
The Proposed Revised Blue Mountains Forest Plan and DEIS Is Coming For Your Comment Soon

by Steve Beverlin, John Laurence, and Kevin Martin

The Blue Mountains of Oregon and Washington are some of the most beautiful—and productive—landscapes in the world. Our forests and rangelands provide water, wood, food, forage, wildlife, fish, fuel, minerals, and fun. Almost 5 million of those acres belong to the citizens of the United States and are managed as the Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests under a multiple use mission to provide those benefits now and into the future. Nature provides these resources and it's up to all of us to be stewards of that gift.

Forest Plans provide the vision of where the forests and rangelands are headed over the next few decades. The Plans describe what we call the “desired condition” that provides a vision for what the landscape should look like and how it should function. Forest Plans matter because nature matters. All national forests are required to have Forest Plans, and to revise them to assure that they reflect current understanding of social, economic, and ecological goals for public lands. Our three Forests have been drafting a revised plan over the past few years and on March 14 our plan is that it will be available for your reading, review, and comment. This will begin the 90-day comment period. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) analyzes 6 alternative management ideas, based on input from the public, cooperating agencies, tribes, and state and local government. Is it large and weighty? You bet. We owe it to you, the public, to do a thorough job of analyzing the effects of managing those 5 million acres over the next 15 years. The Proposed Revised Forest Plan is based on the alternative we believe is the most balanced approach that lays out what needs to be done on the land and contributes to the vitality of our communities and the nation.

Forest Plans provide strategic guidance, establish guidelines for management, and set standards for what we do on national forests. Forest Plans do not make decisions for site-specific projects, open or close roads, or create wilderness. Instead, they suggest where certain types of management activities might occur, define areas suitable for a variety of uses, and evaluate whether there are some areas that could be considered wilderness should Congress choose to set that land aside.

Starting March 17, we will hold a series of meetings in eastern Oregon and southeastern Washington. At those meetings, we will introduce the plan to you, provide details on its components, try to answer your questions, and begin taking your comments. Over the course of the comment period, we will continue to work with you to assure that your concerns and suggestions are heard. We are engaged with our communities and we are committed to working with you. Over the next year,



for the greatest good

we will use your input, and that of our cooperating agencies, tribes, and governments to finalize the Forest Plans. In the end, we believe our Forest Plans will provide a balanced approach to the social, economic, and ecological goals that are mandated by our Forest Service mission and that will provide the greatest good.

We hope you will join us in our efforts to manage these National Forests we all love, to meet our mission to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

Steve Beverlin is Acting Forest Supervisor of the Malheur National Forest. John Laurence is Forest Supervisor of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. Kevin Martin is Forest Supervisor of the Umatilla National Forest.



for the greatest good