



File Code: 1950
Date: May 24, 2019

Dear Friends and Neighbors of the Willamette National Forest,

The Middle Fork Ranger District on the Willamette National Forest is now seeking comment on a variety of upcoming projects. The district will be preparing 13 Categorical Exclusions (CE) and they are comprised of:

- **Indian Creek Bridge Replacement**
- **Westfir-Seed Orchard Bunkhouse**
- **North Fork Bridge Replacement**
- **Five Year Term Permit Renewal to Existing Recreation Events (SUP)**
- **Wall Timber Sale**
- **Middle Fork Pole Barn Construction**
- **Whitebark Pine Planting**
- **Oakridge Sewage Treatment Plant SUP**
- **Coal Creek Road Stabilization**
- **Bark Beetle Damage Control**
- **North Fork #2 Bridge Replacement**
- **Slick Creek Bridge Replacement**
- **Broken Bowl Bridge Replacement**

North Fork Bridge Replacement

Location: Approximately 8 miles north/northeast of Westfir, OR along the North Fork River. The project is located in 6e North Fork of the Middle Fork Willamette Wild and Scenic River of the Willamette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. The legal description is T20S, R3E, Section 13 of the Willamette Meridian, Lane County, Oregon.

Purpose and need: The current bridge has failed and is unsafe to cross. A new bridge is needed to comply with health and safety standards for trails. The new bridge would be built with native log stringers by hand using skilled trail bridge builders.

Project Lead:

Kevin Rowell

Middle Fork Ranger District, 46375 Highway 58 Westfir, OR 97492-5210

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Indian Creek Bridge and Reroute

Location: Approximately 17 miles south of Oakridge, OR. The project is located in 11d-Scenic, Partial Retention-Foreground of the Willamette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. The legal description is T24S, R3E, S4 SE of the Willamette Meridian, Lane County, Oregon.



Purpose and need: Since 2017, there has been no bridge crossing Indian Creek on the Middle Fork Trail. The 80' single stringer bridge was cut down due to significant decay and heavy scour making the bank unstable and the bridge unsafe. The Indian Creek bridge needs to be relocated due to heavy scour on the banks both upstream and down. A better location with natural bedrock banks is found 250 feet upstream. The new bridge can be much shorter, 55 feet, allowing the use of native log stringers located nearby. The reroute would comprise of 2,165 feet of new trail and abandonment of 1500 feet of old trail. Plans for the new bridge will be drawn by qualified engineers and the work will be conducted by Middle Fork RD trail crews using chainsaws, grip hoists and other hand tools. No heavy equipment is needed.

Project Lead

Kevin Rowell

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Middle Fork Pole Barn Construction

Location: The Middle Fork office compound in Westfir, OR. The project area is located in 13b-Admin Site of the Willamette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. Legal descriptions are T21S2 ESec11 of the Willamette Meridian, Lane County, Oregon.

Purpose and Need: Flat Creek Work Center is at capacity to store equipment. With new purchases planned, a pole barn is needed to keep equipment under cover to reduce deterioration from the elements and therefor reducing maintenance and extending lifecycles.

Project Lead:

Rob Mickey

Middle Fork Ranger District, 46375 Highway 58 Westfir, OR 97492-5210

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Westfir-Seed Orchard Bunkhouse Construction

Location: The old Seed Orchard facility one mile west of Westfir, OR. The project area is located in 11c Scenic Retention of the Willamette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. Legal descriptions are T21S/R2E Sec1 of the Willamette Meridian, Lane County, Oregon.

Purpose and Need: More bunkhouses are needed to house seasonal employees and there is few rental options in the area. In order to build new facilities we need to dispose of buildings we are no longer using. The Westfir seed orchard buildings proposed for demolition are the tree cooler, lab, and offices.

Project Lead:

Rob Mickey

Middle Fork Ranger District, 46375 Highway 58 Westfir, OR 97492-5210

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Whitebark Pine Planting

Location: Approximately 16 miles east of Oakridge, OR near Fuji Mountain. The project area is located in 10e Dispersed Recreation – Semiprimitive Nonmotorized of the Willamette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. Legal description is 22S 5 1/2 E Sec 14 of the Willamette Meridian, Lane County, Oregon.

Purpose and Need: To promote the regeneration of Whitebark pine and slow down encroachment from other conifer species. The species is listed as threatened due to white pine blister rust, mountain pine beetle, fire suppression, and climate change. Fuji Mountain has numerous dead Whitebark Pine and seedling survival is minimal due to white pine blister rust. Cones have been collected and potential seedlings will be selected for genetic resistance to white pine blister rust. This project would plant approximately 500 Whitebark pine seedlings in the 30 acre area.

Project Lead:

Sally Christensen

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Five-Year Term Permit Renewal for Existing Recreation Events

Location: Multiple locations across the Middle Fork Ranger District.

Purpose and Need: This is a permit renewal for the recreation events listed below, as they expire, for a new term of up to 5 years. This action is administrative in nature. There is no change to the existing uses for the currently expired permits at this time. Any future proposals for changes in use (such as occupying new areas or changing the route of a race) will be reviewed at that time and concerns/mitigation or new regulations will be addressed in the Operating Plan, which is reviewed annually and revised as necessary. The name and location of the events are as follows:

- Gold Lake WinterFest (Bergs Moonlight Tour), Gold Lake Sno Park – Snowshoeing Event
- Emerald Empire Sports Car Club – Larison Hill Rally, Forest road 2102 – Car race event
- Cascade Cream Puff Mt. Bike Marathon, Westfir Portal Park, North Fork Trail, 1910 and 1912 road, Alpine trail system – Bike race event
- Oregon Trappers Association Annual Rendezvous, Shadow Bay campground, gathering event
- Where's Waldo Ultra Marathon, Willamette Pass parking lot, Twins and Maiden Peak trails (Portion of event crosses onto the Deschutes NF) – Footrace event
- Hardesty Hardcore Race, Hardesty trail system – Foot race event
- Oakridge Dam Marathon, Green Waters Park, Larison Rock trail, Road 2118, 23, 21, and 5852 – Foot race event
- Sturdy Dirty Enduro, Alpine trail system – Bike race event
- Sasquatch Duro – Mudslinger, Forest roads 19, 1912, 1912-672, 1925, 1925-642 – Bike race event
- Willamette Side by Side, Routes along spurs of the 19, 18, 24, 21, and 23 roads
- Oakridge Triple Summit, Alpine, Dead Mountain, and Larison Rock trails

Renewal of the recurring recreation event permits as they expire for a new term of up to 5 years.

Project Lead

McKenzie Jensen

Middle Fork Ranger District, 46375 Highway 58 Westfir, OR 97492-5210

McKenzieJensen@fs.fed.us**Coal Creek Road Stabilization**

Location: Approximately 24 miles south of Oakridge, OR off Forest Service Road 5850. This project is in located 16a-Late Successional Reserve of the Willamette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. The legal description is T24S R3E Section 14,15, 22, 27, 34 and T25S R3E Section 2,3 of the Willamette Meridian, Lane County, Oregon.

Purpose and Need: This project would reduce sediment delivery to Coal Creek by pulling back culvert slopes, installing water bars, removing any existing culverts on the 5850-228 road beyond the main Coal Creek crossing ~1.5 miles of closure for roughly 2.8 miles. Any additional road stabilization work needed on the following spurs off of the 5850-228: 230, 231, 340, 225, and 227 would also occur. The road is currently stored (closed), so it would not change the management level (ML1) but would increase the storage level to High. Coal creek is the Middle Fork Ranger District's priority watershed and hydrologically stabilizing roads in its vicinity is a critical piece of completing the Watershed Restoration Action Plan.

Project Lead

Lisa Kurian

Middle Fork Ranger District, 46375 Highway 58 Westfir, OR 97492-5210

lkurian@fs.fed.us**Wall Thin under Good Neighbor Authority**

Location: Approximately seven miles east of Oakridge, OR near Forest Service Road 24. This project is in located in 14a General Forest of the Willamette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. The legal description is T20S, R4E, Section 26 SE of the Willamette Meridian, Lane County, Oregon.

Purpose and Need: The identified stands (under 70 acres) are densely stocked, ranging between 50 and 65 years of age. The overarching goal is to produce a healthy and vigorously growing stand for future management activity. Reduction of overstory tree density will promote residual tree growth and encourage more natural regeneration in the understory, further "normalizing" the size-class and age distribution of this stand. There will be one variable density thinning prescription to meet land allocation objectives.

Project Lead

Christian Mercado

Middle Fork Ranger District, 46375 Highway 58 Westfir, OR 97492-5210

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Oakridge Water Treatment Special Use Permit Renewal

Location: Approximately two miles east of the Middle Fork Ranger Station office along the Middle Fork of the Willamette River. The project area is located in 11f Scenic-Retention foreground of the Willamette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. The legal description is NW1/4 SE1/4 Section 18, T21S, R3E, NE1/4 NE1/4 Section 21, T21S, R3E of the Willamette Meridian, Lane County, Oregon.

Purpose and Need: The City of Oakridge has maintained a liquid waste treatment area since 1957. Treated effluent is disinfected with ultra-violet light and discharged into the Middle Fork of the Willamette River. Bio-solids are transferred from the digesters to a storage pond for annual removal and application to adjacent forestland. Operation of the plant is governed and permitted by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The Oakridge Water Treatment Plant is requesting a renewal of their existing Special Use Authorization MIF 38 that will expire 12/31/2021. This action is administrative in nature and would reauthorize the continuing use of the existing permit for a new term.

Project Lead

McKenzie Jensen

Middle Fork Ranger District, 46375 Highway 58 Westfir, OR 97492-5210

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Bark Beetle Damage Control

Location; Campground and Administrative sites across the Middle Fork Ranger District.

Purpose and Need: The 2019 snow event resulted in large amounts of down trees across the District. A pulse of down trees can lead to outbreaks of beetle populations and can kill healthy trees near these concentrations of wood the year following the event. To reduce the risk of tree mortality within campgrounds and administrative use sites, this project would apply the anti-aggregation bark beetle pheromone, MCH, in campgrounds and administrative sites where there is substantial down wood. The pheromone will be applied in the spring of 2020 and 2021 before Douglas-fir beetles emerge and begin attacking trees. The MCH will be applied in a "bubble cap" form which are thin flexible rectangular plastic devices about one by two inches in size with a "bubble" near one end containing a small amount of the liquid pheromone. The caps are stapled to trees in the area to be protected in a grid pattern, about 40 feet apart, which results in a distribution of 30 bubble caps per acre.

Project Lead

Leslie Elliot

Middle Fork Ranger District, 46375 Highway 58 Westfir, OR 97492-5210

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Broken Bowl Bridge Replacement

Location: Approximately nine miles north/northeast of Lowell, OR. The project is located in 5a Special Interest Areas of the Willamette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. The legal description is T18S, R2E, S31 SE of the Willamette Meridian, Lane County, Oregon.

Purpose and need: The bridge was broken from a downed tree during the 2019 snow event. This bridge is along the Fall Creek National Scenic Trail.

Project Lead

Kevin Rowell

Middle Fork Ranger District, 46375 Highway 58 Westfir, OR 97492-5210

karowell@fs.fed.us**Slick Creek Bridge Replacement**

Location: Approximately 12 miles north/northeast of Lowell, OR. The project is located in 5a Special Interest Areas of the Willamette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. The legal description is T18S, R2E, S27 SE of the Willamette Meridian, Lane County, Oregon.

Purpose and need: The bridge was burned up during the 2017 Jones Fire. This bridge is along the Fall Creek National Scenic Trail. Surrounding snags that could hit the bridge would be cut.

Project Lead

Kevin Rowell

Middle Fork Ranger District, 46375 Highway 58 Westfir, OR 97492-5210

karowell@fs.fed.us**North Fork #2 Bridge Replacement**

Location: Approximately 5 miles north/northeast of Westfir, OR along the North Fork River. The project is located in 6e North Fork of the Middle Fork Willamette Wild and Scenic River of the Willamette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. The legal description is T20S, R3E, Section 26 of the Willamette Meridian, Lane County, Oregon.

Purpose and need: The bridge damage during the 2019 snow event. It is near failing. This bridge on the North Fork Trail.

Project Lead

Kevin Rowell

Middle Fork Ranger District, 46375 Highway 58 Westfir, OR 97492-5210

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My preliminary assessment are that these proposals fall within a category of actions per 36 CFR 220 that are excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and there are no extraordinary circumstances that would preclude use of the category.

- Indian Creek Bridge Replacement, North Fork Bridge Replacement, North Fork #2 Bridge Replacement, Slick Creek Bridge Replacement, Broken Bowl Bridge Replacement: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(1) “Construction and reconstruction of trails.”
- Westfir-Seed Orchard Bunkhouse and Middle Fork Pole Barn Construction: 36 CFR 220.6(d)(3) “Repair and maintenance of administrative sites.”
- Whitebark Pine Planting: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(5) “Regeneration of an area to native tree species, including site preparation that does not involved the use of herbicides or result in vegetation type conversion.

- Five Year Term Permit Renewal to Existing Recreation Events (SUP) and Oakridge Sewage Treatment Plan SUP: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(15) “Issuance of a new special use authorization when the only changes are administrative, there are not changes to the authorized facilities or increases in the scope or intensity of authorized activities, and the applicant or holder is in full compliance with the terms and conditions of the special use authorization.
- Coal Creek Road Stabilization: 36 CFR 220.6(d)(4) “Repair and maintenance of roads, trails, and landline boundaries.”
- Wall Thin: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(12) “Harvest of live trees not to exceed 70 acres, requiring no more than ½ mile of temporary road construction.
- Bark Beetle Damage Control: 36 CFR 220.6 (d)(3) and (d)(5) “Repair and maintenance of administrative and repair and maintenance of recreation sites.”

This comment period is intended to provide those interested in or affected by this proposal an opportunity to provide early and meaningful participation on a proposed action prior to a decision being made by the Responsible Official.

How to Comment and Timeframe

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, and electronic comments concerning these actions will be accepted until June 21, 2019.

Written comments must be submitted to: Responsible Official, or Katie Isacksen, NEPA Planner, 46375 Highway 58 Westfir, OR 97492. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:30am to 4:30pm Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Persons commenting should include: 1) name, address, telephone number, organization represented, if any; 2) title of project for which the comment is being submitted; and 3) specific facts and supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider.

Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.docx) should be sent to katie.isacksen@usda.gov. It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period.

If you have any questions or need further information regarding these proposals, contact the project leads which are listed with the description of the projects above.

Sincerely,



MOLLY JUILLERAT
Deputy District Ranger