



How to Comment

Scoping Period

The Scoping Period

The first step in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, known as the scoping period, is when you can comment and say what you think are important issues for the agency to consider.

In 2025, the Blue Mountains National Forests Land Management Plan Revision team anticipates releasing a Notice of Intent (NOI), that will initiate a 60-day formal scoping period.

The following documents will be released for scoping:

- draft need to change,
- the proposed action (preliminary draft land management plan),
- preliminary Species of Conservation Concern (SCC) list,
- and the draft evaluation of lands that may have wilderness characteristics.

Substantive comments submitted during formal comment periods give parties standing to participate in the pre-decisional administrative review process (36 CFR 219, Subpart B) – also known as the objection process - before a Record of Decision is signed. Anonymous comments and comments submitted after the close of the designated comment period will not provide the commenter standing to object.

“Comments are considered substantive formal comments when they are within the scope of the proposal, are specific to the proposal, have a direct relationship to the proposal, and include supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider” (36 CFR 219.62)

The Forest Service will make all submissions publicly available on the website via a public reading room. This will allow the public to read or download any letters submitted, which includes the commenter’s name and affiliation. The agency may withhold letters containing proprietary information, sensitive cultural or habitat locations, profanity, etc. All letters, including those not posted, will be considered and included as part of the record.

How will my comments be used?

The Forest Service will use scoping comments to develop a range of alternatives to the preliminary draft plan. Environmental effects of the alternatives and proposed draft land management plan will be analyzed in a detailed document called a draft environmental impact statement (EIS). The Forest Service will make a draft land management plan and the draft EIS available for public review and comment for at least 90-days.



How to make a comment: The comment process invites you to share your perspective and knowledge to help the responsible official make an informed decision. The comment process does not constitute a vote. Comments are most helpful when they provide the “why”.

- **Read the proposed action to the Blue Mountains Land Management Plan Revision**

- The Blue Mountains anticipate releasing a NOI, that will initiate the scoping period, in summer 2025. Once a NOI has been released, the scoping period documents will be available on our website.
- Read through the documents to fully understand its scope.

- **Understand the Timeline**

- Check the comment period deadline.
- Make sure to submit your comment before the deadline closes.

- **Prepare Your Comment**

- Introduce yourself and explain your interest in the Blue Mountains Land Management Plans (e.g., local resident, environmental advocate, industry spokesperson, avid outdoorsperson, etc.).
- Identify specific areas of concern or support (e.g., community effects, environmental impact, wildlife, etc.).
- Stay within the scope of the proposal —make sure your comment addresses the specific action under review and its potential impacts. Comments that focus on issues outside the proposal’s scope (such as unrelated policies or actions) are outside of this process.
- Be specific and clear and indicate what page numbers of the document you are referring to.
- Provide evidence or reasoning for your concerns or support—cite data, studies, or personal observations to strengthen your comment.

- **Submit Your Comment**

- Online: The best way to submit your comment is through our online database, Comment Analysis and Response Application (CARA). CARA allows the revision team to collect, organize, and consider comments efficiently. When comment periods are open, a link to CARA will be posted on the revision website.
- Mail: Send a written letter to:

*Umatilla National Forest Supervisor’s Office
Attn: Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision
72510 Coyote Road
Pendleton, OR 97801*

- **Stay Engaged**

- Follow the Blue Mountains Land Management Plan Revision progress and engage further (if desired) during public meetings or subsequent phases.

Comment Considerations

The objection process (formally known as the “pre-decisional administrative review process”) allows the public to object to a draft decision of a land management plan revision. This process will occur prior to approval and implementation of a decision.

Individuals and entities must have submitted substantive formal comments related to the plan during opportunities for comment in order to object. Objections must be based on concerns raised in earlier comments. The burden is on the objector to demonstrate compliance with requirements for objections (36 CFR 219.53).



Draft Need to Change & Proposed Action

In reviewing the draft need to change and proposed action (preliminary draft land management plan), provide feedback to help the agency determine what actions are needed, potential issues related to the proposed action, and potential alternatives.

Comments are most useful when they are within the scope of the proposal, are specific to the proposal, have a direct relationship to the proposal, and include supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider in developing alternatives.

Scoping comments will be used to develop a range of alternatives to the preliminary draft land management plan.

Species of Conservation Concern

Preliminary Species of Conservation Concern (SCC) for the Malheur, Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests have been identified. The public is invited to provide feedback about Species of Conservation Concern. Feedback should indicate the species, link to a specific piece of literature as applicable, and rationale of why this species should or should not be included on the SCC lists.

SCC lists will continue to be refined throughout the process.

Wilderness Recommendation Process - Evaluation

In reviewing the comprehensive evaluation report and draft evaluation maps, provide feedback and rationale for your support or opposition of the evaluation findings. Feedback should include a specific polygon identification number (or page number) from the evaluation report.

The final evaluation will inform the development of alternatives that will be analyzed in the DEIS.

The Blue Mountains Land Management Plan Revision Team appreciates your continued engagement and participation in this process. The team looks forward to reviewing your comments and hear your perspective. Public comment periods are an integral part of the land management planning process and will be used to inform the development and revision of planning documents.

Contact Information

Have questions about the Plan Revision? Want to connect with the team?

Email: sm.fs.bluesforests@usda.gov

Phone Number: (541) 278-3716

Check out our website at
<https://tinyurl.com/bde5xf6w>
or by following the QR code:

