



File Code: 1920; 1950 **Date:** March 10, 2016

Subject: Forest Plan Conformance to the 2009 Omnibus Act

To: Forest Leadership Team, Mt. Hood National Forest

In an effort to update the Mt. Hood Land and Resource Management Plan (the Forest Plan), we have updated the land use allocations to be consistent with the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (the Omnibus Act). Congress passed this Act “to designate certain land as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System, to authorize certain programs and activities in the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture, and for other purposes” (HR146). This act added over 124,000 acres of wilderness, designated additional Wild and Scenic Rivers, designated the Mt. Hood National Recreation Area, and designated several special resource management areas on Mt. Hood National Forest (the Forest).

All land areas established by the new legislation were designated by Congress. As such, the Forest Plan was amended by Congressional action and a decision is not required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to implement these changes. These changes are made with an administrative change under the 2012 Planning Rule (36 CFR 219.13). These changes do not impact any of the current management direction on the Forest, since the Omnibus Act took effect immediately and has been implemented accordingly.

As required by the 2012 Planning Rule, an administrative change made outside of the process for plan revision or amendment may be made only after notice to the public of the intended change and consideration of public comment (§ 219.16(c)(6)). The Forest posted the details of these administrative changes to website on August 7, 2015. No comments were received. As such, the Forest Plan has been corrected to conform to the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009. Further information regarding this administrative change to the Forest Plan is further discussed below.

Background

The Omnibus Act added approximately 124,200 acres of new wilderness. The new wilderness areas were added to existing designated wilderness areas as well as to newly designated areas. These new wilderness areas were managed immediately to preserve and protect a particular area’s wilderness character. All wilderness acres are managed as directed by the Wilderness Act of 1964. The additions are listed below.

- Badger Creek Wilderness: 4,140 acres added
- Bull of the Woods Wilderness: 10,180 acres added
- Clackamas Wilderness: new wilderness area consisting of 9,470 acres
- Mark O. Hatfield Wilderness: 25,960 acres added
- Mount Hood Wilderness: 18,450 acres added
- Roaring River Wilderness: new wilderness area consisting of 36,550 acres



- Salmon-Huckleberry Wilderness: 16,620 acres added
- Lower White River Wilderness: new wilderness area consisting of 2,870 acres
- Richard L. Kohnstamm Memorial Area: addition to the Mt. Hood Wilderness located in the head waters of the Salmon River and White River

The Omnibus Act also classifies 81 miles of the Forest streams within the national Wild and Scenic River system. All newly designated Wild and Scenic River corridors are managed as directed by the Wild and Scenic River Act of 1968. Outstanding Remarkable Values must be evaluated for these river corridors as described in Appendix E of the Forest Plan before any management activity can take place within the designated corridors. This newly designated corridors includes following.

Wild Rivers

- South Fork of the Clackamas River: 4.2 mile segment of this river from its confluence with the East Fork of the South Fork of the Clackamas River to its confluence with the Clackamas River is designated as a wild river.
- Eagle Creek: 8.3 mile segment of Eagle Creek from its headwaters to the Forest boundary is designated as wild.
- South Fork Roaring River: 4.6 mile segment of this river from its headwaters to its confluence with the Roaring River is designated as a wild river.
- Zigzag River: 4.3 mile segment from its headwaters to the Mt. Hood Wilderness boundary is designated as a wild river.
- Fifteen Mile Creek: starting at its source at Senecal Spring, an 11.1 mile stretch of this stream is designated as either a wild or scenic river.

Scenic & Recreational Rivers

- Middle Fork Hood River: 3.7 mile segment of this river is designated as a scenic river.
- East Fork Hood River: a 13.5 mile segment of this river from Oregon State Highway 35 to the Forest boundary is designated as a recreational river.
- Collawash River: an 11.0 mile segment from the headwaters of the East Fork of the Collawash River to Buckeye Creek is designated as a scenic river while a 6.8 mile segment from Buckeye Creek to the Clackamas River is classified as a recreational river.
- Fish Creek: 13.5 miles of Fish Creek from its headwaters to the confluence with the Clackamas River is designated as a recreational river.

Additionally, the Mt. Hood National Recreation Area (NRA) was designated as part of the Omnibus Act. The NRA is comprised of 34,550 acres and is established to provide for the protection, preservation, and enhancement of recreational, ecological, scenic, cultural, watershed,

and fish and wildlife values in south of Mt. Hood and in the vicinities of Fifteen Mile Creek and Shellrock Mountain. Only uses consistent with these purposes are permitted. The cutting, sale, or removal of timber may be permitted to improve the health of the forest to: (1) maximize retention of large trees; (2) improve habitat of threatened, endangered, or sensitive species; and/or (3) maintain or restore the composition and structure of the ecosystem by reducing the risk of uncharacteristic fire. No new or temporary roads will be constructed within the NRA, except as necessary to protect health and safety of individuals, or to prevent irreparable resource damage. Further, lands within the NRA are withdrawn from: (1) mineral entry or claims; (2) location, entry, and patent under the mining laws; and (3) disposition under all laws relating to mineral and geothermal leasing.

The Omnibus Act also designated protections for the Upper Big Bottom (1,580 acres) and Cultus Creek (280 acres) areas in order to “preserves the natural and primitive character of the land for recreational, scenic, and scientific use” (HR146-127). Based on the Act, permanent roads and commercial enterprises are prohibited in these areas, except as necessary for administration purposes and to protect public health and safety. The use of motor vehicles or establishment of temporary roads is also prohibited. These areas are also withdrawn from: (1) mineral entry or claims; (2) location, entry, and patent under the mining laws; and, (3) disposition under all laws relating to mineral and geothermal leasing.

All other direction in the Omnibus Act would not change the Forest Plan land use allocations or would require additional NEPA analysis to make those changes (e.g., Government Camp-Cooper Spur Land Exchange).

Land Use Allocations

The Omnibus Act changed the land use allocations for 126,060 acres as well as the river corridors along 81 river miles of National Forest System lands, plus provided additional management direction within the Mt. Hood National Recreation Area (34,550 acres). The administrative changes in land use allocations are detailed below.

- All designated wilderness areas (124,240 acres) are changed to A2-Wilderness Land Use Allocation (LUA) under the Forest Plan. The goal of A2 lands are to: “Promote, perpetuate and preserve the wilderness character of the land; protect watersheds and wildlife habitat; preserve scenic and historic resources; and promote scientific research, primitive recreation, solitude, physical and mental challenge, and inspiration” (Forest Plan, page 4-136).

These lands also are designated as Congressionally Reserved Areas under the Northwest Forest Plan. Congressionally Reserved Areas includes Wildernesses, Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Monuments, as well as other federal lands not administrated by the Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management.

- All Wild and Scenic River corridors designated as wild (32.5 miles) are changed to A1-Reserved. The A1 LUA has been used in the past for Designated Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers that preclude timber harvest. The Wild and Scenic River Act prohibits timber harvest within the river segments that are designated as wild segments. The goal of all Wild, Scenic & Recreational Rivers LUAs is to: “Protect and enhance the

resource values for a river was designated into the Wild and Scenic River system.” The specific goal for wild rivers is to: “Perpetuate a primitive recreation experience and protect the river corridor to maintain an essentially unmodified environment” (Forest Plan, page 4-208). These lands also are designated as Congressionally Reserved Areas under the Northwest Forest Plan.

- All Wild and Scenic River corridors designated as scenic or recreational (41.7 miles) are changed to B1-Wild, Scenic & Recreational Rivers. Again, the goal of all Wild, Scenic & Recreational Rivers LUAs is to: “Protect and enhance the resource values for a river was designated into the Wild and Scenic River system.” The specific goal for scenic rivers is to: “Maintain or enhance quality scenery and protect the essentially undeveloped character of the shoreline.” The specific goal for recreational rivers is to: “Provide opportunities for recreational activities and maintain visual quality of the river corridors” (Forest Plan, page 4-208). These lands also are designated as Congressionally Reserved Areas under the Northwest Forest Plan.
- The Mt. Hood National Recreation Area (NRA) will be overlaid over all other Forest Plan and Northwest Forest Plan LUAs. All management actions within the NRA will follow the standards and guidelines for the underlying LUAs. The most stringent standards and guidelines (NRA, primary land use allocations or secondary land use allocation) provide the management direction for the management action. For example, regardless of the underlying LUAs, no new or temporary roads can be constructed within the NRA except as necessary to protect health and safety of individuals or prevent irreparable resource damage as per the Omnibus Act of 2009 (HR146-24).
- Upper Big Bottom (1,580 acres) and Cultus Creek (280 acres) are changed to A4-Special Interest Areas. The goal of A4 lands is to: “Protect and, where appropriate, foster public recreational use and enjoyment of important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage. Preserve and provide interpretation of unique geological, biological, and cultural areas for education, scientific, and public enjoyment purposes.” These areas have an emphasis of scenic/recreation (Forest Plan, Table Four-27) and Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Class of Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized (Forest Plan, Table Four-28) based on the direction provided in the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (Forest Plan, pages 4-151 to 4-153).

These lands also are designated as Administratively Withdrawn Areas under the Northwest Forest Plan. These areas are “identified in current forest and district plans or draft plan preferred alternatives and include recreational and visual areas, back country, and other areas not scheduled for timber harvest” (NWFP ROD, page 7). As such, administratively withdrawn areas are not scheduled for timber harvest.

When there are overlapping land use allocations, the more stringent standards and guidelines will be followed. This includes existing land use allocations that will remain in place as secondary land use allocations. This also includes when two designated Wild and Scenic River corridors overlap at the confluence of a river.

Administrative Change

These updates to the Forest Plan have been made using an administrative change under the 2012 Planning Rule (36 CFR 219). An administrative change (36 CFR 219.13(c)) is any change to a plan that is not a plan amendment or plan revision. “Administrative changes include corrections of clerical errors to any part of the plan, conformance of the plan to new statutory or regulatory requirements, or changes to other content in the plan” (§219.13). As previously stated, the Forest Plan has now been corrected to conform to the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009.

The final land allocation delineations are shown in the attached map and have been filed to Congress as required by the Omnibus Act. Detailed maps of individual areas are available on the Forest website (<http://www.fs.usda.gov/mthood/>) and upon request. If you have any questions, please contact Michelle Lombardo at mlombardo@fs.fed.us or 503-668-1796.

Sincerely,

/s/ Lisa A. Northrop

LISA A. NORTHROP
Forest Supervisor

cc: Michelle Lombardo, Kathryn Strawn