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**File Code:** 1950  
**Date:** November 16, 2020

Dear Reader:

I'd like to provide an update on the status of the Ochoco Wild Horse Herd Management Plan project. The Forest Service provided an opportunity to comment on our draft Environmental Assessment (EA) from April 17 to May 18 earlier this year. We received 126 comment letters from individuals or organizations. We have reviewed the comments and used them to make some clarifications and corrections to the final EA and we also prepared written responses, which are provided as an appendix to the EA. Based on a consideration of the public input and the analysis presented in the EA, I am proposing to select Alternative 2, as described in the Draft Decision Notice (DN). Before the decision becomes final, the Draft DN is available for a pre-decisional administrative review (objection) process. Instructions on how to participate in that process are included in this letter.

The Draft DN describes the reasons for the proposed decision to select Alternative 2 modified. The Final Revised EA analyzes three alternatives: Alternative 1 (No Action); Alternative 2 (Proposed Action); Alternative 3. Alternative 2 establishes an initial appropriate management level (AML) of 12-57 wild horses based on current conditions and capability of the Territory, it authorizes tools for controlling population growth, and also involves managing for an acceptable level of genetic variability in the herd. Alternative 2 includes a permanent Forest Plan Amendment. I am modifying Alternative 2 from what was described in the EA by not including sex ratio manipulation or sterilization of mares in the tools available for managing the herd.

Details are described in the EA and Draft DN which are available on the project web page: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=46228>. If you require a print copy of the EA, please contact Beth Peer at 541-416-6463.

### **How to Object and Timeframe**

This project is subject to pre-decisional administrative review pursuant to 36 CFR 218, Subpart B (also called the "objection process"). The full text of the rule can be found here: <https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?node=pt36.2.218&rgn=div5>.

Only individuals or organizations that submitted specific written or oral comments during a designated opportunity for public participation may object (36 CFR 218.5). Notices of objection must meet the requirements of 36 CFR 218.8. Objections can be submitted in writing, either electronically or in hard copy, and must be filed with the Reviewing Officer within 45 days from the date of publication of the legal notice announcing the opportunity to object; the legal notice is published in The Bulletin newspaper of Bend, Oregon. The legal notice publication date is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection. Those wishing to file an objection to this decision should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other



source. Mailed objections must be received before the close of the fifth business day after the objection filing period closes.

Incorporation of documents by reference is not allowed, except for the following list of items that may be referenced by including date, page, and section of the cited document, along with a description of its content and applicability to the objection: 1) all or any part of a federal law or regulation; 2) Forest Service directives and land management plans; 3) documents referenced by the Forest Service in the subject EIS or EA; or 4) comments previously provided to the Forest Service by the objector during public involvement opportunities for the proposed project where written comments were requested by the responsible official. All other documents must be included with the objection.

Minimum requirements of an objection are described at 36 CFR 218.8(d). An objection must include a description of those aspects of the proposed project addressed by the objection, including specific issues related to the proposed project; if applicable, how the objector believes the environmental analysis or draft decision specifically violates the law, regulation or policy; suggested remedies that will resolve the objection; supporting reasons for the reviewing officer to consider; and a statement that demonstrates the connection between prior specific written comments on the particular proposed project or activity and the content of the objection, unless the objection concerns an issue that arose after the designated opportunities for comment.

There are several options for submitting objections. At this time, we strongly encourage you to submit objections electronically.

### *Electronically*

Electronic objections will be accepted through the Forest Service online comment system available at: <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?project=46228>

(Note that once-monthly updates to the system can briefly interfere with the public's ability to upload objections.)

An alternative method for electronic submission is to this email: [objections-pnw-regional-office@usda.gov](mailto:objections-pnw-regional-office@usda.gov). Please put OBJECTION and the project name in the subject line.

Electronic objections must be submitted as part of an actual e-mail message, or as an attachment in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx), rich text format (.rtf), or portable document format (.pdf) only. For electronically mailed objections, the sender should receive an automated electronic acknowledgement from the agency as confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive an automated acknowledgement of receipt of the objection, it is the sender's responsibility to ensure timely receipt by other means.

*Postal Mail or Delivery*

Objections delivered by mail must be postmarked by the closing day of the objection filing period and received before close of the fifth business day following the end of the objection period. If you are using postal mail or carrier (UPS/FedEx), please notify Debbie Anderson ([debbie.anderson2@usda.gov](mailto:debbie.anderson2@usda.gov) or 503-808-2286) so that we may ensure your objection has been received.

Regional Forester (Reviewing Officer)  
Pacific Northwest Regional Office  
Attn: 1570 Objections  
P.O. Box 3623  
Portland, OR 97208-3623

For FedEx or UPS deliveries, please send to:

Regional Forester (Reviewing Officer)  
Pacific Northwest Regional Office  
Attn: 1570 Objections  
1220 SW Third Avenue  
Portland, OR 97204

*Hand Delivery*

Hand-delivery/Fax: Objections can only be hand-delivered or faxed by appointment at this time, due to the current COVID-19 pandemic and Executive Order by Governor Brown. Please call Debbie Anderson at 503-808-2286 to make an appointment to hand-deliver your objection or request the fax number.

For more information, please contact Beth Peer at (541) 416-6463 or via email at [beth.peer@usda.gov](mailto:beth.peer@usda.gov).

Sincerely,



A. SHANE JEFFRIES  
Forest Supervisor