forest Service uplands to the north and east. The legal location is T. 20 S., R. 11 W., Sections 8, 9, 10 15, and 16.

Access from the south is gained from Highway 101 to Fivemile Road (Douglas County Road 49). Although Fivemile Road is a relatively wide gravel road, there are several steep grades with sharp corners and logging truck traffic can be heavy at times. It is approximately 9 ½ miles from Highway 101 to Fivemile Creek. On the north side of the creek is an unmarked road with a gate on the right. This unmarked road provides access to the Fivemile-Bell tract. The first hay barn is approximately ½ mile up this road. The second, smaller hay barn is about a ½ mile further.

Access from the north is from Highway 101 to Canary Road (Lane County Road 5320) to South Canary Road (Lane County Road 5330). South Canary Road becomes Fivemile Road as it crosses into Douglas County. It is approximately 14 miles from Highway 101 to Fivemile Creek via this route, however, the first 11 ½ miles on Canary Road and South Canary Road are paved. The last 2 ½ miles of this route are gravel with some very steep and very tight corners. Just before reaching Fivemile Creek the unmarked road will appear on the left.

Natural Resources – The Fivemile-Bell tract was acquired by the Forest Service for its rich bottomland habitats, which are scarce on public lands. These bottomlands once provided lush aquatic and wetland habitats, especially for coho salmon. Fivemile Creek, the largest tributary stream to Tahkenitch Lake, provides spawning and rearing habitat for coho salmon, steelhead, and cutthroat trout. Bell Creek, which flows into Fivemile Creek from the north approximately 3½ miles upstream from Tahkenitch Lake, also provides habitat for coho, steelhead, and cutthroat.

Young coho salmon must rear in freshwater for a year before migrating to the ocean to grow into adults. One characteristic of juvenile coho is that, unlike steelhead and cutthroat trout, they prefer slow moving water. This not only includes bottomland streams, with their many backwaters, beaver ponds, and hardwood swamps, but also the large coastal lakes such as Tahkenitch Lake. Even though salmon runs returning to the coastal lakes are considerably less than historic numbers, the lakes populations have remained relatively robust compared to stream-based populations. Adult returns to the tributaries of Tahkenitch Lake have lately numbered between 1,000-3,500 fish.

Elk use the valley and the adjacent uplands extensively. Prior to Forest Service ownership, hunting access was allowed only through special landowner permission. This

allowed for a very healthy elk herd to develop. Bear have also been noted in high numbers.

The nearby arms of Tahkenitch Lake support large numbers of wintering ducks, and mallards frequent the available ponds and slack waters along Fivemile and Bell Creeks. Songbirds flourish in the mixed hardwood/conifer forest and along the edges of the pastures.

Human History – The rich bottomlands that are so essential for coho salmon also provide excellent habitat for human beings as well. In the late 1800's homesteaders moved into the area and cleared the bottomlands to create farmland. The hills around their homesteads were at the time covered with charred snags left over from forest fires that raged in the mid-1800's. Early homesteaders planted a variety of crops and raised a few cattle. By the mid-1900's dairy farming was the predominant use of the land. At this point the creeks were straightened to drain the pastures faster after rainstorms.

Over time the uplands grew a new forest and dairying became uneconomical. The land was purchased by a timber company for its valuable timber resources and the pastures were grazed for beef production. The homesteads disappeared and now all that is left are two barns, some bridges spanning the creek, and the fenced pastures. Most of the surrounding uplands are in some stage of second growth forest.

Facilities – Facilities include two barns, three railcar bridges with wooden decking, and several pastures many of which are enclosed with aesthetically pleasing wooden fencing.

The lower barn is located approximately ½ mile up the valley from the entrance gate. It sits on bench overlooking a bend in the valley. Its dimensions are 100 feet long by 51 feet wide. The inside consists of a large, 16 foot wide center aisle for hay storage. On each side of the center aisle are two smaller, 9 foot wide aisles for cattle. Each of the cattle aisles are separated from the hay aisle by a 3 foot-wide hay crib running the length of the building. Attached to and running the length of the western side of the barn is an open shed that used to be sectioned off to form covered pens or stalls. The floor of the barn is made of concrete that extends outside from each of the ends of the barn about 30 feet. The roof is corrugated metal and the siding is wood. On the south end of the barn there are outdoor pens and chutes for handling livestock.

The second barn is ½ mile further up the valley from the first and lies in a small side draw. It is smaller than the first, measuring 100 feet long and 37 feet wide, and consists of one 23 foot wide aisle for hay and one 11 foot wide aisle for cattle, separated by a 3 foot wide hay crib. It has a corrugated metal roof and walls, nearby corrals, and manure storage area.

The three railcar bridges provide access to pastures located on the opposite side of the creek from the road. The condition of these bridges and their ability to accommodate vehicles safely needs to be assessed.

The Fivemile-Bell parcel contains several miles of wooden fence. Although it is not necessary that the entire fence be maintained, it is an aesthetically pleasing part of the landscape and the more of it that can be preserved the better.

Electrical power is currently provided only to the lower barn site. The wires run above ground paralleling the access road. Only 110 volt power is available. Neither of the two barns have potable water or toilet facilities.

Section 2 Objectives

The primary reason the Forest Service acquired the Fivemile-Bell parcel was to restore important aquatic habitats coho salmon and other fish and wildlife species. Because the exact form of restoration has yet to be determined, it is important for you, as a prospective cooperator, to understand the range of options being considered as you prepare your proposal.

Potential restoration themes were developed in the summer of 2004 when a number of people interested in restoration of the area met for several days to brainstorm ideas for how to go about restoring aquatic habitats in and along Fivemile and Bell Creeks. This gathering, referred to as a Pulse, developed a list of common goals to guide restoration and management for the area. These are:

- Demonstrates respect for local values,
- Honors the history of the area,
- Controls invasive plants,
- Maintains use of meadows by elk,
- Maintains and uses current facilities,
- Incorporates the natural role of beavers in the formation of aquatic habitats,
- Restores stream channel function,
- Provides high quality coho habitat.

The Pulse then developed three main themes around which restoration activities could be based. These themes are briefly outlined, below. For a more detailed discussion of these three themes please refer to *Fivemile/Bell Restoration* Pulse documentation contained on the included CD.

The goals of the **first theme** developed were to demonstrate the compatibility of agriculture with wild coho production, while also developing a mix of plant seral stages across the landscape, restoring stream function in the lower valley, and restoring valley bottom vegetation in the upper valley. Much of the existing straightened channel would be re-meandered to create a more natural sinuous stream. A key to this theme is to develop a working small farm that is productive and economically viable.

The goals of the **second theme** are to emphasize the restoration of stream function while providing for some level of meadow management for elk. Restoration of stream function includes a considerable amount of channel re-meandering. This theme also calls for creating an educational area for schools and other groups.

The goals of the **third theme** were to emphasize active management for meadows, elk, neotropical birds, diverse conifer/hardwood uplands, and fish. Restoration of fish habitat is limited to working within the existing channel alignment by creating a series of sills that would collect sediment and aggrade the currently down cut stream bed.

Actual restoration efforts may follow one of these themes, or a combination of the themes, or a different concept altogether. Additionally, restoration efforts must be based on the goals of existing planning documents. The Northwest Forest plan designated much of the Siuslaw National Forest as Riparian Reserve. Management activities allowed in Riparian Reserves generally must restore natural processes. The objective of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy portion of the Northwest Forest Plan is to create an improving trend in watershed condition while limiting detrimental impacts to the short term.

In addition to the restoration goals for the area, the Forest Service also wishes to use the site for educational purposes. Educational components may vary based on the restoration theme that is eventually selected. For instance, a theme demonstrating the compatibility of salmon restoration and agriculture could lead to development of educational components that highlight this compatibility. In a more general sense, there are opportunities to showcase the restoration activities planned for the area.

Providing for recreational uses of the Fivemile-Bell area is another goal of the Forest Service. Public access was restricted by the previous owner. Now that the area is in public ownership, compatible public uses need to be considered. Currently the road along the valley bottom is closed to motorized traffic except for administrative uses. The public can park near the gate at the lower end of the valley and hike, bike, or horseback ride up the road and throughout the area. It is expected that the area will remain open to the public for a variety of uses including hiking, bird-watching, fishing, and hunting. The creation of a retreat for groups or businesses is also a possibility.

Section 3 Sideboards

The Siuslaw National Forest has some expectations regarding how the facilities at Fivemile-Bell will be managed. These fall into four categories that are described, below. It is important that you take into consideration these sideboards when developing your proposal because they will be used in the rating system to determine the best proposal.

Facility Maintenance and Safety – All proposals need to consider the maintenance needs of the facilities. This includes two barns and at least a portion of the existing pasture fences. Facilities need to be maintained for the continued long-term integrity of the structures and to provide a safe environment for administrative and public use. Because the area is open to public use, and because the Forest Service wants to showcase its restoration efforts, public safety is an important issue. Insurance and bonding will be required for any business operations.

Consistency with Objectives – Proposals need to be consistent with the restoration, education, and recreation objectives outlined in Section 2. Because the Forest Service has not yet selected the restoration theme for Fivemile-Bell, there is flexibility to adapt Forest Service objectives with your proposal.

Proposals should describe any alterations that would be planned for the existing facilities in order to accommodate the proposed use. Proposals should also outline any additional facilities that would need to be constructed. If a proposal containing plans to alter existing or construct new facilities is chosen, all plans to make these changes would need to be approved in advance of the commencement of work.

Functional Use of Facilities - Facilities should be functionally used as part of your overall proposal. Proposals that have plans to maintain the existing facilities but not actively incorporate them as part of the planned use of the area will not be considered. The Forest Service is not simply interested in maintaining the existing structures, but is looking at maintaining them for some sort of public use.

Non-exclusionary – Use of the facilities needs to be non-exclusive and incorporate as many user types as possible. Proposals that accommodate fewer types of users will receive a lower rating than those that accommodate a wide variety of users. Facilities should be managed to accommodate families with small children, people with disabilities, and the elderly. The Forest Service prohibits discrimination in all of its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital status.

Section 4 Application Process

Each party interested in partnering in the Fivemile-Bell project must submit a proposal, in writing, to the Forest Service. Please read this entire section carefully before preparing your proposal. Also, fully discuss any questions you have with the Forest Service contacts listed on page 2.

The information contained in the proposal is subject to verification by the Forest Service, and additional supporting documentation may be requested later. Proposals should be submitted in sealed envelopes and must be signed by an official of the company or organization who has the authority to commit the company's resources, and by the individual submitting the proposal. The contents of the envelope should be identified in the lower left corner of the envelope as "Fivemile-Bell Request for Proposals". It is suggested that mailed proposals be sent certified mail, return receipt requested. Proposal must be received by the close of business on October 31, 2006. Proposals should be mailed to:

Central Coast Ranger District-ODNRA
ATTN: William Helphinstine, District Ranger
4480 Highway 101, Building G
Florence, OR 97439

All proposals become property of the U.S. Government, and will not be returned. For this reason it is suggested that submitters retain a copy of their proposals for their own use and records. Copies of supporting documentation are acceptable. All information derived from the review of proposals is confidential and for official use only (FSM 2712.1). However, the operating plan of the selected proposal will become public information upon issuance of a special use permit.

The Forest Service reserves the right to extend the date for receiving proposals, to reject any or all proposals, and to waive technical defects in the proposal. Parties or persons that have previously held a Forest Service special use permit that was revoked because of poor performance will **not** be considered. It is the policy of the USDA Forest Service to provide and ensure equal opportunity for all persons to participate in our programs and activities.

The Forest Service will only accept written proposal in the format outlined below. Failure to respond to any of the items will constitute a non-responsive or incomplete proposal and will result in your proposal being dropped from consideration.

Identification – Clearly identify that your proposal is for the "Fivemile-Bell Project" on the "Siuslaw National Forest". Identify who you are: your company or organization's name, address, and phone and fax numbers; who is the contact person for your company or organization; and who within your company or organization has authority to commit company or organization resources.

Operating Plan – Describe how you would use the site and how public services would be provided. While a complete operating plan will be required if your proposal is accepted, for the purposes of selection, your proposal should include at a **minimum** the following elements:

- **Operating Season:** this includes how pre- and post-season operation will be handled. Start date for beginning operations is negotiable.
- **Services and Programs:** this should include the type, amount, and range of services or programs you plan to provide - or how you intend to use the site and facilities. For example, if the facilities were to be managed as a learning center, your proposal needs to clearly state this and needs to describe planned capacity, infrastructure support (water, sewer, power needs), etc.
- **Maintenance Schedule:** the proposal should include plans for how the needed maintenance will be accomplished.
- **Improvements and Alterations:** any proposed changes to the existing facilities should be described fully.
- **Personnel Management:** Indicate the number of employee, duties, approximate work schedule, locations, and on-site housing needs. Will the employees be identified to the public by uniform, logo, nameplate, etc. How will employees be trained and supervised to ensure knowledge and expertise of company rules, Forest Service regulations, restoration objectives, and the operating plan.
- **User Fees or Pricing:** the proposal should describe any fees you intend to collect from any paying clients.

Consistency with Management Objectives – Based on the operating plan that you have outlined above, describe how you think it meets the management objectives contained in Section 2. If your proposal is consistent with more than one of the restoration themes be sure to highlight this. If your proposal is consistent with a new theme that you have created, be sure to describe the theme in detail.

Financial Ability – Proposals need to include a description of you or your company's ability to fiscally implement them. This description should include the following:

- **Cash Flow Analysis:** Evaluation of your financial ability will consider cash flow projections as well as current financial condition. The forecast should display, on a monthly basis, expected volume of business, revenue, and cash needs including detailed breakdown of expenditures by category or expense for at least the first year of the proposed operation. In describing revenue, you should describe the structure for charging fees to the public, and estimated annual visitations by fee class. If the necessary cash needs are not obviously available from your existing financial position, the cash flow projection should identify how equipment and working capital will be funded.
- **Financial statement:** In addition to cash flow, a financial statement reflecting your company's current financial condition will be provided as follows, 1) complete all parts of the enclosed Financial Statement Form FS-6500-24, unless

you prefer to use the services of an independent Certified Public Accountant, 2) provide three business references, including names, addresses, and telephone numbers, that can support your financial experience, 3) certify and have notarized that the information contained in Form FS-6500-24 is true and correct (use parts D1 and/or D2 of Form FS-6500-24), 4) complete Request for Verification Form FS6500-25 and mail one copy to each financial institution or lender involved in your financial statement. Note: it is your responsibility to make sure each financial institution or lender returns the form to the Mapleton Ranger District by the proposal due date.

- **Payment History:** The financial ability evaluation will also include payment history. Payment history will take into account the record of payments of fees to the government for those who have had previous permits or other payment transactions with the U.S. Government. Documentation reflecting payment history in other businesses, or credit reports, will also be considered. If you have a clear payment record and no known adverse items have occurred in the last five years, you should attest to this clear record.

Business Experience – Include a detailed description demonstrating the amount of past business experience you have, especially any experience related to government permits or related to the type of business you propose to operate at Fivemile-Bell. Your description should include dates, location, description of services provided, volume of business, number of employees supervised, and numbers of public served.

Past Experience – Provide any documentation related to the quality of past business operations you have managed. If you have held a special use permit with the Forest Service before, include copies of the last two years written performance evaluations. For private business operations provide at least three business references that can attest to the quality of your past performance.

Fees to Forest Service – The Forest Service collects fees from permit holders using federal lands. The amount of fees collected varies depending on the type of permit issued. They can take the form of a flat annual fee, percentage of gross revenue, or even, in the case an organizational camp, a land use fee based on a percentage of the appraised value of the land. In addition, in a competitive atmosphere, permit applicants can propose to pay more than prescribed minimums in order to improve their chances in securing a permit. Because of the wide variety of potential proposals that could be submitted, it would be difficult to include a complete fee schedule here. For this reason, we suggest that you talk with our designated contact person and describe your plans. They will then determine which fee category is applicable and what your minimum fees would be.

Section 5 Rating Process

Proposals will first be screened for completeness (see Section 4 on what constitutes a proposal) prior to rating to determine which is “best qualified”. Incomplete proposals will be dropped from further consideration. Complete proposals will be ranked using the five criteria described, below. Points will be awarded for each criterion up to the maximum displayed.

Operating Plan Proposal (25 pts) – Evaluation will include the kinds and quality of proposed services, including additional proposed items that will further maintain or enhance the restorative, educational, and recreational experience. Such items include amount and range of services, amount of maintenance, length of operating season, and site improvements. Applicants must insure that their proposed services conform to existing laws, regulations, and plans.

Consistency with Management Objectives (25 pts) – The proposal will be assessed for its compatibility and consistency with Forest Service management philosophy and goals for the site.

- How well does the proposal address the list of common goals that were developed by the Pulse participants?
- How well does the proposal meet the goals of one or more of the themes?
- Does the proposal meet the general goals of the Northwest Forest Plan’s Aquatic Conservation Strategy?
- Does the proposal facilitate educational goals including showcasing the restoration activities?
- Does the proposal allow visitors to use and learn more about the natural, historic, and cultural aspects of the surrounding area?
- Would implementation of the proposal provide for a safe environment for the cooperator’s employees, Forest Service personnel, and forest users?

Financial Ability (15) – Current financial condition and financial ability to operate the proposed permit and all other business ventures successfully will be evaluated. Cash flow projections, financial statement, and payment history will be reviewed and evaluated. The amount of financial ability and the quality of documentation will be taken into account in judging each applicant.

Business Experience (15 pts) – The amount of previous business experience and qualifications in operating a business will be evaluated. Business references will also be considered.

Past Performance (15 pts) – Past performance as evidenced by written evaluations for prior Forest Service or other governmental work, as well as assessments from business references will be considered.

Fees to government (5 pts) – The amount of revenue, in terms of fees returned to the government, will also be used in the rating system. This factor accounts for only a small percentage of the total score because facility maintenance and compatibility with the restoration goals are the main impetus for this RFP.

Selection – After the best qualified proposal has been identified, the Forest Service must conduct a planning process guided by the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA. The best qualified proposal, or some variation of it, would most likely be incorporated into the proposed action, along with proposed restoration activities. A variation of the best qualified proposal would be used if a small part of the original proposal was deemed unacceptable by the Forest Service due to regulatory restrictions or management preference.

The proposed action is then made available to the public for notification and comment. Feedback from the public may cause the Forest Service to create one or more alternatives to the proposed action. The best qualified proposal or its variant would be incorporated into compatible alternative(s). If, at the end of the planning process, the proposed action or a compatible alternative is selected, then the best qualified proposal or its variant is also selected and can be awarded.

Alternately, two separate planning processes could occur, one for the restoration activities, and another for the best qualified proposal.

Appendix B

Selected Images



View of lower barn showing entrances for cattle on left and right, and partially open double doors leading to hay storage area in center.



View of main barn with open-air pens under the attached shed roof on right



Upper barn showing entrance for cattle on the right and sliding door for hay area on left



Interior of upper barn showing hay storage area on left, feeding crib in center, and cattle stall on right. Exit out of cattle stall at rear leads to manure storage area



This image shows the south end of upper barn and the manure storage area. View is looking west down the valley. Fivemile Creek runs in a ditch against the far tree line.



This image shows the road, pasture fence, and gate that are immediately below the upper barn.



This image shows the animal handling facilities located to the east of the upper barn. More extensive facilities are present near the lower, main barn.

Appendix C

Forms

FS-6500-24 Financial Statement
FS-6500-25 Request for Verification