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**File Code:** 1950  
**Date:** February 18, 2021

Dear Interested Party,

The Mt. Hood National Forest and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Northwest Oregon District are soliciting comments on the draft comprehensive river management plan and environmental assessment for nine rivers as part of the Wild and Scenic River planning project. BLM is a cooperating agency on this project. Four of the rivers are either on, adjacent to, or in close proximity to lands that BLM manages. The South Fork Clackamas River corridor is the only river corridor that includes both National Forest System and BLM-administered lands. BLM lands are located adjacent or in close proximity to Fifteenmile Creek, Eagle Creek and Fish Creek.

To determine how to manage these wild and scenic river corridors, both a comprehensive river management plan and an environmental assessment are needed. The comprehensive river management plan is required by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, while the environmental assessment is required by the National Environmental Policy Act. The environmental assessment contains the purpose and need for the plan, proposed action, and environmental analysis. The draft comprehensive river management plan contains the river boundaries; river values; management direction, including desired conditions, standards, and guidelines; and monitoring plan. To view the environmental assessment, draft comprehensive river management plan, and related project information, visit the project website at:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=54674>.

### **Purpose and Need for Action**

The purpose of this proposal is to develop a comprehensive river management plan, as required by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, to protect and enhance the values for which the rivers were designated (free-flowing, water quality, and outstandingly remarkable values), and to identify and implement management actions needed to protect these values within the nine wild and scenic river corridors designated in 2009. The outstandingly remarkable values for these rivers include scenery, recreation, wildlife, fish, geologic/hydrologic, historic, botany, and macroinvertebrates. Another purpose of this proposal is to establish the final river corridor boundaries to facilitate the protection and enhancement of the outstandingly remarkable values, within the limits set in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The underlying need is to address the requirements in section 3(d)(1) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act for federal agencies to prepare a comprehensive management plan for each designated river segment that provide for the protection of the river values.

The comprehensive river management plan is to protect and enhance the outstandingly remarkable values, water quality, and free-flowing characteristics of the designated wild and scenic rivers for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. Based upon the



evaluation of corridor conditions, existing management direction, and need for action, the comprehensive river management plan will:

- address current conditions and other management practices, as required by law;
- protect and enhance outstandingly remarkable values;
- ensure free-flowing conditions and water quality are maintained;
- determine types and amounts of uses (user capacity) that each river can support while protecting river values;
- inform future management actions within the designated river corridors; and,
- develop a monitoring strategy to maintain desired conditions.

### **Location of the Proposed Project Area**

The project area is located within the Clackamas, Hood River, Multnomah, and Wasco Counties in the state of Oregon. The Collawash River, Eagle Creek, East Fork Hood River, Fish Creek, Middle Fork Hood River, South Fork Roaring River, and Zigzag River are located solely on lands managed by the Mt. Hood National Forest. South Fork Clackamas River includes National Forest System lands and BLM administered lands, along with a small parcel owned by Portland General Electric. Fifteenmile Creek includes lands owned by the City of Dufur and private landowners. A detailed map of each river, and the proposed final boundaries, can be found in the map packet on the project website: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=54674>.

### **Riverside Fire**

The Riverside Fire started September 8, 2020 and quickly spread to over 138,000 acres, including the entire Fish Creek and South Fork Clackamas River wild and scenic river corridors and a portion of the Collawash River wild and scenic river corridor. The intensity of the burn and impact to the river values within these corridors was unable to be evaluated due to safety concerns. The National Forest System lands within these corridors, along with the main access road (Highway 224) are [closed by Forest Order](#) due to safety concerns. Similarly, the BLM administered lands within the South Fork Clackamas River corridor are closed by an [Emergency Closure Order](#) due to safety concerns. As such, the impacts of the Riverside Fire have not been incorporated into the draft environmental assessment or comprehensive river management plan. We will be working over the coming months to evaluate the impacts to the river values from the Riverside Fire. The impacts of the fire will be incorporated into the final planning documents and decision notice for this project, as appropriate. Updates on the care and recovery from this fire can be found here: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/mthood/fire/?cid=fseprd835619>.

### **How to Comment**

Pursuant to 36 CFR 218.25, comments on this proposed project will be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice in the paper of record (*The Oregonian*). If the comment period ends on a Saturday, Sunday, or Federal holiday, comments will be accepted until the end of the next Federal working day. After consideration of comments received during this 30-day comment period, decision notices and findings of no significant impact will be issued by both the Forest Service and BLM.

## Forest Service Objection Process

The Forest Service draft decision will be subject to an objection process pursuant to 36 CFR 218, subparts A and B. Only individuals or entities (as defined by 36 CFR 218.2) who submit timely and specific written comments (as defined by 36 CFR 218.2) about this proposed project or activity during this or another public comment period established by the responsible official will be eligible to file an objection. Other eligibility requirements are defined by 36 CFR 218.25 (a)(3) and include name, postal address, title of the project and signature or other verification of identity upon request and the identity of the individual or entity who authored the comments. Individual members of an entity must submit their own individual comments in order to have eligibility to object as an individual. A timely submission will be determined as outlined in 36 CFR 218.25 (a)(4). It is the responsibility of the sender to ensure timely receipt of any comments submitted.

Comments should be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and must include supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider (36 CFR 218.2).

The programmatic amendment to the Mt. Hood Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) is subject to 36 CFR 219, Subpart B. Only individuals or entities who have submitted substantive formal comment to the plan amendment during the opportunities for public comment, including this scoping period (36 CFR 219.53). Other eligibility requirements are defined by 36 CFR 219.54(c) and include name, postal address, title of the project and signature or other verification of identity upon request and the identity of the individual or entity who authored the comments.

## Written Comments

Electronic comments including attachments may be submitted electronically in word (.doc), rich text format (.rtf), text (.txt), hypertext markup language (.html), or portable document format (.pdf). Comments must have an identifiable name attached or verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature may serve as verification on electronic comments. To support COVID-19 public health and safety measures, Mt. Hood National Forest and BLM offices prefer comments be submitted via email. Please go to <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?Project=54674>. The link is located on the left side of the [project website](#). If you are unable to submit comment electronically, please mail them to: Wild and Scenic River Planning Comments, 16400 Champion Way, Sandy OR 97055 or BLM Northwest Oregon District, Wild and Scenic River Planning Comments, Attn: Whitney Wirthlin, 1717 Fabry Road SE, Salem, OR 97306.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will become part of the public record for this proposed action and may be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, anonymous comments will not provide the agency with the ability to provide the respondent with subsequent environmental documents nor will it provide the respondent with standing to participate in subsequent administrative judicial review.

Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the requester is denied; the agency will return the submission and notify the requestor that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address within seven days.

**Additional Information, including Project Contact**

Additional information can be found on the [Forest Service project website and BLM project website](#). For questions, please contact Jennie O'Connor Card, team leader, at 406-589-7060 or [jennie.oconnorcard@usda.gov](mailto:jennie.oconnorcard@usda.gov).

Thank you for your interest in this project.

Sincerely,

*(for)*

RICHARD PERIMAN  
Forest Supervisor

cc: Jennie O'Connor Card; Michelle Lombardo; MTH Mailroom