

## **NEWS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

### **Pacific Northwest Region Wallowa-Whitman National Forest**

1550 Dewey Ave., Suite A

Baker City, OR 97814

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/wallowa-whitman>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WallowaWhitmanNF>

Twitter: @WallowaWhitman

## **Public input requested for Morgan Nesbit Forest Resiliency Project**

**BAKER CITY, Ore.** (March 15, 2021) – The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest would like to hear from you and learn more about your interests related to the Morgan-Nesbit Forest Resiliency Project. The project, which has not yet been formally proposed, would involve an area of approximately 87,000 acres where various forest vegetation treatments are under consideration to reduce the risk of damage associated with wildfires, insects, and diseases, while also enhancing the forest-related benefits important to the public.

National Forest staff have worked with social scientists to develop an anonymous web-based [public engagement exercise](#) to collect input about what aspects of the planning area matter most to the public. The exercise provides an opportunity to prioritize ecosystem services (or forest-related benefits), and then select factors or influences that may impact those ecosystem services. “It provides an opportunity for everyone to provide input in a way that is structured, analyzed statistically, and then reported back to the public to clearly show that the diverse range of opinions are captured and considered,” said Chris Armatas, a Research Social Scientist with the US Forest Service.

Naturally, different people relate and connect to the Morgan Nesbit area in a variety of different ways. This public engagement tool will help planners understand the range of relationships with an approach that is scientific and inclusive, while also being anonymous. The knowledge gained will support both decision-making and communication around the Morgan Nesbit Forest Resiliency project.

This project is in an early stage of development, but research shows that engaging the public early and often can lead to more acceptable planning outcomes. “We want to interact with the community in such a way that every voice, perspective, and need is not only heard, but considered during the planning process,” said Mark Bingman, Acting District Ranger for the Wallowa Mountains Office.

Additional information on the Morgan Nesbit Forest Resiliency project can be found on the [project website](#) and [Story Map](#). If you would like to receive future information on the project, please contact Andrea Holmquist at [andrea.holmquist@usda.gov](mailto:andrea.holmquist@usda.gov). For additional questions regarding the science behind the web application, please contact Chris Armatas at [christopher.armatas@usda.gov](mailto:christopher.armatas@usda.gov).