



News Release

June 27, 2018

Forest Service publishes the revised Blue Mountains Land Management Plans

JOHN DAY, PENDLETON and BAKER CITY, Ore. – The USDA Forest Service will soon publish the revised Blue Mountains Land Management Plans (revised Forest Plans) for the Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests, as well as a Final Environmental Impact Statement and a draft Record of Decision.

These revised Forest Plans represent a Forest Service commitment to promote rural prosperity and community well-being, treat fire-prone areas, provide continued access to the forests, and support healthier watersheds. Once the revised Forest Plans are fully implemented, they have the potential to annually support up to 2,820 jobs and \$113.6 million in labor income.

The purpose of these revised Forest Plans is to provide an updated framework to guide the management of approximately 5.5 million acres of National Forest System lands in eastern Oregon and southeastern Washington. The revised Forest Plans will replace the existing 1990 Plans, addressing changes in local economic, social, and environmental conditions over the past 28 years.

“We have been listening to diverse perspectives,” said Pacific Northwest Regional Forester, Jim Peña. “The revised Forest Plans honor the many years of input provided by the public, local governments, states, tribes, federal agencies, and other stakeholders. Together, we are working to make our forests more resilient to change while also supporting rural prosperity. I want to sincerely thank everyone who has contributed to the revised Blue Mountains Forest Plans.”

Under the revised Forest Plans, the Forest Service aims to actively manage the landscape over time toward a more natural range of conditions that will provide:

- long-term economic, social, and ecological value for local communities and the American people;
- healthier forests that are more resilient to wildfires, insects, and diseases – enabling the Forest Service to be a better neighbor to adjacent landowners;
- cleaner water for downstream communities and farmers, as well as improved habitat for sensitive fish, wildlife, and plants.

The revised Forest Plans provide a framework for future site-specific decisions. Decisions during the 15-year life of the revised Forest Plans have the *potential* to deliver the following benefits:

- **More jobs:** Up to 1,173 new jobs in the forest products, livestock, and recreation sectors – from 1,647 jobs under the existing Plans to an estimated total of 2,820 jobs under the revised Forest Plans.
- **More income:** Up to \$59.5 million in additional income in the forest products, livestock, and recreation sectors – from an estimated \$54.1 million under the existing Plans up to an estimated \$113.6 million under the revised Forest Plans.





- **More timber output:** Up to 104 million board feet (MMBF) in additional timber harvest – from a recent average of 101 MMBF under the existing Plans to 205 MMBF under the revised Forest Plans.
- **Continued grazing output:** Approximately 242,800 Animal Unit Months (AUMs), a level consistent with recent outputs under the existing Plans.
- **Continued forest access:** For the public's benefit and enjoyment, the National Forests will continue to be open for multiple uses. Both motorized and non-motorized access remains free of charge in the vast majority of areas.
- **More Wilderness to explore:** To preserve the spirit of the American frontier for current & future generations of explorers, the revised Forest Plans recommend to Congress an additional 70,500 acres in Wilderness (1.3% of planning area). These areas are generally consistent with existing uses and address a range of public comments about Wilderness.

On Friday, June 29, 2018, the Forest Service plans to publish a legal notice in *The Oregonian* to initiate a 60-day objection-filing period. The objection process gives an individual or entity (who provided substantive comments during the 2010 formal scoping period and/or the 2014 formal comment period) an opportunity for independent Forest Service review and resolution of objections before final decisions are made. The objection-filing period begins on the first day after the date of the legal notice in *The Oregonian*, which is the newspaper of record for Regional Forester decisions in the Pacific Northwest Region of the Forest Service. Additionally, the Forest Service has published a Notice of Objection in the Federal Register with specific instructions for the objection process. A 90-day objection-resolution period will occur after the close of the 60-day objection-filing period. Following resolution of the objections, the Regional Forester will sign a final Record of Decision for each of the three revised Forest Plans. The final revised Forest Plans will then replace the existing 1990 Plans.

For details on the objection process, and to access the revised Forest Plans, draft Record of Decision, Final Environmental Impact Statement, and other supporting information, please visit:

www.fs.usda.gov/goto/BlueMountainsPlanRevision

For further information, please email bluemtnplanrevision@fs.fed.us.

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