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Environmental Assessment

Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area Management Plan

Detroit Ranger District
Willamette National Forest



Environmental Assessment

Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area Management Plan

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Detroit Ranger District
Marion and Linn County, Oregon

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Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area Management Plan Environmental Assessment

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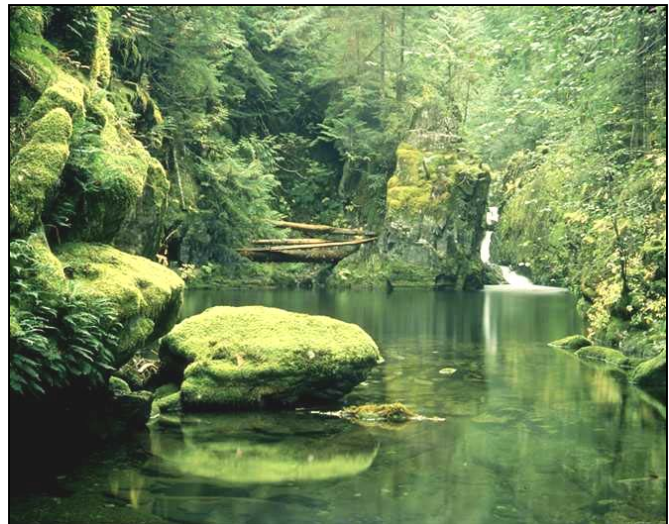
CHAPTER 1 – PURPOSE & NEED

Chapter 1 introduces a proposal to amend the Willamette National Forest Land & Resource Management Plan (1990), and discloses the underlying need for this action. In addition to the purpose and need for action, this chapter includes a description of the proposed action, and the scoping process used to identify concerns and significant issues.

The project record containing the complete analysis for the Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area Management Plan is available for public review at the Detroit Ranger District, 44125 North Santiam Highway, Detroit, Oregon, 97342. For additional information about the project record, or to make appointments to review the record, please contact Jim Romero, Resource Planning Forester, at the Detroit Ranger District, HC73 Box 320, Mill City, OR 97360 or call (503) 854-4212.

1. Introduction & Background

The Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area (Opal Creek SRA) encompasses a 13,408-acre area in the Little North Santiam drainage, which is located in Marion County, Oregon within the Detroit Ranger District of the Willamette National Forest. It is approximately 38 miles east of Salem. See Figure 1.1 and 1.2. Opal Creek is within a 2-hour drive of nearly 80% of the state's population or about 2.3 million people, which makes it a significant outdoor recreation attraction in the Willamette Valley. A short driving distance of Willamette Valley and Portland metropolitan population centers, the location of the Opal Creek SRA fosters easy access and serves as a "backyard recreation destination" for visitors to enjoy a convenient day trip.



Opal Pool – Photo by Patrick T. O'hara, courtesy of Friends of Opal Creek

Opal Creek has a unique history of political and environmental involvement. Since 1982, many legislative efforts were made to resolve the conflicts that centered on how Opal Creek's resources should be managed. During this period, Opal Creek gained regional and national notoriety as a symbolic icon regarding the debate of preserving Northwest old-growth forests. However, time and time again, these efforts did not succeed in offering the protection many groups sought. Final resolution culminated on November 13, 1996 when the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-333 - also referred to as the Opal

Creek Act)¹ was passed declaring special protection by designating three distinct management areas: the Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area, the Opal Creek Wilderness, and Elkhorn Creek as a Wild and Scenic River.

1/ See Appendix A

2. Purpose and Need for Action

The Forest Service established the 13,408-acre Opal Creek SRA on November 9, 1998 after fulfilling specific requirements in the Opal Creek legislation. As directed by the Opal Creek Act, the Forest Service has worked with an appointed advisory council, who serves as a consultant on matters relating to the management of the SRA, to develop the proposed Opal Creek SRA Management Plan. The advisory council consists of 13 members, each of whom represents a particular interest including recreation, education and research, mining, environmental organizations, economic development, Marion County, City of Salem, State of Oregon, Native American tribes, inholders, and adjacent communities and landowners.

The purposes of the Opal Creek SRA as defined in the Opal Creek Act are to:

- Protect and provide for the enhancement of the natural, scenic, recreational, historic and cultural resources of the area in the vicinity of Opal Creek;
- Protect and support the economy of the communities of the Santiam Canyon; and
- Provide increased protection for an important drinking water source for communities served by the North Santiam River.

The Act requires that an Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area Management Plan be developed and shall provide for a broad range of land uses, including:

- Recreation;
- Harvesting of nontraditional forest products, such as gathering mushrooms and material to make baskets; and
- Educational and research opportunities.

The Opal Creek SRA was previously managed under the direction of both the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan as a Late Successional Reserve (LSR) and other special designations as defined within the 1990 Willamette National Forest Management Plan that were consistent with LSR objectives. The legislation changes management emphasis and provides additional protection through specific requirements and prohibitions, some inconsistent with previous management direction. This necessitates the need for redefining management direction to comply with the intent of Opal Creek Act.

**Insert Figure 1.1
Opal Creek SRA Vicinity Map**

Insert Figure 1.2
Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area Map

3. Purpose of the Management Plan

The proposed Opal Creek SRA Management Plan establishes programmatic management direction for the SRA. It has been developed to comply with the mandate in Section 1023 of the Opal Creek legislation and embodies the provisions of that legislation. The management plan shall not be construed to supersede the requirements of any law including the Endangered Species Act or the National Forest Management Act or regulations promulgated under those Acts.

The proposed SRA Management Plan would guide all management activities within the SRA. It describes a “Desired Condition” - how the SRA should look - and some ways in which to reach that condition. It defines the management area goals by describing the Desired Condition of the SRA as a whole as well as within the proposed four recreation use intensity management zones. It establishes “Standards” or direction for management actions necessary to achieve the Desired Condition and to ensure compliance with applicable laws, regulations and policies.

The proposed SRA Management Plan would amend the 1990 Willamette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and be reviewed during the regularly scheduled revision of that Forest Plan. The Opal Creek SRA Management Plan may be amended as necessary, consistent with the procedures and purposes of the Opal Creek Act.

4. Relationship to the Forest Plan

The Opal Creek legislation specifies that the Scenic Recreation Area be managed in accordance with the laws and regulations applicable to the National Forest System. The National Forest Management Act of 1976 required the preparation of Forest Plans to direct the management of each National Forest. The Opal Creek legislation, which was passed after the Forest Plan for the Willamette National Forest was adopted, supersedes Forest Plan direction that is inconsistent with the legislation and the purpose for which the SRA was established.

Because the SRA legislation supersedes the Forest Plan as [amended by the *Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Management of Habitat for Late Successional Species and Old Growth Dependent Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (NWFP 1994)], the direction provided in the final Management Plan would amend the Forest Plan. Existing Forest Plan direction may apply to the SRA when the SRA plan does not speak to a particular issue and Forest Plan direction on that issue is consistent with the intent of the SRA legislation.

5. Proposed Action

The proposed action is to adopt the Opal Creek SRA Management Plan developed by the Opal Creek SRA Advisory Council, in consultation with the Forest Service, as management direction for the Congressionally designated Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area. This plan would amend the 1990 Willamette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. The plan defines a Desired Condition that is sought within all or portions of the SRA, and identifies applicable Standards to achieve these management goals.

6. Public Scoping Process and Issues Considered

Scoping is an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action.

Public Involvement

Public involvement in the planning process for the Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Management Plan was accomplished through mailings and meetings with individuals and groups. This project, identified as the Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Management Plan, first appeared as an upcoming project in the August 2000 edition of the Willamette National Forest planning newsletter, *FOREST FOCUS*, and has been described in subsequent newsletters. This newsletter is sent quarterly to about 250 addressees. In addition, a copy of the Draft Opal Creek Management Plan was sent to a mailing list of over 600 individuals, organizations, and agencies, who have an interest in the Opal Creek area. A complete list of comments received and how issues were tracked through the analysis is located in Appendix F.

Information about the Opal Creek Wilderness and Scenic Recreation Area has been continually updated since April 1999 on the Willamette National Forest web page at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/willamette/>. This web page was created during the development of the Opal Creek SRA Management Plan and contains general recreation information about the area, Opal Creek Advisory Council background information and meeting notes, a description of the Opal Creek Act, and the proposed management plan and maps.

Forest Service specialists were contacted to provide agency concerns and potential issues with the proposed action. District personnel also met with individuals and groups as requested. Table 1.1 provides a summary of the meetings conducted by USDA Forest Service personnel with various agencies and interest groups and various public meetings and field trips to the Opal Creek SRA.

Table 1.1: Public Involvement Meetings & Field Trips

Date	Agency or Interest Group	Forest Service Reps. Present	Number of Attendees	Key Issues & General Summary of Meeting *
June 2000 to July 2001	Opal Creek Advisory Council Meetings	Stephanie Phillips Dani Rosetti Julie Cox	13 Members of the Opal Creek Advisory Council plus various members of the public	Bi-weekly meetings to develop the proposed Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Management Plan. Meeting notes are posted on the Opal Creek Web Page.
July 26, 2001	Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs	Darrel Kenops Stephanie Phillips	Bobby Bruno and Clay Penhollow	Briefing on the Management Plan and gave them a copy. They did not express any issues or have any comments at that time.
July 27, 2001	Office of Governor Kitzhaber	Darrel Kenops Stephanie Phillips	Peter Green (Natural Resources Representative)	Briefing on the Management Plan and gave them a copy. Mr. Green mentioned the Governor's interest in the Elkhorn drainage and inquired on the status of the Wild and Scenic River plan.
July 31, 2001	Public Meeting Salem, OR	Stephanie Phillips plus various IDT members	5 Advisory Council Members 12 members of the public.	There were questions on the firearm restrictions and mining.
Aug. 1, 2001	Public Meeting Mill City, OR	Stephanie Phillips plus various IDT members	3 Advisory Council members 6 members of the public	Mostly general questions - some specific to campfires and fishing.
Aug. 2, 2001	Public Meeting Portland, OR	Stephanie Phillips plus various IDT members	2 Advisory Council members 3 members of the public	General Questions
Aug. 9, 2001	Agency Field Trip to the Opal Creek SRA	Stephanie Phillips plus various IDT members	<u>Agency Representatives:</u> Marion Co Sheriff Dept. Oregon Dept of Forestry Marion Co. Parks. Bureau of Land Management State Wild & Scenic Rivers Coord.	

* Meeting Notes from the meetings listed on Table 1.1 are located in the Project Record.

Date	Agency or Interest Group	Forest Service Reps. Present	Number of Attendees	Key Issues & General Summary of Meeting
Aug. 9, 2001	North Santiam Watershed Council	Stephanie Phillips Dani Rosetti	10 people at that meeting	Briefing on the Management Plan
Aug. 13, 2001	Idanha City Council	Stephanie Phillips	City Administrator 3 City Council members 2 members of the public	Briefing on the Management Plan . No specific issues were raised
Aug. 14, 2001	Detroit City Council	Stephanie Phillips	City Administrator 3 City Council Members 20 members of the public	Briefing on the Management Plan. Only general comments, no specific issues.
Aug. 16, 2001	Willamette Valley Miners Association	Stephanie Phillips Jim Romero	About 40 people were at the meeting.	There were questions regarding prohibiting the use of dredges and sluice boxes, and limiting gold panning to the Little N. Santiam and Cedar Creek.
Aug. 18, 2001	Public Field Trip to the Opal Creek SRA	Stephanie Phillips plus various IDT members	16 members of the public	There were a variety of comments, such as -- how is metal detecting addressed, can people ride their horses through the high use zone to get to the moderate use zone, limiting recreational mining to panning only on Cedar Ck and Little N. Santiam.
Sept. 4 , 2001	Chemeketans Club	Stephanie Phillips		Briefing on the Management Plan.
Sept. 17, 2001	Opal Creek Advisory Council	Stephanie Phillips Jim Romero Dani Rosetti Julie Cox	Advisory Council Members plus various members of the public	Review status of the public comments received to date, and schedule of NEPA analysis.
Sept. 17, 2001	Stayton City Council	Julie Cox		Briefing on the Management Plan.
Sept. 20, 2001	Oregon Hunters Association	Stephanie Phillips		Briefing on the Management Plan.

7. Issues

The proposed action, developed to meet the need for action, may cause effects which conflict with various public uses or other resources managed by the Forest Service. These conflicts, called issues, are typically found during the initial scoping period and are used to generate alternatives to the proposed action, or mitigation.

Significant Issues:

The following issues were deemed significant by the Responsible Official and used to develop the alternatives presented in Chapter 2:

A. Issue Statement: Several members of the public believe that if and when fire suppression activities should occur, then minimal or “light on the land” suppression techniques should be employed to insure that the suppression techniques do not result in more damage to resources than the fire itself. Specifically, they suggested that the following should be prohibited -- mechanized fire suppression equipment such as bulldozers, chemical fire retardants, cutting of large trees and snags, and chainsaws.

Discussion: This issue is addressed in *Alternative 3 – Apply Light On The Land Fire Suppression Techniques*.

Unit of Measure: Acres of National Forest System lands burned as a result of minimal fire suppression techniques.

B. Issue Statement: Some members of the public believe that the Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area should be managed to allow natural processes to occur, including fire to play a natural role and to occur in the ecosystem according to the natural fire regime.

Discussion: This issue is addressed in *Alternative 4: Allow Fire In Its Natural Role*.

Unit of Measure: Acres of National Forest System lands burned as a result of allowing fires to burn in a natural role with no suppression efforts.

C. Issue Statement: Some members of the public believe that recreation use in the Opal Creek SRA should be restricted to protect the environment and maintain a pristine, quiet forest setting.

Discussion: This issue is a composite of many comments from the public expressing a desire for a very specific setting and recreational experience in Opal Creek. Several suggested that the setting should be almost wilderness like. The comments included terms such as pristine, primitive, a quiet retreat, and “lets push for wilderness”. Some of the suggestions included designating the area from the gate to Jawbone flats as “very low”, allowing campfires only in developed area or in designated fire rings, limit overnight use except in campgrounds in all zones, limit trail development, no personal use of special forest products, allow only bow hunting, no vehicles behind gate during week-ends, and disallow all off-road vehicles. This issue is addressed in *Alternative 5: Further Restrict Use That Would Be Allowed Under The Proposed Management Plan*.

D. Issue Statement: Some members of the public think that limiting recreational mineral activities to only gold panning in a designated corridor is too restrictive and limits a recreational activity that has been ongoing in the SRA for many years.

Discussion: Many individuals submitted comments regarding the Opal Creek SRA proposed management plan’s standard to limit recreational mineral activities to only gold panning in a designated corridor. Most thought that at least panning should be allowed on all streams throughout the SRA. Others thought that all non-motorized methods should be allowed, while a few thought that motorized suction dredges should be allowed in all streams within the SRA. This issue will be addressed in *Alternative 6 – Allow Use Above The Levels In The Proposed Management Plan*.

Units of Measure: Number of people using the area for recreational mineral collection activities. The number of permits issued by the Oregon Department of State Lands would measure dredging.

E. Issue Statement: Some members of the public are concerned that the proposed management plan prohibits discharging of firearms in the high and moderate use zones, which would eliminate hunting within these zones.

Discussion: Several individuals made comments regarding discharging of firearms, and the impacts on hunting. Some believe that a prohibition on discharging of firearms could be precedent setting, and pave the way for firearm restrictions on other National Forest system lands. The intent of the firearms restriction was for safety in the zones where there were high use levels. Suggestions from the public on how to resolve the issue fell into three options: (1) better enforcement of existing Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) restrictions on discharging firearms within 150 yards of a campsites or administrative sites and facilities and across an open road or body of water; (2) prohibit discharging of firearms in the high and moderate zones during the high use season from Memorial Day to Labor Day; and (3) prohibit target shooting but allow discharging of firearms for hunting in the high and moderate zones. Enforcing the existing Code of Federal Regulations is included in the No Action alternative, which is the alternative that analyzes “no change” to existing federal regulations, Forest Plan direction, and Forest Service Policy. The second and third options are addressed in *Alternative 6 – Allow Use Above The Levels In The Proposed Management Plan*.

F. Issue Statement: Some members of the public believe that the proposed management plan restricts recreational activities that were in use on the date of enactment, which does not comply with the legislation that established the Opal Creek SRA; and other methods should be used to protect resources prior to limiting recreation use in a scenic recreation area.

Discussion: In addition to the hunting and firearm issues, there were comments from the public, requesting that there be no limits of use in the moderate zone, that bikes are allowed on Battle Ax and Opal Creek trails, and that horses be allowed on the roads in the high use zone. This issue is addressed in *Alternative 6 – Allow Use Above The Levels In The Proposed Management Plan*.

G. Issue Statement: Some members of the public think that the legislation language regarding when trees may be cut is not specific enough, and allows for trees to be cut when other methods could achieve the objectives.

Discussion: Some of the public submitting comments requested that the Opal Creek SRA management plan should provide a clear definition of possible administrative reasons for cutting trees and establishes the criteria for the cutting of hazard trees. In general, the comments conveyed sense that the individuals did not want trees cut unnecessarily. This issue is addressed in *Alternative 7: Defines Administrative Cutting Of Trees*.

8. Other Significant Issues Tracked Through the Analysis

These issues were identified by the Responsible Official as significant, but were not used to develop alternatives. These issues will be tracked through the analysis to describe the environmental effects.

1. **Issue Statement:** Some members of the public are concerned that constructing additional trails in the low and medium use zones, and allowing bicycle access on the Opal Creek and Kopetski Trails may affect the Opal Creek Wilderness.
2. **Issue Statement:** Some members of the public are concerned that designating a narrow corridor for recreational panning may cause people to “trespass” upon the existing claims that are located within the corridor, possibly resulting in conflicts between the public and the claim holders.
3. **Issue Statement:** Some individuals are concerned that the Opal Creek legislation’s prohibition on the cutting of trees may affect the SRA’s ability to function as a Late Successional Reserve and will have subsequent effects on wildlife.
4. **Issue Statement:** Some individuals are concerned that the recreation use levels in the Opal Creek SRA at the time of enactment are higher than when the Willamette National Forest Plan was finalized. These use levels, specifically in the moderate zone, may affect the status of the proposed wild and scenic rivers classification in the moderate zone.
5. **Issue Statement:** Some individuals commented that since the Elkhorn Wild and Scenic River management plan will be a separate document, the SRA Management Plan EA should disclose the effects of implementing the proposed action and the alternatives on the Elkhorn Wild and Scenic River.
6. **Issue Statement:** Some members of the public stated that there is a need for increased law enforcement patrols in the Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area to enforce regulations, reduce vandalism and theft, and in general, deter unacceptable behavior.
7. **Issue Statement:** Some individuals commented that limiting recreation use to the levels on the date of enactment in the moderate zone might affect the Friends of Opal Creek operations and special use permittees in the SRA.

9. Issues Identified but Determined to be Non-Significant

The following is a list of issues that were identified during scoping for this project. These issues are considered to be non-significant and were not used for developing alternatives, mitigation, nor tracked through the analysis process. Provided is a brief statement of why each issue would not have a significant effect on the human environment.

A. Access to Jawbone Flats and Opal Pool

1. **Issue Statement:** Some members of the public are concerned that the six-mile round trip to Jawbone Flats/Opal Pool is too far for disabled persons, the elderly, and small children to hike, and that the proposed action does not address making this section of the closed road ADA accessible. Some suggested some solutions to the accessibility problem such as providing shuttle services or similar motorized transportation.

Discussion: We do not consider this to be a significant issue because the proposed management plan allows for barrier-free opportunities within the SRA. However, improvements to Forest Road 2209 beyond the gate are limited by the Opal Creek Legislation. Specifically the legislation restricts construction or improvement of Forest Road 2209 beyond the gate to maintaining the character of the road, as it existed upon date of enactment of the legislation. It eliminates the option to pave or widen the road. Paving or widening may be necessary to meet accessibility standards in places where grades are too steep, but this does not comply with the Opal Creek legislation. The limited improvements that can be made to the road will not significantly enhance access to Jawbone Flats and Opal Pool for people with disabilities.

Most of the comments referred to the distance (six miles round trip) as the limiting factor not the condition of the road. However, the legislation only allows motorized access beyond the gate for administrative purposes or by private inholders for the purpose of reasonable access to their land. This does not allow for using a shuttle system or other multi-passenger vehicles for transporting people who are unable to hike the 6-mile round trip.

B. Recreational Minerals Operations and Techniques

1. **Issue Statement:** Some members of the public believe that the proposed management plan does not comply with Oregon State laws, specifically ORS 390.805, Oregon State Scenic Waterways Law, which states that recreational panning is allowed in all Oregon State Scenic Waterways and that dredges using up to 4" suction hoses is allowed for recreational purposes.

Discussion: We do not believe this to be a significant issue. The Santiam State Scenic Waterway includes the Little North Fork of the Santiam River from the confluence of Battle Ax Creek and Opal Creek downstream to the boundary of the Willamette National Forest. State law ORS 390.805 does allow Division of State lands to permit recreational prospecting and placer mining on State Scenic Waterways; however, it does not state that these activities “**shall**” occur on the Waterways. Permission for recreational placer mining to occur on public lands must be authorized by the agency responsible for managing the public lands.

2. **Issue Statement:** Some members of the public were concerned that the proposed management plan’s restrictions on recreational minerals activities would also apply to the activities occurring on the six valid existing claims.

Discussion: We do not believe this to be a significant issue because the Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Management Plan and its standards do not apply to legal minerals activities on the six existing claims. These claims shall be administered in accordance with applicable laws and regulations including the General Mining Law of 1872 as amended, and the Opal Creek Legislation. Administration of activities on the existing mining claims is outside the scope of the SRA management plan.

3. **Issue Statement:** Some members of the public are concerned that the Opal Creek Advisory Council made decisions regarding recreational mining when the Advisory Council member representing mining interests was not present at the meeting.

Discussion: We do not believe this to be a significant issue because the approved Charter for the Opal Creek Advisory Council states that the Council can make decisions if a quorum of seven (7) members is present.

C. Mine Closures

1. **Issue Statement:** Some members of the public believe that mine closures should be implemented using bat gates only, to allow for animal habitat. No blasting or chemicals such as foam plugs should be used.

Discussion: We do not believe this to be a significant issue because proposals for mine closures are considered to be “project level” and not within the scope of the proposed management plan. The management plan describes the desired condition and the standards for achieving the desired condition, and does not address site-specific projects. The analysis for the mine closures has been in the past, and will be in the future, conducted at the site-specific scale. The mine closures will be implemented in a manner to achieve the desired condition described in the approved Management Plan.

D. Funding for Implementing the SRA Management Plan

1. **Issue Statement:** Some individuals believe that the proposed management plan calls for actions that are beyond what the Willamette National Forest has funding for, specifically in the areas of trail maintenance and construction, roads management, and interpretation & education.

Discussion: We do not believe this to be a significant issue because it is not uncommon for the actions needed to achieve a desired condition, as described in a management plan, to cost more than available National Forest funding. Utilizing partnerships, grants, and volunteers will be very important in implementing this management plan. Decisions regarding funding and partnerships are outside the scope of this analysis for the SRA Management plan.

E. Monitoring

1. **Issue Statement:** Some individuals suggest that an inventory and monitoring strategy should be developed to determine if the desired condition and standards are being met.

Discussion: We do not believe this to be a significant issue because the National Forest Management Act of 1976 requires that each National Forest plan include a monitoring plan. After the decision has been made on whether or not to amend the Willamette National Forest Plan with the proposed SRA management plan or an alternative, a monitoring plan will be developed to determine if the desired conditions and standards are being met. Preparing a management plan will be done outside the scope of this analysis.

F. Site Specific Projects

1. **Issue Statement:** Many members of the public had suggestions for developing and implementing projects such as loop trails, shuttle services, boardwalks, platforms, and etc. to protect the resources and disperse use.

Discussion: We do not believe this to be a significant issue because projects, such as the ones mentioned, will be considered after the Forest Supervisor decides whether or not to implement the proposed management plan or an alternative. It is important to wait until after the Forest Supervisor has made a decision, since the decision could affect what projects would be appropriate for meeting the selected desired condition and standards. Decisions to implement specific projects are outside the scope of the SRA Management Plan analysis.

G. Interpretation, Environmental Education, and Research

1. **Issue Statement:** Some members of the public were concerned that the proposed SRA Management Plan does not provide details on what components of the SRA will be interpreted, what facilities will be required for interpretation/education, and the types of partnerships utilized to carry out the interpretation/education activities.

Discussion: We do not believe this to be a significant issue because an interpretation plan will be developed after the decision is made on whether or not to amend the Willamette National Forest Plan with the proposed SRA management plan, or with one of the alternatives. The interpretive plan will implement the final SRA Management Plan direction.

10. Responsible Official and Decision to be Made

The Forest Supervisor of the Willamette National Forest will be the responsible official and will make the decision following preparation of an environmental assessment by the USDA Forest Service for the proposal. The decision to be made is whether or not to amend the Willamette National Forest Plan with the Opal Creek SRA management plan as proposed; to implement an alternative to the proposal; or, to take no action at this time.

Recreation Management

- 1) **The SRA shall be made available for public use and enjoyment, consistent with resource protection and maintenance of SRA values.**
- 2) **Recreation activities at not less than the levels in existence on the date of enactment of P.L. 104-333 shall be permitted.** Levels of recreation use higher than the levels in existence on the date of enactment of P.L. 104-333 may be provided if such uses are consistent with the protection of the resource values of the SRA.
- 3) **Recreation use in the Medium Intensity Zone should not exceed the levels that existed on the date on enactment of P.L. 104-133.**
- 4) **The SRA shall be made available for a range of recreational opportunities, and are managed to provide four recreation opportunity settings as specified for each management zone:**
 - a. ***Very Low Intensity Zone: Primitive***
 - b. ***Low Intensity Zone:***
 - i. **Semiprimitive Motorized along roads and trails corridors**
 - ii. **Semiprimitive Non-motorized in areas with no motorized access.**
 - c. ***Medium Intensity Zone: Roaded Natural***
 - d. ***High Intensity Zone: Roaded Natural***
- 5) **When recreation use results in effects that would not achieve desired condition or meet standards, management actions shall be taken to address the impacts or effects. The following actions, in order of priority, should be used in most cases:**
 - a. **Informing and educating the public, and site restoration**
 - b. **Site improvement and/or use of regulations** such as limiting campfires, designating campsites, hardening sites, establishing minimum setbacks from features, facility development for safety or resource protection, and/or restricting types of use, group size and/or length of stay.
 - c. **Restrict numbers of users or timing of use** such as allowing only day use, and/or restricting number of entries.
 - d. **Close areas to all users**
- 6) **Subject to applicable Federal and State law, hunting and fishing in the SRA shall be permitted. Under consultation with the Oregon State Department of Fish and Wildlife, designated zones or periods when no hunting or fishing shall be permitted for reasons of public safety, administration or public use and enjoyment of the SRA may be established.**

Recreation Management – Continued

- 7) **Discharging of firearms shall not be permitted in the Medium and High Intensity Zones to ensure the safety of other visitors.**
- 8) **Information and education efforts should be oriented toward enhancing visitors' experiences, increasing their understanding of and respect for the natural processes and areas special values, and encouraging safe and appropriate use.** Visitors are provided with information that encourages user behavior that is respectful of area resources and towards other visitors, and minimizes conflicts. Information topics would include visitor orientation, recreation opportunities, management goals and standards, regulations, user safety, fire prevention, enforcement and emergency services, and "leave no trace practices."
- 9) **Day use recreation should be encouraged in the Medium Intensity Zone. Camping should be encouraged within the High Intensity Zone.**
- 10) **Partnerships, volunteer programs, and co-operative agreements shall be encouraged to assist in maximizing visitor recreational opportunities and reducing operational costs.**

Scenery Management

- 1) **The SRA was established to protect and provide for the enhancement of the natural, scenic, recreational, historic and cultural resources,* and shall be managed to meet the following visual quality objectives defined for each management zone:**
 - a. ***Very Low Intensity Zone:* Very High Scenic Integrity / Preservation**
 - b. ***Low Intensity Zone:* High Scenic Integrity / Retention**
 - c. ***Medium Intensity Zone:* High Scenic Integrity / Retention**
 - d. ***High Intensity Zone:* High Scenic Integrity / Retention**
- 2) **Management practices shall result in a physical setting that meets or exceeds the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) class defined within each management zone:**
 - a. ***Very Low Intensity Zone:* Primitive**
 - b. ***Low Intensity Zone:***
 - i. **Semiprimitive Motorized along roads and trails corridors**
 - ii. **Semiprimitive Non-motorized in general unroaded areas**
 - c. ***Medium Intensity Zone:* Roaded Natural**
 - d. ***High Intensity Zone:* Roaded Natural**

Forest Trail System

- 1) Trail types, difficulty level and management practices shall be consistent with recreation settings and opportunities (ROS) identified in each management zone.**
- 2) No trails shall be developed in the Very Low Intensity Zone. In other management zones, new trails should be considered to disperse use and provide loop travel opportunities. Provide for some barrier-free segments in compliance with accessibility standards.**
- 3) Within Low Intensity Zones, trails should be maintained at a Level 2 standard, and at a Level 3 maintenance standard within Medium and High Intensity Zones.**
- 4) Trails shall be closed to off-road motorized vehicle use.**
- 5) Bicycle use shall not be permitted on Mike Kopetski/Opal Creek and Battle Ax Trails.**
- 6) No stock use shall be permitted within the High Intensity Zone.**
- 7) Pets should be kept under voice control and/or physical restraint. They may be banned to decrease social and resource effects.**

Vegetation Management

- 1) Timber harvest, and cutting and selling of trees including salvage sales shall be prohibited in the Scenic Recreation Area except the cutting of trees for:**
 - a. public safety, such as to control the continued spread of a forest fire in the SRA or on land adjacent to the SRA,**
 - b. activities related to administration of the SRA consistent with the Opal Creek Management Plan, or**
 - c. removal of hazard trees along trails and roadways.**
- 2) Stumps resulting from hazard tree falling should be flush cut to meet scenic quality objectives.**
- 3) In roadside zones, vegetation management such as brush cutting for protection of roads and public safety, controlling/eradicating noxious weeds, and removing slash associated with removing hazard trees, should employ treatment methods consistent with scenic resource management needs. Establishment of native low maintenance species through seeding or planting should be considered on bare soils. Preferred methods are manual treatments over mechanized equipment to avoid or reduce undesirable impacts to soils and damage to vegetation.**

Special Forest Products

- 1) Special forest product collection shall be consistent with resource management needs and limited to:**
 - traditional tribal uses, and**
 - personal non-commercial use associated with recreation activities but limited to plant cuttings without mortality, gathering of fruits, nuts and mushrooms, and firewood gathering for on-site campfires.**

Fire Management

- 1) Fire prevention messages shall be integrated into information and education efforts, and public contact should be scheduled throughout the recreation use season.**

Special Uses

- 1) Nothing in P.L. 104-333 shall interfere with activity for which a special use permit has been issued, has not been revoked, and has not expired, before the date of enactment of this law, subject to the terms of the permit.**
- 2) Nothing in P.L. 104-333 shall be construed to interfere with the ability to approve and issue, or deny, special use permits in connection with exploration, mining, and mining-related activities in the Bornite Project Area.**
- 3) Notwithstanding the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 791a et seq.), the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission shall not license the construction of any dam, water conduit, reservoir, powerhouse, transmission line, or other project work in the SRA, except as may be necessary to comply with the provisions with regard to the Bornite Project in accordance to P.L. 104-333.**
- 4) Any new utility or transmission lines permitted in the SRA should be buried.**
- 5) Inholders, including mine claim holders, within the SRA shall have the right of reasonable access to and lawful use of their property as provided by law and subject to valid existing rights.**
- 6) Requests for special use permits shall be considered and may be issued for compatible uses if such uses are consistent with the protection of the values for which the SRA was established.**

- 7) **Services shall be compatible with general public use, and protect or enhance other SRA values and objectives.** Outfitting and guiding services may be authorized that support the purposes for which the SRA was established. Limits on number of operational days, people served or other restrictions may be placed to preserve a quality recreation experience in the SRA.

Lands

- 1) **Subject to the other provisions of P.L. 104-333, the Forest Service may acquire any lands or interests in land in the SRA that the Secretary of Agriculture determines are needed to carry out this law.**
- 2) **Any lands or interests in land owned by a State or a political subdivision of a State may be acquired only by donation or exchange.**
- 3) **Within the boundaries of the Opal Creek Wilderness or the SRA, the Secretary shall not acquire any privately owned land or interest in land without the consent of the owner unless the Secretary finds that--**
 - a. **the nature of land use has changed significantly, or the landowner has demonstrated intent to change the land use significantly, from the use that existed on the date of the enactment of P.L. 104-333; and**
 - b. **acquisition of the land or interest in land is essential to ensure use of the land or interest in land in accordance with the purposes PL 104-333 or the management plan.**

Minerals & Energy

- 1) **Subject to valid existing rights, all lands in the SRA are withdrawn from any form of entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public lands laws; location, entry, and patent under the mining laws; and disposition under the mineral and geothermal leasing laws (per Opal Creek Act, P.L. 104-333, Sect. 1023 (d)(7)).**
- 2) **Nothing in the Opal Creek Legislation (P.L. 104-333) shall be construed to interfere with or approve any exploration, mining, or mining-related activity in the Bornite Project Area, conducted in accordance with applicable laws.**
- 3) **Where valid claims exist, the rights of the minerals claimant shall be met with the least possible effect on SRA resources and values.**

Minerals & Energy - Continued

- 4) The operating plan referred to in FW-291 (Plan of Operations as required by 36 CFR 228.4) shall emphasize restoration of the site by minimizing, mitigating, preventing, or repairing adverse impacts within the SRA.**
- 5) Extraction of common variety minerals shall be prohibited, except for the use of the Elkhorn rock quarry for enhancement, restoration, maintenance or construction projects within the SRA and Bornite Project Area.**
- 6) Recreational panning shall be limited to use of non-motorized equipment within a designated corridor (see map From the FS boundary follow the Little N. Santiam River to confluence of Cedar Creek, then follow Cedar Creek up to the SRA boundary) and shall not interfere with mining claim operations. Use of sluice boxes shall not be permitted for recreational mineral collecting. There are no requirements on panning.**

Road System

- 1) A transportation plan shall be developed for the SRA. It will evaluate the road network to determine which roads should be retained or closed, provides guidelines for transportation and access consistent with management objectives, and considers the access needs of persons with disabilities.**
- 2) Roads serving recreation sites and facilities in existence on the date of enactment of *P.L. 104-333* shall remain open.**
- 3) Roads not needed for motorized access shall be closed or decommissioned as warranted for resource protection. Roads may be converted to recreation trails.**
- 4) No new roads shall be constructed.**
- 5) Motorized vehicles shall not be permitted off of open roads. ORV use on open forest system roads may occur but shall not conflict with other vehicle traffic.**
- 6) Motorized use on Forest Road 2209 beyond gate at the Opal Creek Trailhead shall be permitted for emergency and administrative use, authorized research, and for access by private inholders subject to terms and conditions established within a road easement consistent with Opal Creek Legislation. Timing and amount of motorized use on the road should be minimized to reduce conflicts with visitors during peak use periods.**

Road System - Continued

- 7) Forest Road 2209 and its bridge structures beyond gate at the Opal Creek Trailhead shall be maintained or improved consistent with the character of the road as it existed upon the date of enactment of P.L. 104-333, and shall not include paving or widening.**
- 8) Forest Roads 2207, and 2209 to the gate at the Opal Creek Trailhead, should be maintained for low clearance vehicles at Maintenance Level 3. All other open roads needed for dispersed recreation should be maintained for high-clearance vehicles at Maintenance Level 2.**
- 9) Dust created by traffic on unpaved roads should be abated around recreation sites and adjacent private residences.**

Facilities

- 1) Motorized vehicles, roads, structures, and utilities (including but not limited to power lines and water lines) shall be allowed inside the SRA as needed to serve the mining related activities conducted on land within the Bornite Project.**
- 2) Facilities shall be designed and constructed to provide recreation settings and experiences that are compatible with the management zone in which they occur.**
- 3) Facility development and site modification shall be to a level that will cause the minimum possible impact on the natural character and provide resource protection. Design standards should be characterized by minimal size and careful integration with the area's natural character. They should facilitate interaction with the natural and cultural resources rather than serve as attractions themselves. Where facilities are appropriate, they shall be simple and durable in design and constructed with materials that harmonize with features of the natural landscape.**
- 4) Development of structures and improvements shall be kept at the minimum level necessary to facilitate use, protect resource and SRA values and provide for visitor education, health and safety.**
- 5) No roads, bridges, trails, recreation facilities or other resource developments shall be permitted within the Very Low Intensity Zone.**
- 6) Developed recreation sites such as campgrounds and day use areas shall only be built in the High Intensity Zone.**

Public Safety

- 1) Evacuation plans shall be developed for and posted within Medium and High Intensity Zones.**
- 2) Appropriate vehicle speed shall be set and posted on the 2209 and 2207 Roads.**

Education, Interpretation and Research

- 1) Research, educational and interpretive opportunities shall be consistent with protection of natural and cultural resources.**
- 2) Interpretation and education activities shall be developed in consultation with state, federal, tribes, and local historic preservation organizations and include a balanced and factual interpretation of the cultural, ecological and industrial history of forestry and mining in the SRA.** Interpretive and educational activities may include interpretive and information signage and exhibits, guided hikes, workshops, courses, seminars, self-directed discovery, classes, and hands on participation in research activities.
- 3) An interpretive strategy for the SRA shall be developed and include site-specific educational goals, interpretive themes and messages, direction for services and facilities development (e.g. signs, brochures, guided tours, trails), design criteria consistent with facility development for each management zone, and project implementation priorities.**
- 4) Research and education activities should be coordinated with recreation management. Size and numbers of groups should be compatible with general public use, and minimize impacts on recreational use and activities or degradation of resources and ecological processes. Research projects and educational activities deemed appropriate and compatible with SRA objectives shall be permitted.**
- 5) Areas and features of particular educational interest shall be protected, if necessary with structures or facilities as deemed appropriate by management intensity zone.**
- 6) Partnerships shall be encouraged to develop, support and maximize research and education opportunities.**

Tribes

- 1) Existing and future Memorandums of Understanding for individual tribes shall be followed.**
- 2) Trust responsibilities to Indian tribes shall be maintained, and formal consultation processes with appropriate tribes shall ensure compliance with applicable laws, and encourage meaningful tribal involvement in the management of the SRA.** Consult on a regular basis with respect to tribal resources within the SRA on matters including but not limited to: sacred sites; sacred or ceremonial traditions; activities that affect cultural resources; cultural studies of mutual interest; and gathering of traditional use information.

Local Communities

- 1) Projects that protect and support the economy of the communities of the North Santiam Canyon shall be considered.**
- 2) To protect an important drinking water source for communities served by the North Santiam River, the Federal General Water Quality Best Management Practices shall be used.**

4. Alternative 3 – Apply Light on the Land Fire Suppression Techniques

Alternative 3 modifies the proposed action to specifically address the issue of using “light on the land” fire suppression techniques. This alternative includes the same desired condition and standards as Alternative 2, except for the following changes:

Desired Condition

No changes to the Desired Condition as described in Alternative 2

Standards

This standard would be added to **Fire Management**

3-1 Suppression practices within the Opal Creek SRA should have the least physical impact on the land consistent with other management considerations. Minimal Impact Suppression Tactics (MIST) should be used during suppression efforts. Preference will be given to use of natural firebreaks. In some cases direct attack with a minimum width of hand fire line, or wet line using power driven pumps and hose may be more cost-effective and cause the least overall damage to SRA values. (MIST tactics will be described in Appendix E of the EA).

This standard would be added to **Fire Management**

3-2 Mechanized fire suppression equipment such as bulldozers, chainsaws, and the use of chemical fire retardants should be prohibited during fire suppression activities.

This standard would be added to **Fire Management**

3-3 Felling of trees and snags during fire suppression activities should be restricted to the absolute minimum for containment and/or safety purposes.

5. Alternative 4 – Allow Fire In Its Natural Role

Alternative 4 modifies the proposed action to specifically address the issue of allowing fire to take a natural role in the ecosystem. This alternative includes the same desired condition and standards as Alternative 2, except for the following changes:

Desired Condition

The following changes would be made to the desired condition as written in Alternative 2. The specific reference to changes in the document are described following each change.

Natural ecological processes are operating to the extent practical; however, fire suppression occurs to protect private land ownerships. Late-successional ecosystems function as part of a regional network of old-growth ecosystems, but are not protected from loss due to wildfire. No timber harvest or mineral entry occurs.

(Changes paragraph 2 on page 2-2 of the EA. Also changes portions of the first paragraph under Vegetation Management on page B-1.)

Standards and Guidelines

This standard would be added to **Fire Management**

4-1 A Scenic Recreation Area Fire Management Implementation Plan shall be completed and approved prior to allowing naturally occurring fires to burn in the Opal Creek SRA.

This standard would be added to **Fire Management**

4-2 Following the approval of the Scenic Recreation Area Fire Management Implementation Plan, naturally occurring fires in the Opal Creek SRA, should be monitored and allowed to burn within the boundaries of the Scenic Recreation Area. Considerations will be made for the protection of human lives, structures, and private property.

6. Alternative 5 – Further Restricts Use That Would Be Allowed Under The Proposed Management Plan

Alternative 5 modifies the proposed action to specifically address the issues of restricting the recreation use allowed in the Proposed Management Plan. This alternative includes the same desired condition and standards as Alternative 2, except for the following changes:

Desired Condition

The following changes would be made to the desired condition as written in Alternative 2. The specific reference to changes in the document are described following each change.

- The number of visitors is maintained at existing levels at the date of enactment in all management zones while ensuring that ecosystem values are protected, and quality of recreational experiences and objectives for which the SRA was established are maintained.
(Changes the last sentence in the first paragraph on page B-7)
- The existing system of non-motorized trails enhances visitors' enjoyment of the SRA, and provides various challenge levels. No new trails are created anywhere within the SRA.
(Changes the second to last sentence in the third paragraph on page B-7)
- The SRA serves primarily as a day use destination with some overnight use occurring within developed campgrounds.
(Adds sentence to the first paragraph under Recreation, Access and Facilities on page B-6)
- No commercial extraction or personal use of special forest products is occurring within the SRA. Only tribal uses and incidental on-site use of non-traditional forest products takes place within the SRA.
(Changes the first two paragraphs under Special Forest Products on page B-2)

Alternative 5 Standards and Guidelines

This standard would be added under **Fire Management**

5-1 Campfires shall only be allowed within designated fire rings.

This standard would replace **Forest Trails #2:**

5-2 No new trails shall be developed within the SRA. Provide for some barrier-free segments of existing trails in compliance with accessibility standards. Conversion of existing roads to trails will be considered following specific site analysis.

This standard would replace **Recreation Management #2**, and would delete **Recreation Management #3:**

5-3 Use levels should be limited at the levels that existed on the date of enactment of the Opal Creek Legislation (November 13, 1996).

This standard would modify **Recreation Management #5:**

5-4 When recreation use results in effects that would not achieve desired condition or meet standards, management actions shall be taken to address the impacts or effects. The following actions, in order of priority, should be used in most cases:

- a. **Informing and educating the public, and site restoration**
- b. **Site improvement and/or use of regulations** such as hardening sites, establishing minimum setbacks from features, facility development for safety or resource protection, and/or restricting types of use, group size and/or length of stay.
- c. **Restrict numbers of users or timing of use** such as allowing only day use, and/or restricting number of entries.
- d. **Close areas to all users**

This standard would replace **Recreation Management #7:**

5-5 Discharging of firearms shall be prohibited in all areas of the SRA to ensure the safety of other visitors. Bow hunting will be allowed during the seasons established by the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife only in the Low and Very Low Management Zones.

This standard would replace **Recreation Management #9:**

5-6 Overnight camping shall be allowed only in designated campgrounds in the high intensity zone.

This standard would replace **Road System #5:**

5-7 Motorized vehicles shall not be permitted off of open roads. Off Road Vehicles (ORVs) shall not be permitted within the SRA.

Alternative 5 - Continued

This standard would replace **Road System #6:**

5-8 Motorized use on Forest Road 2209 beyond gate at the Opal Creek Trailhead shall be permitted for emergency and administrative use, authorized research, and for access by private inholders subject to terms and conditions established within a road easement. Motorized use on the road should be prohibited on weekends and limited on weekdays to reduce conflicts with visitors.

This standard would replace **Special Forest Products #1:**

5-9 Special forest product collection shall be limited to traditional tribal uses and incidental on-site use within the SRA. No commercial extraction or personal use permits of special forest products will occur within the SRA.

7. Alternative 6 – Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan

Alternative 6 modifies the proposed action to specifically address the issue of allowing recreation use levels to increase in the moderate zone, and activities that occurred on the date of enactment to continue at some level. This alternative includes the same desired condition and standards as Alternative 2, except for the following changes:

Desired Condition

The following changes would be made to the desired condition as written in Alternative 2. The specific reference to changes in the document are described following each change.

- Activities within the SRA are generally non-motorized in nature such as: hiking, picnicking, camping, fishing, swimming, boating, horseback-riding, scenic viewing, nature study, mountain-biking, hunting, snow-shoeing, Nordic skiing, and recreational panning and sluicing. Motorized activities may include vehicles on designated open roads and recreational dredging. (Replaces the last two sentences in the first paragraph under Recreation, Access and Facilities)
- With the exception of panning, sluicing and dredging as recreational activities, and subject to valid existing rights as stipulated in the Opal Creek legislation, no mining takes place within the Scenic Recreation Area. (Replaces the first paragraph under Mining)
- Mountain bike and stock use is low but present on designated routes. Target shooting is not allowed in the medium and high intensity zones. (Replaces the appropriate sentences in the Medium and High Use Zones on pages B-12 and B-14)
- The SRA accommodates increasing numbers of visitors while ensuring that ecosystem values are protected, and quality of recreational experiences and objectives for which the SRA was established are maintained. (Changes the last sentence in the first paragraph on page B-7)

Desired Condition – Alternative 6 – Additional Changes

- **Recreational Minerals Activities**

Recreationists are informed of appropriate panning practices, and comply with State and Federal laws and regulations. The riverbed and bank remains largely undisturbed, which allows natural processes to continue.

Visitors gain knowledge and respect of the geologic history of the SRA and have come to understand the importance of geology to ecology, archaeology and the landscape, and historical mining tradition. Representative features of historic mining activities are preserved to maintain the local historical integrity of the area and are a significant part of the education and interpretive activities within the SRA. Some abandoned mines continue to provide bat habitat.

(This section would be added under Recreation, Access and Facilities. The second paragraph under Mining would be deleted)

Standards and Guidelines – Alternative 6

This standard would delete **Minerals #6**, and would create a new standard under **Recreation Management**:

6-1 Non-motorized recreational mineral collecting activities shall be allowed to occur on all streams within the Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area. All activities should remain within the wet perimeter of the stream to insure the least possible effect on SRA resources and values. Recreational mining activities, as defined in OAR 141-89-0040, includes the use of equipment such gold pans, sluices, and rocker boxes.

This standard would be added under **Recreation Management**:

6-2 Motorized suction dredging shall be allowed to occur for recreation purposes on all streams within the Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area. All activities should remain within the wet perimeter of the stream and to insure the least possible effect on SRA resources and values. Activities will comply with State permitting standards as required by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Motorized suction dredges will be limited to an intake nozzle with an inside diameter not exceeding four inches and motor not exceeding 16 horsepower. Dredging operations shall comply with existing State (OAR 141-89-0050) and Federal regulations for streams.

Standards and Guidelines – Alternative 6 – continued

This standard would be added under **Recreation Management:**

6-3 Dredging activities shall comply with the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODF&W) Guidelines for Timing of In-Water Work to Protect Fish and Wildlife Resources. To provide maximum protection of potential fish habitat, recommendations will be made to ODF&W that work activities be restricted to operating only within the existing, published dates.

This standard would replace **Recreation Management #7:**

6-4 Discharging of firearms shall be prohibited in the Medium and High Intensity Zones from Memorial Day to Labor Day to ensure the safety of other visitors. The use of these weapons (firearms and bows) will be allowed for wildlife hunting, as established by the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, during the remainder of the year.

This standard would be added under **Recreation Management:**

6-5 Target shooting with firearms shall be prohibited in the medium and high intensity zone.

This standard would replace **Forest Trail System #5:**

6-6 Within the medium intensity zone, bicycle use shall be prohibited on the Mike Kopetski/Opal Creek trail. Bicycles will be allowed on the 2209 road beyond the gate, and the Battle Axe Trail within the SRA.

This standard would replace **Forest Trail System #6:**

6-7 Within the High Intensity Zone, stock use shall be permitted only on existing roads.

8. Alternative 7 – Administrative Cutting of Trees

Alternative 7 clarifies the proposed action to specifically addresses the issue regarding the legislative language of cutting of trees for administrative purposes. The current legislation describes that “the Secretary may allow the cutting of trees in the Scenic Recreation Area only-- 1) for public safety, such as to control the continued spread of a forest fire in the Scenic Recreation Area or on land adjacent to the Scenic Recreation Area; (2) for activities related to administration of the Scenic Recreation Area, consistent with the Opal Creek Management Plan; or (3) for removal of hazard trees along trails and roadways. This alternative includes the same actions and desired condition as Alternative 2, except for the following changes:

Desired Condition

No changes to the Desired Condition as described in Alternative 2

Standards Guidelines

This standard would append **Vegetation Management #1 – b:**

7-1 Cutting of trees for administrative purposes should include, but is not limited to, providing recreation improvements, trail construction and reconstruction, and road maintenance projects. Specific site analysis shall be completed prior to the removal to determine if other methods exist to achieve project objectives.

This standard would append **Vegetation Management #1 – c:**

7-2 The cutting and removal of hazard trees shall occur if the tree will fall across, strike, or subsequently move onto, a roadway, trail, structure, transitory object of value, or other facility. The type of criteria used for the identification and removal of hazard trees can be found in the Technical Handbook developed by the Region 6 – Pacific Northwest Region, Long-Range Planning for Developed Sites in the Pacific Northwest: The Context of Hazard Tree Management (FPM-TP039-92) (1992).

Table 2.2: Comparison of Effects on Issues by Alternatives – Issue 7A (Page 1-9)

Issue	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2 Proposed Action	Alternative 3 Light on the Land	
<p>7A: If and when fire suppression activities should occur, then minimal or “light on the land” suppression techniques should be employed to ensure that the suppression techniques do not result in more damage than the fire itself. Specifically, the following should be prohibited -- mechanized fire suppression equipment such as bulldozers, chemical fire retardants, cutting of large trees and snags, and chainsaws.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fires could be kept to smaller size and less damage to resources from the fire would occur. • There may be visible scars left on the landscape affecting the scenic integrity of the area for decades as a result of full fire suppression techniques. • Evidence of suppression activities across a landscape could potentially impact scenery for decades, which could in turn, affect the recreation potential of the SRA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects similar to Alternative 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No impacts to resources from mechanized fire suppression equipment. • In high intensity fires, MIST guidelines are less likely to be effective in controlling a fire, resulting in larger fires scarring a greater number of acres across the landscape. This could result in an increased risk to the public and fire fighter safety, additional acres burned, and more damage to resources such as exposed mineral soil and dead vegetation resulting in erosion into streams. • Containment of the fire within SRA boundaries and the protection of structures, etc. may be less likely without the use of fire retardants and mechanized equipment. 	
	Alternative 4 Natural Role of Fire	Alternative 5 Restricted Use	Alternative 6 Additional Use	Alternative 7 Admin. Tree Cutting
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of fire scars generated by fires burning a large number of acres across a landscape could potentially impact scenery for decades, which could in turn, affect the recreation potential of the SRA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces the potential risk of an escaped fire. This would reduce the number of acres burned and the need for suppression activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects similar to Alternative 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects similar to Alternative 2

Table 2.3: Comparison of Effects on Issues by Alternatives – Issue 7B (Page 1-9)

Issue	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2 Proposed Action	Alternative 3 Light on the Land		
<p>7B: The Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area should be managed to allow natural processes to occur, including fire to play a natural role and to occur in the ecosystem according to the natural fire regime.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suppression tactics would be more direct with the use of wide fire lines to control fire spread. • Years of suppression activities and increased fuel loads has created unnatural conditions that could result in large-scale catastrophic fires that may require more aggressive suppression tactics to protect the SRA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenic resources may be affected where ‘light-hand-on-the-land’ tactics could not be employed. Negative impacts to scenery as a result of fire suppression activities would require rehabilitation to meet scenic integrity objectives. • The natural role of fire would not be allowed to occur in many cases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire suppression tactics would not allow fires to completely take a natural role in the ecosystem. 		
	<p>Alternative 4 Natural Role of Fire</p>	<p>Alternative 5 Restricted Use</p>	<p>Alternative 6 Additional Use</p>	<p>Alternative 7 Admin. Tree Cutting</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fires would be allowed to grow larger and may impact features that people value in the SRA and want protected including recreation areas, old-growth groves, scenic features, private property and developments. • When left to evolve naturally, allowing fire to play a natural role could eliminate and affect the areas of old growth people value. • Years of suppression activities has created unnatural conditions that could result in large-scale fires. • Allowing fire to play a natural role would increase the potential threat to, and could affect, lives, structures and private property. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects similar to Alternative 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects similar to Alternative 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects similar to Alternative 2 	

Table 2.4: Comparison of Effects on Issues by Alternatives – Issue 7C (Page 1-10)

Issue	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2 Proposed Action	Alternative 3 Light on the Land	
<p>7C: Recreation use in the Opal Creek SRA should be restricted to protect the environment and maintain a pristine, quiet forest setting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the population increases, recreation use of the area would likely increase at about the same rate. Popular areas may become more crowded and cause impacts to resources that would require strategies to manage these issues. An increase in people may also increase noise disturbance at popular areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the Medium Use Zone, visitors would be displaced to other areas when capacity limits are met. Noise levels would remain at current levels during peak use periods by placing visitor limits in the area at one time. Popular areas within the low, medium and high intensity zones would continue to have high use. Managing for a quiet setting could not likely be achieved on busy days. Occasional, the noise from off-road vehicles may disturb forest visitors seeking a quiet retreat. Noise disturbance and damage to resources would be reduced with the restriction to firearm use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effects similar to Alternative 2, except during fire suppression activities when noise from chainsaws, dozers, and other mechanized equipment would be reduced. 	
	Alternative 4 Natural Role of Fire	Alternative 5 Restricted Use	Alternative 6 Additional Use	Alternative 7 Admin. Tree Cutting
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effects similar to Alternative 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By restricting camping to campgrounds, existing impacted dispersed sites would recover with vegetation, and no conflicts would occur between overnight campers and other recreational activities. No discharging of firearms or ORV use would be allowed anywhere in the SRA, preserving a quiet setting, and reducing safety problems and conflicts with other visitors. This would displace firearm users to areas outside the SRA. Motorized use on Forest Road 2209 beyond the gate would be limited to weekends, increasing safety and reducing conflicts to hikers. This may impact activities for inholders behind the gate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motorized suction dredging would be allowed from July 15 – Aug. 30. This may affect the opportunity to experience a quiet retreat in proximity to the dredging activities. Limiting firearm use would reduce noise and provide for safety of recreation users during the high use summer season in the medium and high intensity zones. Target shooters would be displaced outside of the SRA. Hunters would not be affected during the primary hunting seasons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effects similar to Alternative 2

Table 2.6: Comparison of Effects on Issues by Alternatives – Issue 7D (Page 1-10)

Issue	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2 Proposed Action	Alternative 3 Light on the Land		
<p>7D: The proposed action allows only gold panning in a designated corridor, which is too restrictive and limits a recreational activity that has been ongoing in the SRA for many years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change from the existing condition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By only allowing panning as a recreational mineral collecting activity, and restricting this activity to a small corridor, this may increase the potential for people to trespass on existing claims in the area, as much of the proposed designated corridor already has existing claims. Individuals that prefer to collect minerals with a sluice or dredge would be displaced to areas outside the SRA. No effects on existing claim owners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effects similar to Alternative 2 		
	Alternative 4 Natural Role of Fire	Alternative 5 Restricted Use	Alternative 6 Additional Use		Alternative 7 Admin. Tree Cutting
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effects similar to Alternative 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effects similar to Alternative 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recreational sluicing and motorized dredging would continue to occur anywhere within the entire SRA, therefore, providing the opportunity for this type of recreational activity. By allowing recreational mineral collecting activities on all streams in the SRA, this may decrease the potential for people to trespass on existing claims in the area, as there would be more areas available for these activities. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effects similar to Alternative 2

Table 2.5: Comparison of Effects on Issues by Alternatives – Issue 7E (Page 1-11)

Issue	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2 Proposed Action	Alternative 3 Light on the Land	
<p>7E: The proposed management plan prohibits discharging of firearms in the high and moderate use zones, which would eliminate hunting within these zones.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of firearms would be allowed to continue in all areas of the SRA, except as restricted by existing regulations in developed recreation sites, and along roads and trails. No effect to recreational opportunities would occur since all activities would continue to be allowed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noise disturbance and damage to resources would be reduced with the restriction to firearm use. Hunters within the moderate and high intensity zones would be displaced into other zones or outside of the SRA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effects similar to Alternative 2 	
	Alternative 4 Natural Role of Fire	Alternative 5 Restricted Use	Alternative 6 Additional Use	Alternative 7 Admin. Tree Cutting
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effects similar to Alternative 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety would be improved in the SRA by eliminating firearm use Hunters within the entire SRA would be displaced outside of the SRA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hunting would not be affected as restrictions on firearms would not be enforced during the primary hunting seasons Users wanting to target shoot within the SRA would be displaced to other areas outside of the SRA. High visitor use areas would be safer when free from indiscriminate target shooting, and provides for a quieter forest setting. Resource and property damage would likely be less frequent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effects similar to Alternative 2

Table 2-7: Comparison of Effects on Issues by Alternatives – Issue 7F (Page 1-11)

Issue	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2 Proposed Action	Alternative 3 Light on the Land	Alternative 4 Natural Role of Fire
<p>7F: The proposed management plan restricts recreational activities that were in use on the date of enactment, which does not comply with the legislation that established the Opal Creek SRA; and, other methods should be used to protect resources prior to limiting recreation use in a scenic recreation area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No effect to recreational opportunities would occur since all activities would continue to be allowed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Effects on Mineral Collecting and Firearm Use. Prohibiting bicycle use the Battle Axe and Opal Creek trails would discourage bicycles from entering the Wilderness. Restricting bicycle use would not affect the majority of bicyclist in Opal Creek due to low use on these trails. Stock users who have traditionally traveled along Forest Road 2209 within the high intensity zone, would no longer be able to travel this route. Due to restrictions on increasing use in the Medium Use Zone, hikers at the Opal Creek Trailhead would be displaced to other areas in the SRA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effects similar to Alternative 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effects similar to Alternative 2
	<p>Alternative 5 Restricted Use</p>		<p>Alternative 6 Additional Use</p>	<p>Alternative 7 Admin. Tree Cutting</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See effects on Firearm Use. Visitors may be displaced in the future to other areas of the Forest to avoid exceeding limits on use. By only allowing campfires in designated rings, this would reduce the risk of abandoned fires and damage to soils and vegetation. Campgrounds would become overcrowded and displace campers to other campgrounds outside the SRA. Increased safety on Forest Service Roads due to lack of ORV use. Popular trails may become more crowded and no opportunity for loop trails to be constructed. Fewer conflicts with hikers and vehicles on weekends on Forest Service Road 2209 beyond the gate. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See effects on Mineral Collecting and Firearm Use. Bicycle use on the 2209 road behind the gate may encourage bike use in the Opal Creek Wilderness. Stock use on roads may increase safety hazards for users. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effects similar to Alternative 2

Table 2.8: Comparison of Effects on Issues by Alternatives – Issue 7G (Page 1-11)

Issue	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2 Proposed Action		Alternative 3 Light on the Land
<p>7G: The legislation language regarding when trees may be cut is not specific enough, and allows for trees to be cut when other methods could achieve the objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No effects would occur since all activities would continue to be allowed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treatments that could protect existing Late Successional stands and would enhance younger stands are not allowed. Increase in localized fuels and large accumulations of fuel resulting from windstorms or wildfires increases fire risk in the area. Potential for increase in theft of downed wood along roads since no personal or commercial use allowed. Yearly maintenance of roads and campgrounds, which includes the cutting of trees, will require appropriated funding for cutting and removal of trees since there is no commercial alternative. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effects similar to Alternative 2
	<p>Alternative 4 Natural Role of Fire</p>	<p>Alternative 5 Restricted Use</p>	<p>Alternative 6 Additional Use</p>	<p>Alternative 7 Admin. Tree Cutting</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effects similar to Alternative 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effects similar to Alternative 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effects similar to Alternative 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defines administrative cutting of trees in Alternative 2 – no additional effects other than those described in Alternative 2.

CHAPTER 3 – ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The chapter will succinctly describe the environment of the areas to be affected or created by the alternatives under consideration. The descriptions are no longer than is necessary to understand the effects of the alternatives. The environmental consequences form the scientific and analytical basis for the comparison of the alternatives. The discussion includes environmental impacts of the alternatives including the proposed action, any adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided, and the relationship between short term uses of the human environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long term productivity, and any irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources.

1. Environmental Consequences Related to the Key Issues

A. Issue – Utilize Light on the Land Fire Suppression Techniques to Insure Resource Damage Does Not Result in More Damage Than the Fire Itself.

Effects of Alternative 1 – No Action

The Forest Plan allows for full suppression activities to occur for the protection of late successional forest ecosystems from stand replacing fire events. This includes fire retardant, mechanized equipment such as dozers, and chainsaws. However, the use of dozers for line construction may be limited due to the steep terrain within the SRA. Potentially, fires could be kept to smaller size and less damage to resources from the fire would occur. However, there may be visible scars left on the landscape affecting the scenic integrity of the area for decades as a result of full fire suppression techniques. These may be short-term effects such as fire retardant in riparian areas or sprayed on unburned vegetation, or long-term effects such as fireline corridors constructed with dozers or by fire suppression crews.

During fire suppression activities, all available tools and suppression methods could be made available to use for the protection of private lands, personal property, and forest resources. By continuing to use full suppression fire techniques, this could create unnatural stand conditions (fuel buildup) that may result in future large-stand replacing fires to occur that affect scenic and other SRA resources.

Evidence of suppression activities and large fire scars across a landscape could potentially impact scenery for decades, which could in turn, affect the recreation potential of the SRA.

Effects of Alternative 2 – Proposed Action

Under Alternative 2, natural ecological processes are operating to the extent practical; however, fire suppression occurs in many areas to protect adjacent land ownerships, inholder property, recreation areas, old growth groves and other scenic features. The SRA has potential for large stand replacing fires and all fires would be suppressed under the proposed management plan. Years of fire suppression and increasing fuel loads would likely set up a landscape for large stand replacing fire to occur that may require more aggressive suppression tactics to protect the SRA in critical sensitive areas. This may have an affect on visual resources where 'light-hand-on-the-land' tactics could not be employed and would have similar effects as Alternative 1. In cases where light on the land fire suppression techniques could be employed, affects would be similar to Alternative 3. Negative impacts to scenery as a result of fire suppression activities would require rehabilitation to meet scenic integrity objectives under this alternative.

Effects of Alternative 3 – Apply Light on the Land Fire Suppression Techniques

Employing Minimal Impact Suppression Tactics (MIST) guidelines in fighting low intensity fires creates the least damaging impacts by fire suppression methods to SRA resources. There is a risk in employing MIST standards however; should a fire re-burn it could escape minimum hand constructed fire lines or wet lines that have dried out. Fire suppression efforts would then need to be repeated. This may result in an uncontrolled fire burning additional acres and the possibility of a stand replacing fires. Public and fire fighter's safety are at risk again.

In high intensity fires, MIST guidelines are less likely to be effective in controlling a fire. This could result in an increased risk to the public and fire fighter safety, additional acres burned, and more damage to resources such as exposed mineral soil and dead vegetation resulting in erosion into streams. Evidence of large fire scars across a landscape or elimination of scenic features by fire could potentially impact scenery for decades, which could in turn, affect the recreation potential of the SRA.

Using MIST guidelines, control is generally best achieved at strategic or desired locations, such as at a ridgeline or natural barrier. Containment of the fire within SRA boundaries and the protection of structures, etc. may be less likely without the use of fire retardants and mechanized equipment. Employing minimal fire suppression tactics would likely result in fires growing larger and impacting features that people value in the SRA and want protected including recreation areas, old-growth groves, scenic features, and private property.

Effects of Alternative 4 – Allow Fire in its Natural Role

This alternative allows fire to take a natural role, which is consistent with MIST guidelines; however, full fire suppression techniques would be used on all human caused fires and some naturally occurring fires. MIST guidelines would not be used. Fires would be allowed to burn to natural barriers and fuel breaks. Considerations would be made for the protection of human lives, structures and private property in which more aggressive tactics may be required that would not meet MIST objectives. In these cases, evidence of suppression activities may have an affect on the scenic integrity of the area.

Effects of Alternative 5 – Restricted Use

Elimination of campfires outside of designated fire rings in developed campgrounds would reduce potential risk of an escaped fire. This would reduce the occurrence of suppression activities needed, which meets the intent of achieving minimum fire suppression tactics.

Effects of Alternatives 6 and 7

These alternatives would allow full fire suppression techniques on all wildfires. The effects of fire suppression would be similar to those described in Alternative 1 and 2.

B. Issue – Allow Natural Processes to Occur; Allow Fire to Play a Natural Role in the Ecosystem According to the Natural Fire Regime.

The Opal Creek SRA is characterized by an infrequent, high-intensity fire regime. Historically there has been a relatively low fire occurrence of fire, but when fires do occur, it is possible for these fires to be high intensity. If wildfires were allowed to burn, fire effects on Opal Creek SRA resources would depend on the fire characteristics (flame length, intensity, etc.) and burn conditions (weather, fuel conditions, topography, etc.) present during the fire events. This could range from low intensity ground fires to stand replacing crown fires. Evidence of large fire scars across a landscape or elimination of scenic features could potentially impact scenery for decades, which could in turn, affect the recreation potential of the SRA.

If fire is allowed to burn without intervention, under extreme fire conditions, then control of the fire within the SRA boundaries may not be attainable. Protection of human life, public property and structures may also not be attainable. Smoke conditions derived from the fire are not controlled and could impact local driving conditions, public, and environmental health and safety. The determination to let the fire burn, after following the procedures described in the SRA Fire Management Plan (yet to be developed), would be completed on a individual fire basis, and not all fires may be allowed to burn without intervention.

Effects of Alternative 1 – No Action

Under the Forest Plan, full suppression tactics would be employed and the SRA would not be managed to allow fire to play a natural role. The area would be managed to protect late successional forest ecosystems from catastrophic events including allowing treatment options such as harvesting. Suppression tactics would be more direct with the use of wide fire lines to control fire spread. Mechanized fires suppression equipment such as bulldozers, chemical fire retardants, and chainsaws could be used. Years of suppression activities and increase fuel loads has created unnatural conditions that could result in large-scale catastrophic fires that may require more aggressive suppression tactics to protect the SRA.

Effects of Alternative 2 – Proposed Action

Under the proposed management plan, natural ecological processes are operating to the extent practical; however, fire suppression occurs in many areas to protect adjacent land ownerships, inholder property, recreation areas, old growth groves and other scenic features. The natural role of fire would not be allowed to occur in many cases. The SRA has potential for large stand replacing fires and most fires would be suppressed under the proposed management plan. Years of fire suppression and increasing fuel loads would likely set up a landscape for large catastrophic fires to occur that may require more aggressive suppression tactics to protect the SRA in critical

sensitive areas. This may have an affect on visual resources where 'light-hand-on-the-land' tactics could not be employed. Negative impacts to scenery as a result of fire suppression activities would require rehabilitation to meet scenic integrity objectives.

Effects of Alternative 3 – Light on the Land

Implementing minimal fire suppression tactics would not allow fires to completely take a natural role in the ecosystem. It would provide more opportunity for fire to play a natural role in the case of using natural barriers and fuel breaks. This would result in fires growing larger and impacting features that people value in the SRA and want protected including recreation areas, old-growth groves, scenic features, private property and developments.

If burn conditions are low intensity, the success of containing a fire within the Opal Creek SRA boundaries may be possible and impacts from smoke minimal. Effects on SRA resources with this type of fire may include reduction in down woody material, understory vegetation, and forest floor litter and duff, and removal of insect & diseased trees.

By suppressing fires when they start, this reduces the negative effects of fire on natural resources and provides for safety of the public and firefighters should a fire escape control. On the contrary, suppressing fires does not allow for natural processes to occur.

Effects of Alternative 4 – Natural Role of Fire

Under this alternative, fires would be allowed to grow larger and may impact features that people value in the SRA and want protected including recreation areas, old-growth groves, scenic features, private property and developments. This alternative would help achieve a naturally appearing and evolving landscape over the long term, which is a dynamic system of changing age classes of trees, and subsequently achieves scenic quality objectives. Old growth forests are a feature that many visitors would like to see preserved within the SRA, and protected from catastrophic wildfire. Since forests are a dynamic system when left to evolve naturally, allowing fire to play a natural role could eliminate and affect the areas of old growth people value.

The landscape would be naturally evolving and retain a natural appearance, however, years of suppression activities has created unnatural conditions that could result in large-scale catastrophic fires. By allowing fire to play a natural role, large fire scars across a landscape or elimination of scenic features by fire could potentially impact scenery for decades, which could in turn, affect the recreation potential of the SRA.

Wildfires can affect public and firefighter safety, and property. Wildfire is not desirable in such areas where recreation developments and popular recreation sites exist, and adjacent private and public lands. Allowing fire to play a natural role would increase the potential threat to, and could affect, lives, structures and private property.

Effects of Alternative 5, 6 and 7

These alternatives would allow full fire suppression techniques on all wildfires. The effects of fire suppression would be similar to those described in Alternative 1 and 2.

C. Issue – Restrict Recreational Use and Activities to Protect the Environment, and Maintain a Pristine and Quiet Forest Setting.

This issue is comprised of several concerns used to develop the overall issue statement specific to restricting use at levels and activities established at the date of enactment. These include limiting use to existing numbers at the date of enactment, no new trails, no discharging of firearms, no overnight camping or campfires except in designated areas, no off road vehicles, no personal or commercial special forest product collection, and limited administrative and inholder access only beyond the gate on the Forest Road 2209.

Effects of Alternative 1: Under the Forest Plan, use levels and activities would continue that occurred at the date of enactment. As the population increases, recreation use of the area would likely increase at about the same rate. This could result in popular areas getting more crowded and cause impacts to resources that would require strategies to manage these issues. Most use within the SRA prior to enactment of the Opal Creek legislation was non-motorized in nature except for motorized use on roads including ORV's and recreational mining activities. Motorized uses would continue that would create noise in areas were other people are recreating. An increase in people may also increase noise disturbance at popular areas.

Effects of Alternative 2 – Proposed Action

Alternative 2 has several standards that restrict recreation use and activities. Each of these standards [identified in ()] will be discussed based on concerns raised during the scoping process.

Limiting Use To Existing Numbers (Recreation Management #2 and #5)

The Opal Creek legislation permits recreational activities at not less than the levels in existence on the date of enactment. Alternative 2 only limits use within the medium intensity zone and allows for increasing use in all other zones. As the population increases, recreation use of these areas will likely increase at about the same rate. This could result in popular areas getting more crowded in the high and low intensity zones, become noisier and cause impacts to resources. Visitors to the medium intensity zone would be affected by being displaced.

Popular developed and dispersed areas within the low, medium and high intensity zones would continue to have high use. Managing for a quiet setting could not likely be achieved on busy days. Many areas within the medium and high intensity zones would not be described as pristine in the sense of being Wilderness, so managing use levels within the medium zone would not shift the area's character towards this setting.

The lack of roads and trails within the very low intensity zone, and unroaded areas of the low intensity zone, will limit access and no

significant increase in use is anticipated. Therefore, a pristine, quiet forest setting would be maintained with minimal impact to the environment in these areas.

Off-Road Vehicles (Alt. 2 - Forest Trail System #4, Road System #5)

Allowing only non-motorized recreational activities will help preserve a quiet forest setting in a large portion of the SRA. Due to steep topography, dense vegetation and limited access, off-road vehicle use would occasionally occur on roads only within the SRA. ORV use could still occur on these open roads as long as State and Federal laws are followed, including speed limits. Occasionally, the noise created by off-road vehicles may disturb forest visitors seeking a quiet retreat.

Off-road vehicle use on trails was not a known activity found within the SRA, so there would be no effect of limiting motorized use to open roads under Alternative 2. These trail corridors would continue to provide a quiet setting.

Trails (Alt. 2 - Forest Trail System #2, #4, #5, and #6)

All of SRA trails are primarily used by hikers and maintained for foot travel. Under Alternative 2, a net increase in miles of trails could occur to disperse use away from the medium and high zones into the low intensity zone to improve opportunities for a quiet setting by lowering encounters with other users. These trails would introduce people into areas that may have received very little or no use, which could create impacts to resources if not managed. Bike and horse use could be restricted on new trails to protect the environment. However, management standards (Recreation Management #4) have been identified to reduce social conflicts and resource degradation as a result of recreation use so no adverse affects are anticipated.

Motorized Vehicles On 2209 Road (Alt. 2 - Road System #6, #7, and #8)

The 2209 Road beyond the gate is currently closed to public vehicle access, but would continue to allow access by inholders to Jawbone Flats, and for other administrative access. It is anticipated that conflicts between administrative vehicles and pedestrians sharing the 2209 road beyond the gate would be minimized during peak use with travel restricted to specific times and frequency. Motorized access to private land by inholders would be limited to the established timeframes, requiring the inholder to schedule and plan trips in advance. This would limit the flexibility that currently exists. During non-peak use, when there are no restrictions, hikers may encounter vehicles along the 2209 road beyond the gate.

Firearms (Alt. 2 - Recreation Management #7 and #8)

Currently, target shooting is an activity found within all zones except for the very low, and more commonly within the high intensity zone.

Discharging of firearms is done at locations and in a manner that is not legal under the Code of Federal Regulations including unsafe shooting practices near occupied areas, or vandalism to property and resources. Visitors regularly report complaints to rangers and law enforcement officials about unsafe firearm use, noise disturbance, and ammunition litter that is left on site. Alternative 2 would reduce the amount of firearm use, noise disturbance, and damage to resources and property provided it is adequately enforced.

No firearm restrictions would occur in the low and very low intensity zones. In Alternative 2, discharging of firearms for hunting and target shooting would continue within the low and very low zones, and may cause some noise disturbance to others and damage to resources in a few popular dispersed areas. Existing CFR's prohibit discharging of firearms adjacent occupied areas, such as dispersed sites, and across lake, streams, trails and roads, minimizing noise disturbance around these sites. Noise disturbance as a result of firearm use at popular dispersed sites in the low intensity zone would likely continue when law enforcement is not present. Due to the lack of road and trails within the very low intensity zone, firearm use is incidental and the chance of encountering another user is very low. This will likely not have an effect on someone seeking solitude. However, noise from firearm use in an adjacent zone or area outside the SRA could be heard from a distance.

Special Forest Products (Alt. 2 - Special Forest Products #1)

Under Alternative 2, only tribal uses of nontraditional forest products and limited personal non-commercial use associated with recreational activities would be allowed including plant cuttings without mortality; gathering fruits, mushrooms and nuts; and firewood gathering for on-site campfires. Firewood availability for personal and commercial use is not allowed under the legislation. This alternative allows people to get a personal use permit to harvest certain forest products to take home with them, which would result in the removal of vegetation above incidental use, and thereby minimally altering the natural quality of the environment. This would occur in a very small portion of the SRA primarily where access is available, and would likely not be noticeable.

Mineral Collecting Activities (Alt. 2 - Minerals and Energy #6)

By only allowing panning as a recreational mineral collecting activity, and restricting this activity to a small corridor, would reduce the amount of noise in the SRA.

Alternative 3

This alternative would have similar effects as described in Alternative 2, except during fire suppression operations. Noise from chainsaws, dozers, and other mechanized equipment would be reduced.

Alternative 4

This alternative would have similar effects as described in Alternative 2.

Alternative 5

Alternative 5 was developed to address this issue by placing a limit on use levels in the entire SRA and restricts certain activities that existed at the time of enactment. As with Alternative 2, several standards that restrict recreation use and activities have been identified in Alternative 5. Each of these standards [identified in ()] will be discussed based on concerns raised during the scoping process.

Limiting Use To Existing Numbers (5-3 and 5-4)

This alternative has the similar effects as Alternative 2, but further restricts the recreation use allowed in the proposed management plan. The very low, low, and high intensity zones would be further affected by limiting use levels to the levels that existed on the date of enactment of the Opal Creek legislation. Dispersed overnight camping and campfires, discharging of firearms, and off-road vehicle use on open roads would be completely prohibited within the entire SRA; and special forest products gathering would be limited to onsite incidental use only.

Overnight Camping (5-6) & Campfires (5-1)

No overnight camping would be allowed except in developed campgrounds displacing this activity to other areas outside of the SRA and increasing the demand for campsites at Shady Cove Campground, which is often filled to capacity during summer weekends. Existing impacted dispersed sites would recover with vegetation, and no conflicts would occur between overnight campers and other recreational activities. Campfires would be allowed within designated rings, and would reduce the risk of the number of abandoned campfires that could damage soil and vegetation and subsequently the aesthetic features people value.

Firearms (5-5), ORV Use (5-7) and Special Forest Products (5-9)

No discharging of firearms or ORV use would be allowed anywhere in the SRA, preserving a quiet setting, and reducing safety problems and conflicts with other visitors. However, these recreational activities existed prior to enactment, and eliminating these opportunities would displace users outside of the SRA. Incidental uses of special forest products would minimally alter the natural quality of the area and be unnoticeable.

Trails (5-2)

No trails would be developed concentrating use on existing trails, which would crowd people at popular sites rather than disperse use or provide desired loop route opportunities many visitors want.

Motorized Vehicles On 2209 Road (5-8)

Under this alternative, motorized use of Forest Road 2209 beyond the gate would be completely prohibited on weekends and limited on weekdays to reduce conflicts with visitors during peak use periods. This would further reduce conflicts occurring between motorized vehicles and pedestrians sharing the same road during these times. Motorized access to private land by inholders would be limited to the established timeframes, requiring the inholder to schedule and plan trips in advance.

Alternative 6

This alternative essentially allows activities to continue that were in existence at the time of enactment of the Opal Creek legislation. In addition, it allows for increasing use levels in all management intensity zones if they are consistent with the protection of resource values of the SRA. As with Alternative 2 and 5, several standards that allow additional recreation use and activities have been identified in Alternative 6. Each of these standards [identified in ()] will be discussed based on concerns raised during the scoping process.

Mineral Collection Activities (6-1, 6-2, and 6-3)

Recreational sluicing and motorized suction dredging could continue to occur within the entire SRA under State and Federal regulations. Motorized suction dredging activities for collecting minerals would create noise in the SRA between July 15th and August 30th. This may affect the opportunity to experience a quiet retreat in proximity to the dredging activities. Panning and sluicing activities would also be allowed in all streams within the SRA, however, these activities should not have any effects on other resources.

Allowing recreational mineral collecting activities on all streams in the SRA, may decrease the potential for people to trespass on existing claims in the area, as there would be more areas available for these activities.

Firearms (6-4) and Target Shooting (6-5)

Hunters would be allowed to discharge firearms and bows in the Medium and High Intensity Zone during the primary hunting seasons after Labor Day to Memorial Day weekend. Therefore hunting activities in the SRA would not be affected. In alternative 6, discharging of firearms could occur anytime within the low and very low zones, which can create noise disturbance adjacent occupied areas.

Prohibiting target shooting, which is the predominant firearm use within the medium and high intensity zones, would affect target shooters by displacing them outside the SRA. High visitor use areas would be safer when free from indiscriminate target shooting, and provides for a quieter forest setting. Resource and property damage would likely be less frequent.

Limiting firearm use would reduce noise during the high use summer season in the medium and high intensity zones.

Bicycle (6-6) and Stock Use (6-7)

Alternative 6 allows bicycle use on the Battle Ax trail (road), and horse use on roads within the high intensity zone, which would not create any new impacts to established roads. These non-motorized activities would not compromise the quiet forest setting.

Alternative 7

This alternative would have similar effects as described in Alternative 2.

D. Issue – The Proposed Management Plan Restricts Recreational Activities That Were in Use on the Date of Enactment and May Not Comply With the Legislation.

Similar to the previous issue discussed, this issue is comprised of several concerns used to develop the overall issue statement specific to allowing additional use to occur at levels and activities established at the date of enactment. These include recreational mineral collecting, firearm and target shooting, trails, roads, limits on use levels and activities, and special forest products.

Effects of Alternative 1 – No Action

Under the Forest Plan, use levels and activities would continue that occurred at the date of enactment, and levels of use would be allowed to increase. It would continue to allow discharging of firearms and recreational mining activities under existing State and Federal regulations. It would continue to allow target shooting in the medium and high intensity zone. Bicycle and stock use in the medium and high zones would not be restricted. No effect to recreational opportunities would occur since all activities would continue to be allowed.

Effects of Alternative 2 – Proposed Action

Alternative 2 has several standards that restrict recreation use and activities. Each of these standards [identified in ()] will be discussed based on concerns raised during the scoping process.

Recreational Mining Activities (Alt. 2 - Minerals and Energy #6)

In Alternative 2, recreational mining activities would be limited to non-motorized panning within a designated corridor. All other streams would be excluded from recreational mining. Furthermore, sluicing and motorized dredging, which were previously allowed under State and Federal regulations, would be prohibited. The SRA has been a long-time, traditional recreational prospecting area for many including generations of families. This would displace these individuals to another area with similar characteristics of the Little North Santiam River, such as the Quartzville Creek Recreational Mining Corridor.

Firearms (Alt. 2 - Recreation Management #7)

Currently, target shooting is a common activity found within these zones, particularly within the high intensity zone. Alternative 2 would reduce the amount of discharging of firearms provided it is adequately enforced. Prohibiting target shooting, which is the predominant firearm use within the medium and high intensity zones, would affect target shooters by displacing them outside the SRA.

The medium and high intensity zones receive less hunting activity than the low intensity zone, where most hunting activity has been observed. Alternative 2 would eliminate the opportunity to hunt within the moderate and high intensity zones displacing hunters into other zones or outside of the SRA.

Bicycle Use on Trails (Alt. 2 - Forest Trail System #5) & Stock Use (#6)
Alternative 2 prohibits bicycle use on the Mike Kopetski-Opal Creek and Battle Ax Trails.

About three percent of bike use that does occur in this zone is found on the road between the gate and Jawbone Flats/Opal Pool. Bike use is infrequently encountered on the Battle Ax and Opal Creek Trails. These two trails lead into the newly designated Opal Creek Wilderness where bicycle use is prohibited. Prohibiting bicycle use on these trails would discourage bicycles from entering the Wilderness. Restricting bicycle use would not affect the majority of bicyclist in Opal Creek due to low use on these trails.

Less than one percent of total users registered at the Opal Creek Gate trailhead are stock users, and this activity could continue under the Alternative 2. Stock use does not occur on the Little North Santiam River Trail, therefore a stock use restriction within the high intensity zone as suggested in alternative 2 is not anticipated to affect or displace stock users using this trail. Stock users who have traditionally traveled Forest Roads within the high intensity zone, would no longer be able to travel this route.

Limiting Use in the Medium Intensity Zone

Within the medium intensity zone, Alternative 2 limits use to levels that existed on the date of enactment of the Opal Creek legislation. This would place a ceiling on number of users and not allow for increasing numbers of visitors. Hikers at the Opal Creek Trailhead would be displaced to other areas in the SRA.

Alternative 2 encourages day-use within the medium zone and provides an option to limit overnight camping and campfires to designated areas. The day-use emphasis as proposed for this zone is generally compatible with existing visitor length-of-stays. If the number of camp and campfire areas is reduced, this may displace some campers or potentially create impact to now undisturbed areas outside of the medium zone.

Special Forest Products (Alt. 2 - Special Forest Products #1)

Under Alternative 2, only tribal uses of nontraditional forest products and limited personal non-commercial use associated with recreational activities would be allowed. This alternative allows people to get a

personal use permit to harvest certain forest products to take home with them. Due to topography and very limited road access, harvesting special forest products within the SRA has not been a traditional practice and opportunities are further limited with decreasing road access. Most special forest product uses within the SRA are associated with a recreational or other personal-use activity such as campfire wood gathering, mushroom gathering and huckleberry picking. Since these would be allowed to continue under the proposed action, no change or effect is expected to occur in the types of special forest product uses.

Recreational Mineral Collecting (Alt. 2 – Minerals & Energy #6)

Alternative 2 only allows panning as a recreational mineral collecting activity and restricts this activity to a small corridor. This may increase the potential for people to trespass on existing claims in the area, as much of the proposed designated corridor already has existing claims. Individuals that prefer to collect minerals with a sluice, dredge, or other mechanized method of mineral collection, would be displaced to another area with similar characteristics of the Little North Santiam River, such as the Quartzville Creek Recreational Mining Corridor.

Effects of Alternative 3 – Light on the Land

This alternative would have similar effects as described in Alternative 2.

Effects of Alternative 4 – Natural Role of Fire

This alternative would have similar effects as described in Alternative 2.

Effects of Alternative 5 – Restricted Use

Alternative 5 would place a ceiling on number of users and not allow for increasing numbers of visitors in the entire SRA. Visitors could be affected by being displaced in the future.

This alternative would eliminate certain recreational activities that occurred at the date of enactment of the Opal Creek legislation. Dispersed overnight camping and campfires, discharging of firearms, and off-road vehicle use on open roads would be completely prohibited within the entire SRA; and special forest products gathering would be limited to onsite incidental use only. All these activities existed prior to enactment, and these opportunities would no longer be available displacing users to areas outside the SRA. Safety would be improved in the SRA by prohibiting ORV use, eliminating firearm use, allowing campfires only in designated fire rings, and limiting motorized use on Forest Road 2209 beyond the gate.

No new trails would be developed and therefore may concentrate use on existing trails. Popular sites would be more crowded rather than dispersing use or providing desired loop route opportunities many visitors want.

Effects of Alternative 6 – Additional Use

Alternative 6 was developed to address this issue, and essentially allows activities and levels of use to continue that were in existence at the time of enactment of the Opal Creek legislation.

Recreational sluicing and motorized dredging would continue to occur anywhere within the entire SRA providing the opportunity for this type of recreational activity.

Other activities would be allowed but still have some degree of limitations. Hunters would be allowed to discharge firearms and bows in the Medium and High Intensity Zone during the primary hunting seasons after Labor Day to Memorial Day weekend. Therefore hunting activities in the SRA would not be affected.

Target shooting would still be prohibited which would affect these users and displace them outside of the SRA. However, high visitor use areas would be safer when free from indiscriminate target shooting, and provides for a quieter forest setting. Resource and property damage would likely be less frequent.

Bicycle use would only be prohibited on the Mike Kopetski/Opal Creek Trail, which would not likely to affect bikers since most use is on the Forest Road 2209. Bicycle use would be allowed on the Battle Ax Trail, which may encourage bicyclists to illegally enter the Opal Creek Wilderness, and may affect the experiences of visitors in the Wilderness.

Within the High Intensity Zone, stock use is permitted on existing roads only. Riding horses on roads that are heavily traveled by motor vehicles increases safety and traffic hazard.

Effects of Alternative 7 – Administrative Cutting of Trees

This alternative would have similar effects as described in Alternative 2.

E. Issue – Legislation Language For Cutting Of Trees

Effects of Alternative 1 – No Action

The Forest Plan allows for the cutting and selling of trees within the Opal Creek SRA. Therefore no additional effects are identified for this alternative.

Effects of Alternative 2 & 7

Alternatives 2 and 7 would prohibit the cutting or removal of trees except for safety, administrative purposes (defined in Alternative 7), and the suppression of wildfire. These alternative do not allow trees to be cut or sold to meet objectives for managing LSR's. Treatments that could protect existing Late Successional stands and would enhance younger stands are not allowed.

Large accumulations of fuels, such as those that occur following windstorms or fire, could not be practically treated. Even if a valid safety issue was established that called for the treatment of fuels, it is very unlikely that sufficient funding would be available to implement the removal. Furthermore, if funding became available to remove fuels from high hazard sites, there does not appear to a mechanism for disposing of potentially huge volumes of material that would be generated, since it would overwhelm any local use of firewood in campgrounds or other potential administrative uses.

Hazard reduction to protect administrative and private facilities from potential fire does not appear to be permissible, if cutting of trees is not allowed. As above, removal and disposal of trees with no ability to sell them would be an out-of-pocket expense that is unlikely to be funded. Yearly maintenance of roads and campgrounds, which includes the cutting of trees, will require appropriated funding for cutting and removal of trees since there is no commercial alternative.

Without an established firewood removal program, the possibility of theft of down woody material along roadsides may increase.

Effects of Alternative 3, 4, 5, and 6

The cutting of trees for administrative purposes would be the same as described in Alternative 2.

Cumulative Effects

In the long-run, the inability to implement a preventative fuel treatment program would likely result in heavy accumulations of localized fuels and overall would not allow an effective plan to be carried out in the SRA. Large disturbances, such as blowdown from wind storms and insect and disease infestations, could very likely occur that generate high fuel accumulations and stands that mature and develop at higher rates of mortality and susceptibility to fire. When large fires do occur, they can be expected to be larger and more intense than would be the case if preventative treatment was carried out.

2. Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species

Wildlife Species

Threatened or Endangered Species

All action alternatives will not affect bald eagles or their habitat; or impact harlequin ducks and peregrine falcons or their habitat.

Northern spotted owl – Threatened

The proposed project will not affect spotted owls or their habitat. Potential risks of catastrophic stand replacing fires are increased with all action alternatives. Habitat is not being affected by the proposed alternatives.

There is potential for possible long-term mature and old growth ecosystem maintenance deficiencies with all action alternatives as a result of the area no longer being managed a Late Successional Reserve.

Effects on Other Sensitive Wildlife Species

The proposed project will not impact the following species or their habitat: Horned grebes; buffleheads; black swifts; Canada Lynx; Baird's shrew; Pacific shrew; pacific fringe-tailed bat; wolverines; pacific fisher; Northwestern Pond turtle; Oregon slender salamander; cascade torrent salamander; foothill yellow-legged frog; Oregon Spotted frog.

3. Fisheries

Effects of all alternatives would be on **resident fish species**, such as rainbow and cutthroat trout and their habitat; and **anadromous fish species**, such as spring chinook and the essential habitat for this species, and winter steelhead and their habitat.

For all alternatives, there are no effects to bull trout or Oregon Chub as there are no individuals or habitat present within the project area for these species.

Effects of Alternative 1 – No Action

Alternative 1 may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect any threatened or endangered fish species in the Little North Santiam River Drainage. Management under the 1990 Forest Plan, as modified by the Northwest Forest Plan, should see a slow, long-term improvement of fish habitat condition in the Little North Santiam Drainage (Little North Santiam Watershed Analysis 1998). The potential risks to fish habitat are that Alternative 1 allows for panning, sluicing and motorized dredging throughout the SRA. Based on the general stability of the Opal Creek SRA and the likely activities that might take place under Alternative 1 such as road, trail and campground maintenance, recreational mining, general recreation activities, and mining activities on claims, there should be very minor effects to spring chinook salmon and winter steelhead or their habitat.

Effects of Alternatives 2 through 7 – Action Alternatives

For all action alternatives, this project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, winter steelhead or their habitat. In **Alternative 2**, eliminating dredging activities reduces impacts to potential salmon spawning habitat. In **Alternative 3**, eliminating the use of retardant and mechanized equipment for fire suppression reduces the risk of retardant entering surface waters, and reduces the amount of sediment produced by large fireline constructed by dozers. However, without the use of mechanized equipment and retardant, fires may grow larger in size. This may create short term effects to water quality and fish habitat for 1-2 years following large scale fires that could erode silt and ash from the burn area into streams causing a reduction in habitat quality for resident and anadromous species. Effects from **Alternative 4** would be similar to Alternative 3 if fires burned large areas when allowed to burn under historic fire regimes. Stream flow may be increased as a result of increased snow reaching the ground and less evapotranspiration in canopy. Water temperatures in streams within the burned area may increase as shading is reduced following large crown-fires. In **Alternative 5**, effects would be similar as described in Alternative 2. In **Alternative 6** sluicing and dredging activities are not expected to have any impacts to fish species or their habitat as long as activities occur within the guidelines established by ODF&W. **Alternative 7** would have similar effects as described in Alternative 2.

4. Sensitive Plants

Only one Region 6 sensitive plant species has been documented in the Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area (SRA): Gorman's aster (*Aster gormanii*). Gorman's aster occurs on dry, exposed scree slopes at mid to high elevations. The Gorman's aster subpopulation that occurs in the Opal Creek SRA is located above Sullivan Creek, and nearby subpopulations occur in the vicinities of Rocky Top and Cedar Creek. Each of these subpopulations appear to be stable.

The area where the Gorman's aster subpopulation exists in the Opal Creek SRA will either fall into the low intensity zone or the very low intensity zone in **Alternative 2**. In general, **Alternative 2** should result in less net human caused disturbance and more educational awareness of Gorman's aster habitat. As a result of the expectation that human disturbance in this area will not increase substantially over the no action alternative, neither direct, indirect, nor cumulative effects are anticipated for Gorman's aster or the habitat of any other R-6 sensitive plant population due to the implementation of **Alternative 2**.

The proposed standards in **Alternatives 2, 5, 6, and 7** regarding levels of use in the SRA, road and trail building, tree cutting, and bike riding, are not expected to impact Gorman's aster or its habitat beyond what would be

expected in **Alternative 1**, and in some cases, are less destructive. Of these, trail building would be the most likely threat, and that disturbance could not be occur under any alternative without environmental review.

It is not clear what role fire may play in the population dynamics of Gorman's aster, as well as for other sensitive and Survey & Manage species. Late successional reserve fire management (**Alternatives 1&2**) allows for the development of fire management plans and consultations with resource specialists in order to fit fire management to resource needs. This provides flexibility in species management as new information on these species becomes available. **Alternative 3** may represent a threat to aster habitat, if minimal suppression tactics prove less than adequate in directing fire away from populations. Conversely, **Alternative 3** prohibits mechanized fire equipment such as bulldozers, commonly used to create firebreaks on ridgetops. This would eliminate one of the threats posed to aster's ridgetop habitat by wildfire. **Alternative 4** is similar to **3**, except that no fire suppression effort would be attempted, further reducing the options to prevent large scale fire events.

5. Migratory Birds

There would be no effects to migratory birds as there are no timber stand altering projects proposed with this project.

Each type of migratory bird specializes in a habitat niche and are widely distributed within the Pacific Northwest during the summer nesting season. Altering habitat may favor one species but not favor another with the overall effect being insignificant. Generally forested habitats would contain warblers, swallows, swifts and other migratory species. Riparian areas having alder and maple may contain the same species as the forest, but with higher densities of riparian specialized species of warblers, flycatchers, etc.

6. Survey & Manage/Protection Buffer Species Wildlife

Canada Lynx & Great Grey Owls, Mollusks, and Red Tree Voles

All action alternatives would not affect habitat for survey and manage wildlife species. Projects proposed within the Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area would be analyzed individually for their potential to affect S&M species. Surveys would be conducted as needed for projects in the area.

Survey and Manage Plants

The Opal Creek SRA contains habitat for a number of various lichen, fungal, and bryophytic Survey & Manage species. As mentioned in the Sensitive Plants section, it is not clear to what degree these species might be fire adapted, and to what types of fire regimes they might be adapted to. Of equal concern to the consequence of fire suppression is the consequence of

fuel buildup that may increase the likelihood of an uncharacteristically intense and widespread catastrophic fire. To the extent that **Alternatives 3 & 4** reduce the flexibility in fire management and fuels reduction within the Opal Creek SRA, there may well be negative impacts on several Survey & Manage species as a result of the implementation of these alternatives.

The proposed standards in **Alternatives 2, 5, 6, and 7** regarding levels of use in the SRA, road and trail building, and bike riding, are not expected to impact Survey & Manage species or their habitat. Of these, the standard in **Alternative 5**, that puts further restrictions on Special Forest Product collection, may benefit Survey & Manage (especially moss) species.

One former Survey & Manage species, the lichen *Hydrothyria venosa*, may be impacted by the standard in **Alternative 6** that permits motorized suction dredging within the wet perimeter of the stream. This lichen is known to occur in the streambed of the Little North Santiam River. However, this lichen was removed from Survey & Manage status by the *FSEIS For Amendment to the Survey & Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines* (November 2000). This species was considered by the FSEIS to be well distributed, and well protected by riparian reserves and other protective land allocations.

Alternatives 2 & 7 seem to prohibit the use of timber harvest as a tool in habitat enhancement and development, and may result in negative impacts to certain species. This can be a site specific impact, or a landscape scale impact. Site specifically, a particular survey and manage population may require a certain amount of sunlight that can only be achieved by harvesting encroaching trees. On the landscape scale, the Northwest Forest Plan Record of Decision (1994) states "For example, some areas within Late-Successional Reserves are actually young single species stands. Thinning these stands can open up the canopy, thereby increasing diversity of plant and animals and hastening transition to a forest with mature characteristics." (ROD, pg. C-12).

While the relative number of acres of previously managed stands is low, if the management intent for this area is to promote late-successional forest characteristics and promote the affiliated species, then allowing for management decisions that would site-specifically open up a dense stand in order to increase species diversity or assist an uncommon species seems desirable.

7. Heritage Resources

Direct, Indirect and Cumulative Effects

All of the proposed alternatives and associated standards as described in Chapter 2 are consistent with the protection of Heritage Resources and should have no effects on the Opal Creek SRA with the exception of **Alternative 4**. This alternative could potentially affect Heritage Resources for the following reasons:

- 1) A substantial number of acres have never been surveyed within the Scenic Recreation Area; thus, our knowledge of the number and extent of Heritage Properties throughout the SRA is unknown; and
- 2) We do know that numerous sites exist within the High Intensity Zone (historic and prehistoric). Allowing a fire to fulfill a natural role in the ecosystem, through a let burn policy, could potentially damage any research, interpretive or significant values of the historic and prehistoric sites. The amount of damage to the resource would be dependent on the intensity and range of the fire.

8. Wild and Scenic Rivers

In all alternatives, the very low intensity zone adjacent to the Elkhorn Creek Wild and Scenic River would be managed consistent to the 'Wild' classification of this creek. No developments within the very low intensity zone presently exist, and all of the alternatives contain a standard that prohibit future development. No affects to the Wild and Scenic River designation are anticipated.

9. Public Health & Safety

All of the alternatives, including the no action, allow for increased law enforcement patrols, provided there is adequate funding for the patrols. In the past, lack of funding has limited the presence of both Forest Service and the Marion County law enforcement officers. Alternatives containing standards that restrict uses will require more law enforcement efforts to be implemented successfully.

10. Unavoidable Adverse Environmental Affects

a. Noxious Weeds

The alternatives most pertinent to noxious weed management include Alternatives 2, 3 & 4. Assuming human disturbance and influence in this area would not increase substantially over the no action alternative due to implementation of Alternative 2 (also 6 & 7), an increase in noxious weed occurrence is not expected. Standards in Alternative 2 that address road closure and decommissioning, and burial of future power lines should result in at least no net increase, and possibly a decrease in noxious weed habitat. Additionally, the Alternative 2

emphasis on scenic and natural resources and the encouragement of educational and research activities within the SRA should also benefit weed control efforts. If the noxious weed standard under Vegetation Management in Alternative 2 can be interpreted as no change in the management of noxious weeds under the Willamette National Forest's Integrated Weed Management EA (1999), neither direct, indirect, nor cumulative effects with regard to the spread of noxious weeds or the effort to control noxious weeds are anticipated as a result of implementation of Alternative 2.

The most prevalent weeds in the SRA include tansy ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), Scot's broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), and St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*). Areas of dry rock garden openings in the SRA have been invaded by these species. Once again, to the extent that Alternatives 4 & 5 reduce the flexibility in fire management and fuels reduction within the Opal Creek SRA, there may be an increased probability of stand replacing fire resulting in enhanced noxious weed habitat as a result if these alternatives are selected.

b. Soils & Hydrology

Under all alternatives, all management activities would be done in such a manner to comply with current standards for soil, water, and riparian management. Affects to soils resources, water quality and quantity would be no different than the those described in the Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended by the Northwest Forest Plan of 1994. In **Alternative 4**, if a determination is made to allow a fire to burn under natural conditions, Best Management Practices incorporated into the Opal Creek Fire Management Plan would protect water quality and soil resources. This would then constitute a *no effect* for soil and water related resources.

c. Late-Successional Reserves

Effects of Alternative 5: Late successional reserve (LSR) objectives may not be met by allowing naturally occurring fires to burn uncontrolled. Without pre-treatment of fuels to reduce accumulated material, the forest may be removed by fire. By consuming the trees in a stand replacing fire, this would not result in the attainment of late successional characteristics which would conflict with LSR management objectives. Maintaining existing mature and old growth species habitat and ecosystems would also be difficult with this alternative.

d. Eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers

The Willamette Forest Plan determined Opal Creek as eligible for the inclusion into the National WSR's System. It was recommended that the entire length of Opal Creek be classified as "Wild" because it is

largely primitive. Opal Creek should be managed as prescribed in the Forest Plan (MA-6a Wild) until suitability has been determined, and does not allow activities that would preclude it from potential National designation. This includes maintaining its free-flowing character and protecting its Outstandingly Remarkable Values. Under MA-6a, the “Wild” corridor should be managed to provide a setting for “Semiprimitive Nonmotorized” recreation.

Opal Creek’s popularity and use levels have increased since the Forest Plan was approved, and often does not provide for a “Semiprimitive Nonmotorized” opportunity on the lower reaches of the creek adjacent to Jawbone Flats or Opal Pool during high use weekends. At the time of enactment, the use levels may not have met the recreation opportunity intended for a “Wild” classification.

None of the alternatives would affect the “Wild” classification for that portion of Opal Creek that lies within the Opal Creek Wilderness. Due to the adjacent developments at Jawbone Flats, the access road adjacent to Opal Pool, and existing use levels, the creek segment within the medium intensity zone would likely qualify for a “Scenic” status as opposed to a “Wild” status. Opal Creek’s free-flowing character and Outstandingly Remarkable Values have been protected to maintain its Wild and Scenic River eligibility. When Opal Creek undergoes a suitability study, the creek would be reevaluated and reclassified at this time.

e. Special Use Authorizations and Existing Permittees

Existing special use permit authorizations would continue to operate under all alternatives. New permits could allow research studies, educational activities and recreational permits, including outfitting and guiding. All alternatives encourage research and education activities, so an increase in these opportunities would be likely. These types of uses are consistent with current special use requests so there would be no change in the types of uses occurring within the SRA. However, the number of permits or limits on numbers of people or “service days” may occur where “activities should be coordinated with recreation management.” In all alternatives, “size and numbers of groups are to be compatible with general public use, and minimize impacts on recreational use and activities or degradation of resources and ecological processes.” Only compatible uses and services that protect or enhance SRA values and objectives would be considered. These considerations may restrict authorization of new permits by limiting available service days, or issuing fewer or no permits at all. New special use authorizations within the medium use intensity zone would likely be most affected and may not be approved under **Alternatives 2**, and all zones may be affected by **Alternative 5**, since use is limited to

levels that existed on the date of enactment of the Opal Creek legislation. Special use authorizations would be least affected in **Alternative 6** since this alternative proposes the least change from existing management direction.

Alternative 2 and 5 may limit the amount of educational activities and programs conducted on National Forest System lands by special use permittees including the Friends of Opal Creek, a current inholder at Jawbone Flats.

11. Irreversible and Irrecoverable Commitments of Resources

No irreversible and/or irretrievable use of the soils or geologic resources is anticipated beyond that which has been previously identified in the Willamette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended.

12. Urban Quality

In general, the area is located in a rural forest setting and no effect to urban quality would result as a result of implementing any alternative.

13. Environmental Justice

The Proposed Action, as described, does fall within compliance with Executive Order 12989 “Federal Action to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations”.

14. Effects on Prime Farmlands, Range Land, or Forest Lands

Department of Agriculture Land Use Policy (DR 9500-3), as discussed in FSH 1909.15-93-1, 65.21 Exhibit 01, states that “Continued conversion of the Nation’s farmlands, forest lands, and rangelands may impair the ability of the United States to produce sufficient food, fiber, and wood to meet the domestic needs and the demands of export markets.” The Department’s responsibility is to assure that the United States retains a farm, range, and forest land base sufficient to produce adequate supplies at reasonable production costs of high quality food, fiber and wood. The Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area has no farm land or range land and therefore would have no effect on these resources. All forested lands within the SRA boundaries would no longer be available as commercial forest timber products as designated by the Opal Creek Legislation described in **Alternative 2**.

CHAPTER 4 – List of Preparers

The following are the members of the interdisciplinary team (IDT) responsible for conducting the environmental assessment for the Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area Management Plan.

Stephanie Phillips – District Ranger

- B.S. Forest Resource Management
- M.S. Silviculture
- 20 years experience Forest Service

Dani Rosetti – Recreation Planner

- B.S. Forest Resources & Recreation Management
- 11 years experience Forest Service

Dave Leach – Natural Resources Assistant / Silviculturist

- R6/PNW Certified Silviculturist
- B.S. Forest Management
- 31 years experience Forest Service

Dave Halemeier - Hydrologist

- B.S. Resource Planning and Interpretation
- M.S. Natural Resources, Watershed Management
- 28 years experience Forest Service

Mike Roantree – Botanist

- B.S. Botany
- M.A. Biology
- 16 years experience Forest Service

Julie Cox – Public Affairs Specialist

Jim Romero – Resource Planner, Team Leader

- B.S. Forest Management
- 14 years experience Forest Service

Doug Shank – Geologist

- B.S. Geology
- M.S. Geology
- 24 years experience Forest Service

Wayne Somes – Fish Biologist

- B.S. Fisheries
- 25 years experience Forest Service

Kelly Esterbrook – Fuels Planner, Assistant Fire Management Officer

- Technical Fire Management
- 24 years experience Forest Service

Cara Kelly – Archaeologist

- B.S. Anthropology
- M.A.I.S. Anthropology
- 13 years experience Forest Service

Daryl Whitmore – Wildlife Biologist

- A.S. Forest Industries Technology
 - B.S. Natural Resource Management
- 14 years experience Forest Service

Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Management Plan Environmental Assessment

Appendices

Appendix A: Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-333)

Appendix B: Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area – Desired Condition

Appendix C: Scenic Integrity

Appendix D: Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)

Appendix E: Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics (MIST)

Appendix F: Public Comments Received / Response to Comments

Appendix A:

**Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996
(Public Law 104-333)**

November 13, 1996

Also referred to as the Opal Creek Act

OPAL CREEK LEGISLATION

P.L. 104-333

**One Hundred Fourth Congress
of the
United States of America**

AT THE SECOND SESSION

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Wednesday,
the third day of January, one thousand nine hundred and ninety-six

AN ACT

To provide for the administration of certain Presidio
properties at minimal cost to the Federal taxpayer, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives
of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS.

This Act may be cited as the "Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996".

Sec. 1. Short title and table of contents.

DIVISION I

TITLE X--MISCELLANEOUS

SUBTITLE C--ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 1023. Opal Creek Wilderness and Scenic Recreation Area.

1023 Opal Creek Wilderness and Scenic Recreation Area (Willamette National Forest) - S1662 (Hatfield, R-OR) - This title establishes the Opal Creek Wilderness, adding approximately 13,212 acres of the Willamette National Forest to the National Wilderness Preservation System. It also establishes the Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area (13,013 acres). These designations do not take effect until certain lands and interests are donated to the United States. This title also designates parts of Elkhorn Creek as a component of the National Wild and Scenic River System.

SEC. 1023. OPAL CREEK WILDERNESS AND SCENIC RECREATION AREA.

(a) DEFINITIONS.--In this section:

(1) BULL OF THE WOODS WILDERNESS.--The term "Bull of the Woods Wilderness" means the land designated as wilderness by section 3(4) of the Oregon Wilderness Act of 1984 (Public Law 98- 328; 16 U.S.C. 1132 note).

(2) OPAL CREEK WILDERNESS.--The term "Opal Creek Wilderness" means certain land in the Willamette National Forest in the State of Oregon comprising approximately 12,800 acres, as generally depicted on the map entitled "Proposed Opal Creek Wilderness and Scenic Recreation Area", dated July 1996.

(3) SCENIC RECREATION AREA.--The term "Scenic Recreation Area" means the Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area, comprising approximately 13,000 acres, as generally depicted on the map entitled "Proposed Opal Creek Wilderness and Scenic Recreation Area", dated July 1996 and established under subsection (c)(1)(C).

(4) SECRETARY.--The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Agriculture.

(b) PURPOSES.--The purposes of this section are--

(1) to establish a wilderness and scenic recreation area to protect and provide for the enhancement of the natural, scenic, recreational, historic and cultural resources of the area in the vicinity of Opal Creek;

(2) to protect and support the economy of the communities of the Santiam Canyon; and

(3) to provide increased protection for an important drinking water source for communities served by the North Santiam River.

(c) ESTABLISHMENT OF OPAL CREEK WILDERNESS AND SCENIC RECREATION AREA.--

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.--On a determination by the Secretary under paragraph (2)--

(A) the Opal Creek Wilderness, as depicted on the map described in subsection (a)(2), is hereby designated as wilderness, subject to the provisions of the Wilderness Act of 1964, shall become a component of the National Wilderness System, and shall be known as the Opal Creek Wilderness;

(B) the part of the Bull of the Woods Wilderness that is located in the Willamette National Forest shall be incorporated into the Opal Creek Wilderness; and

(C) the Secretary shall establish the Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area in the Willamette National Forest in the State of Oregon, comprising approximately 13,000 acres, as generally depicted on the map described in subsection (a)(3).

(2) CONDITIONS.--The designations in paragraph (1) shall not take effect unless the Secretary makes a determination, not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this title, that the following conditions have been met:

(A) the following have been donated to the United States in an acceptable condition and without encumbrances:

(i) all right, title, and interest in the following patented parcels of land--

(I) Santiam Number 1, mineral survey number 992, as described in patent number 39-92-0002, dated December 11, 1991;

(II) Ruth Quartz Mine Number 2, mineral survey number 994, as described in patent number 39-91-0012, dated February 12, 1991;

(III) Morning Star Lode, mineral survey number 993, as described in patent number 36-91-0011, dated February 12, 1991;

(ii) all right, title, and interest held by any entity other than the Times Mirror Land and Timber Company, its successors and assigns, in and to lands located in section 18, township 8 south, range 5 east, Marion County, Oregon, Eureka numbers 6, 7, 8, and 13 mining claims; and

(iii) an easement across the Hewitt, Starvation, and Poor Boy Mill Sites, mineral survey number 990, as described in patent number 36-91-0017, dated May 9, 1991. In the sole discretion of the Secretary, such easement may be limited to administrative use if an alternative access route, adequate and appropriate for public use, is provided.

(B) a binding agreement has been executed by the Secretary and the owners of record as of March 29, 1996, of the following interests, specifying the terms and conditions for the disposition of such interests to the United States Government--

(i) The lode mining claims known as Princess Lode, Black Prince Lode, and King Number 4 Lode, embracing portions of sections 29 and 32, township 8 south, range 5 east, Willamette Meridian, Marion County, Oregon, the claims being more particularly described in the field notes and depicted on the plat of mineral survey number 887, Oregon; and

(ii) Ruth Quartz Mine Number 1, mineral survey number 994, as described in patent number 39-91-0012, dated February 12, 1991.

(3) ADDITIONS TO THE WILDERNESS AND SCENIC RECREATION AREAS.--

(A) Lands or interests in lands conveyed to the United States under this subsection shall be included in and become part of, as appropriate, Opal Creek Wilderness or the Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area.

(B) On acquiring all or substantially all of the land located in section 36, township 8 south, range 4 east, of the Willamette Meridian, Marion County, Oregon, commonly known as the Rosboro section by exchange, purchase from a willing seller, or by donation, the Secretary shall expand the boundary of the Scenic Recreation Area to include such land.

(C) On acquiring all or substantially all of the land located in section 18, township 8 south, range 5 east, Marion County, Oregon, commonly known as the Time Mirror property, by exchange, purchase from a willing seller, or by donation, such land shall be included in and become a part of the Opal Creek Wilderness.

(d) ADMINISTRATION OF THE SCENIC RECREATION AREA.--

(1) IN GENERAL.--The Secretary shall administer the Scenic Recreation Area in accordance with this section and the laws (including regulations) applicable to the National Forest System.

(2) OPAL CREEK MANAGEMENT PLAN.--

(A) IN GENERAL.--Not later than 2 years after the date of establishment of the Scenic Recreation Area, the Secretary, in consultation with the advisory committee established under subsection (e)(1), shall prepare a comprehensive Opal Creek Management Plan (Management Plan) for the Scenic Recreation Area.

(B) INCORPORATION IN LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.-- Upon its completion, the Opal Creek Management Plan shall become part of the land and resource management plan for the Willamette National Forest and supersede any conflicting provision in such land and resource management plan. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to supersede the requirements of the Endangered Species Act or the National Forest Management Act or regulations promulgated under those Acts, or any other law.

(C) REQUIREMENTS.--The Opal Creek Management Plan shall provide for a broad range of land uses, including--

(i) recreation;

(ii) harvesting of nontraditional forest products, such as gathering mushrooms and material to make baskets; and

(iii) educational and research opportunities.

(D) PLAN AMENDMENTS.--The Secretary may amend the Opal Creek Management Plan as the Secretary may determine to be necessary, consistent with the procedures and purposes of this section.

(3) CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY.--

(A) IN GENERAL.--Not later than 1 year after the date of establishment of the Scenic Recreation Area, the Secretary shall review and revise the inventory of the cultural and historic resources on the public land in the Scenic Recreation Area developed pursuant to the Oregon Wilderness Act of 1984 (Public Law 98-328; 16 U.S.C. 1132).

(B) INTERPRETATION.--Interpretive activities shall be developed under the management plan in consultation with State and local historic preservation organizations and shall include a balanced and factual interpretation of the cultural, ecological, and industrial history of forestry and mining in the Scenic Recreation Area.

(4) TRANSPORTATION PLANNING.--

(A) IN GENERAL.--Except as provided in this subparagraph, motorized vehicles shall not be permitted in the Scenic Recreation Area. To maintain reasonable motorized and other access to recreation sites and facilities in existence on the date of enactment of this title, the Secretary shall prepare a transportation plan for the Scenic Recreation Area that-

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(i) evaluates the road network within the Scenic Recreation Area to determine which roads should be retained and which roads should be closed;

(ii) provides guidelines for transportation and access consistent with this section;

(iii) considers the access needs of persons with disabilities in preparing the transportation plan for the Scenic Recreation Area;

(iv) allows forest road 2209 beyond the gate to the Scenic Recreation Area, as depicted on the map described in subsection (a)(2), to be used by motorized vehicles only for administrative purposes and for access by private inholders, subject to such terms and conditions as the Secretary may determine to be necessary; and

(v) restricts construction or improvement of forest road 2209 beyond the gate to the Scenic Recreation Area to maintaining the character of the road as it existed upon the date of enactment of this Act, which shall not include paving or widening. In order to comply with subsection (f)(2), the Secretary may make improvements to forest road 2209 and its bridge structures consistent with the character of the road as it existed on the date of enactment of this Act.

(5) HUNTING AND FISHING.--

(A) IN GENERAL.--Subject to applicable Federal and State law, the Secretary shall permit hunting and fishing in the Scenic Recreation Area.

(B) LIMITATION.--The Secretary may designate zones in which, and establish periods when, no hunting or fishing shall be permitted for reasons of public safety, administration, or public use and enjoyment of the Scenic Recreation Area.

(C) CONSULTATION.--Except during an emergency, as determined by the Secretary, the Secretary shall consult with the Oregon State Department of Fish and Wildlife before issuing any regulation under this subsection.

(6) TIMBER CUTTING.--

(A) IN GENERAL.--Subject to subparagraph (B), the Secretary shall prohibit the cutting and/or selling of trees in the Scenic Reservation Area.

(B) PERMITTED CUTTING.--

(i) IN GENERAL.--Subject to clause (ii), the Secretary may allow the cutting of trees in the Scenic Recreation Area only--

(I) for public safety, such as to control the continued spread of a forest fire in the Scenic Recreation Area or on land adjacent to the Scenic Recreation Area;

(II) for activities related to administration of the Scenic Recreation Area, consistent with the Opal Creek Management Plan; or

(III) for removal of hazard trees along trails and roadways.

(ii) SALVAGE SALES.--The Secretary may not allow a salvage sale in the Scenic Recreation Area.

(7) WITHDRAWAL.--

(A) subject to valid existing rights, all lands in the Scenic Recreation Area are withdrawn from--

(i) any form of entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public lands laws;

(ii) location, entry, and patent under the mining laws; and

(iii) disposition under the mineral and geothermal leasing laws.

(8) BORNITE PROJECT.--

(A) Nothing in this section shall be construed to interfere with or approve any exploration, mining, or mining-related activity in the Bornite Project Area, depicted on the map described in subsection (a)(3), conducted in accordance with applicable laws.

(B) Nothing in this section shall be construed to interfere with the ability of the Secretary to approve and issue, or deny, special use permits in connection with exploration, mining, and mining-related activities in the Bornite Project Area.

(C) Motorized vehicles, roads, structures, and utilities (including but not limited to power lines and water lines) may be allowed inside the Scenic Recreation Area to serve the activities conducted on land within the Bornite Project.

(D) After the date of enactment of this Act, no patent shall be issued for any mining claim under the general mining laws located within the Bornite Project Area.

(9) WATER IMPOUNDMENTS.--Notwithstanding the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 791a et seq.), the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission may not license the construction of any dam, water conduit, reservoir, powerhouse, transmission line, or other project work in the Scenic Recreation Area, except as may be necessary to comply with the provisions of paragraph (8) with regard to the Bornite Project.

(10) RECREATIONS.--

(A) RECOGNITION.--Congress recognizes recreation as an appropriate use of the Scenic Recreation Area.

(B) MINIMUM LEVELS.--The management plan shall permit recreation activities at not less than the levels in existence on the date of enactment of this Act.

(C) HIGHER LEVELS.--The management plan may provide for levels of recreation use higher than the levels in existence on the date of enactment of this Act if such uses are consistent with the protection of the resource values of the Scenic Recreation Area.

(D) The management plan may include public trail access through section 28, township 8 south, range 5 east, Willamette Meridian, to Battle Ax Creek, Opal Pool and other areas in the Opal Creek Wilderness and the Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area.

(11) PARTICIPATION.--So that the knowledge, expertise, and views of all agencies and groups may contribute affirmatively to the most sensitive present and future use of the Scenic Recreation Area and its various subareas for the benefit of the public:

(A) ADVISORY COUNCIL.--The Secretary shall consult on a periodic and regular basis with the advisory council established under subsection (e) with respect to matters relating to management of the Scenic Recreation Area.

(B) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.--The Secretary shall seek the views of private groups, individuals, and the public concerning the Scenic Recreation Area.

(C) OTHER AGENCIES.--The Secretary shall seek the views and assistance of, and cooperate with, any other Federal, State, or local agency with any responsibility for the zoning, planning, or natural resources of the Scenic Recreation Area.

(D) NONPROFIT AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS.--The Secretary shall seek the views of any nonprofit agency or organization that may contribute information or expertise about the resources and the management of the Scenic Recreation Area.

(e) ADVISORY COUNCIL.--

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.--Not later than 90 days after the establishment of the Scenic Recreation Area, the Secretary shall establish an advisory council for the Scenic Recreation Area.

(2) MEMBERSHIP.--The advisory council shall consist of not more than 13 members, of whom--

(A) 1 member shall represent Marion County, Oregon, and shall be designated by the governing body of the county;

(B) 1 member shall represent the State of Oregon and shall be designated by the Governor of Oregon;

(C) 1 member shall represent the City of Salem, and shall be designated by the mayor of Salem, Oregon;

(D) 1 member from a city within a 25-mile radius of the Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area, to be designated by the Governor of the State of Oregon from a list of candidates provided by the mayors of the cities located within a 25- mile radius of the Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area; and

(E) not more than 9 members shall be appointed by the Secretary from among persons who, individually or through association with a national or local organization, have an interest in the administration of the Scenic Recreation Area, including, but not limited to, representatives of the timber industry, environmental organizations, the mining industry, inholders in the Opal Creek Wilderness and Scenic Recreation Area, economic development interests and Indian tribes.

(3) STAGGERED TERMS.--Members of the advisory council shall serve for staggered terms of 3 years.

(4) CHAIRMAN.--The Secretary shall designate 1 member of the advisory council as chairman.

(5) VACANCIES.--The Secretary shall fill a vacancy on the advisory council in the same manner as the original appointment.

(6) COMPENSATION.--Members of the advisory council shall receive no compensation for their service on the advisory council.

(f) GENERAL PROVISIONS.--

(1) LAND ACQUISITION.--

(A) IN GENERAL.--Subject to the other provisions of this section, the Secretary may acquire any lands or interests in land in the Scenic Recreation Area or the Opal Creek Wilderness that the Secretary determines are needed to carry out this section.

(B) PUBLIC LAND.--Any lands or interests in land owned by a State or a political subdivision of a State may be acquired only by donation or exchange.

(C) CONDEMNATION.--Within the boundaries of the Opal Creek Wilderness or the Scenic Recreation Area, the Secretary may not acquire any privately owned land or interest in land without the consent of the owner unless the Secretary finds that--

(i) the nature of land use has changed significantly, or the landowner has demonstrated intent to change the land use significantly, from the use that existed on the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(ii) acquisition by the Secretary of the land or interest in land is essential to ensure use of the land or interest in land in accordance with the purposes of this title or the management plan prepared under subsection (d)(2).

(D) Nothing in this section shall be construed to enhance or diminish the condemnation authority available to the Secretary outside the boundaries of the Opal Creek Wilderness or the Scenic Recreation Area.

(2) ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE ACTIONS AND COST RECOVERY.--

(A) RESPONSE ACTIONS.--Nothing in this section shall limit the authority of the Secretary or a responsible party to conduct an environmental response action in the Scenic Recreation Area in connection with the release, threatened release, or cleanup of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant, including a response action conducted under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9601 et seq.).

(B) LIABILITY.--Nothing in this section shall limit the authority of the Secretary or a responsible party to recover costs related to the release, threatened release, or cleanup of any hazardous substance or pollutant or contaminant in the Scenic Recreation Area.

(3) MAPS AND DESCRIPTION.--

(A) IN GENERAL.--As soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall file a map and a boundary description for the Opal Creek Wilderness and for the Scenic Recreation Area with the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate.

(B) FORCE AND EFFECT.--The boundary description and map shall have the same force and effect as if the description and map were included in this section, except that the Secretary may correct clerical and typographical errors in the boundary description and map.

(C) AVAILABILITY.--The map and boundary description shall be on file and available for public inspection in the Office of the Chief of the Forest Service, Department of Agriculture.

(4) SAVINGS PROVISION.--Nothing in this section shall interfere with activity for which a special use permit has been issued, has not been revoked, and has not expired, before the date of enactment of this Act, subject to the terms of the permit.

(g) ROSBORO LAND EXCHANGE.--

(1) AUTHORIZATION.--Notwithstanding any other law, if the Rosboro Lumber Company (referred to in this subsection as "Rosboro") offers and conveys marketable title to the United States to the land described in paragraph (2), the Secretary of Agriculture shall convey all right, title and interest held by the United States to sufficient lands described in paragraph (3) to Rosboro, in the order in which they appear in this subsection, as necessary to satisfy the equal value requirements of paragraph (4).

(2) LAND TO BE OFFERED BY ROSBORO.--The land referred to in paragraph (1) as the land to be offered by Rosboro shall comprise Section 36, Township 8 South, Range 4 East, Willamette Meridian.

(3) LAND TO BE CONVEYED BY THE UNITED STATES.--The land referred to in paragraph (1) as the land to be conveyed by the United States shall comprise sufficient land from the following prioritized list to be equal value under paragraph (4):

(A) Section 5, Township 17 South, Range 4 East, Lot 7 (37.63 acres);

(B) Section 2, Township 17 South, Range 4 East, Lot 3 (29.28 acres);

(C) Section 13, Township 17 South, Range 4 East, S 1/2 SE 1/4 (80 acres);

(D) Section 2, Township 17 South, Range 4 East, SW 1/4 SW 1/4 (40 acres);

(E) Section 2, Township 17 South, Range 4 East, NW 1/4 SE 1/4 (40 acres);

(F) Section 8, Township 17 South, Range 4 East, SE 1/4 SW 1/4 (40 acres);

(G) Section 11, Township 17 South, Range 4 East, W 1/2 NW 1/4 (80 acres);

(4) EQUAL VALUE.--The land and interests in land exchanged under this subsection shall be of equal market value as determined by nationally recognized appraisal standards, including, to the extent appropriate, the Uniform Standards for Federal Land Acquisition, the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice, or shall be equalized by way of payment of cash pursuant to the provisions of section 206(d) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1716(d)), and other applicable law. The appraisal shall consider access costs for the parcels involved.

(5) TIMETABLE.--

(A) The exchange directed by this subsection shall be consummated not later than 120 days after the date Rosboro offers and conveys the property described in paragraph (2) to the United States.

(B) The authority provided by this subsection shall lapse if Rosboro fails to offer the land described in paragraph (2) within 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

(6) CHALLENGE.--Rosboro shall have the right to challenge in the United States District Court for the District of Oregon a determination of marketability under paragraph (1) and a determination of value for the lands described in paragraphs (2) and (3) by the Secretary of Agriculture. The court shall have the authority to order the Secretary to complete the transaction contemplated in this subsection.

(7) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.--There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this subsection.

(h) DESIGNATION OF ELKHORN CREEK AS A WILD AND SCENIC RIVER.-- Section 3(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1274(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(A) ELKHORN CREEK.--The 6.4-mile segment traversing federally administered lands from that point along the Willamette National Forest boundary on the common section line between Sections 12 and 13, Township 9 South, Range 4 East, Willamette Meridian, to that point where the segment leaves Federal ownership along the Bureau of Land Management boundary in Section 1, Township 9 South, Range 3 East, Willamette Meridian, in the following classes:

“(i) a 5.8-mile wild river area, extending from that point along the Willamette National Forest boundary on the common section line between Sections 12 and 13, Township 9 South, Range 4 East, Willamette Meridian, to its confluence with Buck Creek in Section 1, Township 9 South, Range 3 East, Willamette Meridian, to be

administered as agreed on by the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior, or as directed by the President; and

"(ii) a 0.6-mile scenic river area, extending from the confluence with Buck Creek in Section 1, Township 9 South, Range 3 East, Willamette Meridian, to that point where the segment leaves Federal ownership along the Bureau of Land Management boundary in Section 1, Township 9 South, Range 3 East, Willamette Meridian, to be administered by the Secretary of Interior, or as directed by the President.

"(B) Notwithstanding section 3(b) of this Act, the lateral boundaries of both the wild river area and the scenic river area along Elkhorn Creek shall include an average of not more than 640 acres per mile measured from the ordinary high water mark on both sides of the river."

(i) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.--

(1) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN.--As a condition for receiving funding under paragraph (2), the State of Oregon, in consultation with Marion County, Oregon, and the Secretary of Agriculture, shall develop a plan for economic development projects for which grants under this subsection may be used in a manner consistent with this section and to benefit local communities in the vicinity of the Opal Creek area. Such plan shall be based on an economic opportunity study and other appropriate information.

(2) FUNDS PROVIDED TO THE STATES FOR GRANTS.--Upon completion of the Opal Creek Management Plan, and receipt of the plan referred to in paragraph (1), the Secretary shall provide, subject to appropriations, \$15,000,000 to the State of Oregon. Such funds shall be used to make grants or loans for economic development projects that further the purposes of this section and benefit the local communities in the vicinity of the Opal Creek area.

(3) REPORT.--The State of Oregon shall--

(A) prepare and provide the Secretary and Congress with an annual report on the use of the funds made available under this subsection;

(B) make available to the Secretary and to Congress, upon request, all accounts, financial records, and other information related to grants and loans made available pursuant to this subsection; and

(C) as loans are repaid, make additional grants and loans with the money made available for obligation by such repayments.

Special Uses

Compatible special uses such as research studies, educational activities, and recreation permits that support and contribute to the values for which the SRA was created are permitted.

Tribes

The SRA is part of the homeland for native Indian tribes and bands where sacred sites, cultural resources and culturally important areas continue to serve an important role in the tribes' cultural heritage. Trust responsibilities to Indian tribes are met on a continuing basis through strong government-to-government relationships. Formal consultation processes with appropriate tribes ensure compliance with applicable laws, and encourage meaningful tribal involvement in the management of the SRA. Meaningful tribal involvement is encouraged on matters including but not limited to: sacred sites; sacred or ceremonial traditions; activities that affect cultural resources; cultural studies of mutual interest; and gathering of traditional use information.

Local Communities

The economies of local communities benefit from safe, reasonable access to and use of the SRA. In addition to adequate facilities, the quality and variety of the recreational opportunities create a positive visitor experience, and encourage new and return visitation. Recreational and educational opportunities offered within the SRA, as well as the attractiveness of the area as a safe place to visit, benefit the local economy by drawing visitors many of whom will patronize local businesses. People are attracted to the natural and scenic amenities of the SRA and move to nearby communities, bringing income and new businesses.

Information is made easily available to visitors interested in opportunities to recreate in the SRA. Local communities have the opportunity to promote the area and its resource values while supporting a responsible level of tourism and visitation to the SRA.

When practical, the Forest Service and Advisory Council monitor and participate in the development of local and regional management plans to facilitate integration with the SRA management plan and identifies mutually beneficial cooperative opportunities.



Access road to Jawbone Flats

Inholders

Inholders within the SRA consist of both property owners of Jawbone Flats and mine claim holders. Inholders within the SRA provide unique and invaluable opportunities for partnership with the Forest Service. Partnerships with inholders are encouraged and provide support in management, education, historic preservation, safety, research, monitoring and stewardship within the SRA. Through formal partnerships and other more general cooperative efforts, inholders may help further the goals of the SRA management plan. Inholders help to preserve the natural and the cultural heritage of the region and to promote conscientious stewardship of the SRA. The inholder at Jawbone Flats occupies a focal geographic location in the SRA and operates a year-round educational center. The center's education, conservation, historic preservation, and stewardship activities are integrated into the management of the SRA.

Inholders continue to have the right to reasonable access to and use of their property as provided by law. Inholder access along the 2209 Road occurs in a manner that is consistent with the provisions of the Opal Creek Act. Forest administration, Inholder activities, and public use harmoniously co-exist along this road. Vehicular traffic on the 2209 Road is minimized to enhance visitor experience while not compromising access needed by inholders and the Forest Service.

Mining

With the exception of non-motorized recreational panning and rock hounding occurring in designated corridors, and subject to valid existing rights as stipulated in the Opal Creek legislation, no mining takes place within the Scenic Recreation Area. Recreationists are informed of appropriate panning practices, and comply with State and Federal laws and regulations. The riverbed and bank remains largely undisturbed, which allows natural processes to continue.



Recreational panning at the Little North Santiam

Visitors gain knowledge and respect of the geologic history of the SRA and have come to understand the importance of geology to ecology, archaeology and the landscape, and historical mining tradition. Representative features of historic mining activities are preserved to maintain the local historical integrity of the area and are a significant part of the education and interpretive activities within the SRA. Some mines continue to provide bat habitat.

Scenery

The landscape is naturally-evolving and appearing¹, which is composed of several rustic historic mining sites representing important events and periods of human activity in the SRA. The valued landscape character and sense of place is expressed at the highest possible level. To the average visitor, the landscape appears as an unaltered and intact natural setting, and is characterized as having high scenic integrity² along travel corridors and around recreational use areas, and very high scenic integrity² within the Elkhorn drainage. Deviations may be present but repeat the form, line, color, texture and pattern common to the landscape character so completely and at such a scale that they are not evident. It reflects the diversity, beauty, ecology and historic human activity of a unique low elevation west Cascades temperate forest.

Management activities are conducted in such a way that they are completely subordinate to the character of the natural landscape and not evident to the casual Forest visitor. Sensitive forest foregrounds along travel corridors maintain a natural setting. Facilities are designed for the enjoyment of the SRA's natural and cultural resources while preserving the focal points of interest, rather than serving as attractions in themselves. Developments harmonize with the natural environment. Disturbance by human activity and development is managed to mitigate and reverse impact on scenic resources.

Education, Interpretation and Research

The SRA offers a wide range of high quality educational and interpretive experiences to all people as well as unique and significant research opportunities. Interpretive and educational activities are available and include a balanced and factual interpretation of the cultural, ecological and industrial history of forestry and mining in the SRA. Since native Indian tribes have a unique relationship with the natural world, coordinating with local tribes enhances the educational and scientific



Environmental education tour

¹/ See Appendix C

value of interpretive projects, cultural studies and research. Organized educational activities provide people with opportunities to learn about the virtues and values of the area.

Interpretive activities enhance the understanding that the human species is part of an interdependent web of life as exemplified by the complex relationships among the natural features, processes, and living organisms of the Opal Creek forest ecosystem. Educational experiences promote respect for and

stewardship of these interconnected relationships upon which all life depends. Watershed perspectives also receive emphasis.

Effective, engaging interpretation inspires visitors' curiosity and wonder, increases their understanding of forest ecosystems and instills a sense of stewardship. Visitors are motivated to respect the natural and cultural resources and protect the area's special features. Interpretive facilities and signs are aesthetically compatible and durable in design, maintained in an undamaged state, and are engaging and easily understood by all visitors.

Scientific research projects aid in public understanding of forest ecosystems and watersheds, and how these natural processes function. Student and public participation in research is encouraged and contributes to high quality educational experiences. Research results are widely and publicly accessible.

Organizations, interest groups, watershed councils, municipalities, academic community, Tribes and local communities, including schools are involved in developing interpretive and education programs. Strong partnerships and mutually benefiting cooperative opportunities between the Forest Service and local, state and national organizations and agencies support and generate both education and research activities.

Recreation, Access and Facilities

Visitors to the Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area can participate in a wide range of year-round activities in a safe and natural appearing setting. Both developed and dispersed recreational opportunities are available that range from Roaded Natural to Primitive within the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)². Activities may include hiking, picnicking, camping, fishing, swimming, non-motorized boating, horseback-riding, scenic viewing, recreational panning, nature study, mountain-biking, hunting, snow-shoeing and Nordic skiing. Except for motorized access on open roads, activities associated with the SRA are non-motorized in nature.



Use and occupancy are managed to protect natural and cultural resources, minimize depreciative behavior, prevent conflicting uses, and to ensure healthy, safe and enjoyable recreational experiences. Resource destruction, vandalism and disturbances to visitors are minimal. A higher degree of regulation and management

²/ See Appendix D

presence occurs in management zones of intensive use. Recreation activities are permitted at a level not less than those that existed on the date of enactment of the Opal Creek legislation. The SRA accommodates increasing numbers of visitors in many areas while ensuring that ecosystem values are protected, and quality of recreational experiences and objectives for which the SRA was established are maintained.

Information and education enhance visitors' knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of the SRA, and encourage appropriate and safe use. Innovative programs such as partnerships, volunteers, and co-operative agreements assist in reducing Forest Service operational costs and maximizing visitor educational opportunities. Visitors have an understanding of imposed limitations to protect ecological processes and how individual behavior affects the natural environment, and safety and enjoyment of other visitors. They comply with regulations and follow "leave no trace" practices.

The SRA is easily and safely accessed by Forest Roads 2209 and 2207, and provides pleasurable scenic driving experiences. Access to recreation sites and facilities in existence on the date of enactment of the Opal Creek legislation is maintained. Motorized use is managed to meet recreational and resource objectives. The roads provide safe access to recreation sites and major trailheads with minimal dust and noise around major use areas. Road congestion around recreation sites is minimal with adequate parking to protect resources and aesthetics, and ensure safety. Roads



Overflow parking along Road 2207 at 3 Pools

are maintained to a standard appropriate for the setting they traverse, the volume of traffic and the types of vehicles commensurate with recreation and resource management objectives. Forest Road 2209 beyond the gate accommodates reasonable motorized access to private Inholder land and for Forest Service administrative purposes, and does not detract from visitor experiences. The character of this segment of the road remains as it existed at the time of enactment of the Opal Creek legislation. A system of inter-linking non-motorized trails disperses use, enhances visitors' enjoyment of the SRA, and provides various challenge levels. Persons with disabilities have access to some parts of the SRA.

Campgrounds, trails and other facilities provide opportunities to enjoy the SRA's natural and cultural resources, rather than serving as attractions in themselves. Development is at the minimum level necessary to accommodate use and provide for public enjoyment of the SRA while protecting resource values and the character of the area. Development planning considers such factors as user needs and demand patterns, specific site suitability, resource objectives and cost efficiency of

installation, operation and maintenance. Facilities are kept in good condition and appear well maintained to desired standards and service levels.

High use areas meet sanitary and safety needs, and protect fragile resources. Dispersed camp areas retain the appearance of natural conditions, and are compatible with other resource values, and managed to minimize user conflicts and wildfire risk.

Recreation Management Intensity Zones

The SRA is divided into four management zones based on recreation use intensity that determine: types of experiences and relative amount of use recreationists can expect; types of recreational activities are appropriate; types and level of developments and where facilities are appropriate; and degrees to which visitors are regulated or managed by onsite controls as well as the types of information and interpretive services provided.

Very Low Intensity Zone *(This zone encompasses the Elkhorn drainage below Elkhorn Road and Ridge Trail. It includes the Wild river section of the Elkhorn Wild and Scenic River corridor on NFS lands)*

This zone is managed to provide opportunities for the most primitive recreational experiences. The area is characterized as an unmodified natural environment of very high scenic integrity, and remains undeveloped with little or no evidence of recent human activity or impacts. No roads (except existing Road 351 to State land), bridges, trails, recreation facilities or other resource developments are present. The area is generally inaccessible and can only be reached by cross-country travel over very rugged terrain.



Elkhorn Creek drainage

Activities are exclusively non-motorized in nature. Recreation use and interaction between visitors is very low, and opportunity to experience considerable isolation from the sights and sounds of human activity is very high. The area offers visitors potential to experience a high degree of solitude and tranquility, with many opportunities to appreciate the natural environment, and learning by investigation and self-discovery. Visitors understand that a high degree of self-reliance and knowledge of primitive outdoor skills are required in order to meet the inherent challenge and risk of the natural environment. Management of the area is done in a non-obtrusive manner emphasizing minimal visible evidence of management restrictions and controls.

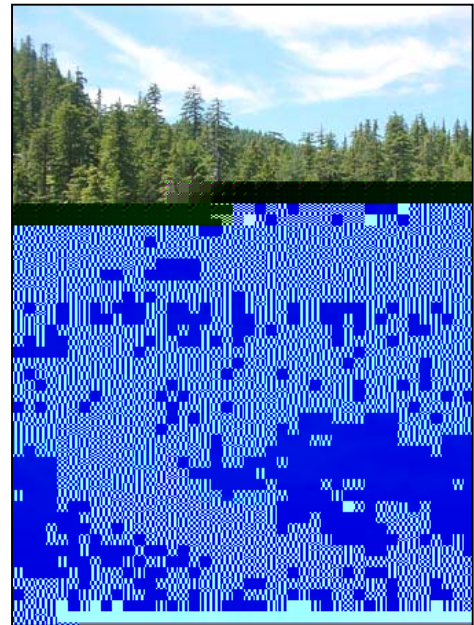
The wild river segment of Elkhorn Creek Wild and Scenic River is free of impoundments with no dams, diversions or water resource projects. The watershed and shoreline appear as wild to the user and represent a vestige of primitive America.

Low Intensity Zone *(This zone includes the Opal Creek general undeveloped area and transition zones into Wilderness including: Opal Creek beyond Opal Pool; Battle Axe Creek; Elkhorn Ridge and Lake; Stoney Ridge; and former Rosoboro section)*

This zone is managed to provide opportunities for dispersed semi-primitive motorized and non-motorized recreation experiences. The area is characterized as a natural environment of high scenic integrity essentially undeveloped. Recreation use varies by season but generally remains light to moderate. There are usually not more than moderate numbers of people present along roads and trails during peak use periods, particularly summer weekends. Frequency of contact with other recreationists and duration of contact is low-to-moderate. Opportunities exist to experience solitude and tranquility especially in

backcountry areas, and provides opportunities for nature appreciation, and learning by investigation and self-discovery.

The area generally appears natural and unmodified with a few rustic facilities such as trails, designated dispersed camp areas, and minimum directional, informational and safety signing present. Rustic and rudimentary improvements are designed for site protection. Minimal management restrictions, law enforcement presence and onsite visitor management controls such as informational and regulatory signs, are present but subtle. Interpretive services are informal through self-discovery augmented by various publications, but very limited onsite facilities.



Elkhorn Lake

Large portions of the area remain remote and without trails. Trails are used primarily by hikers and require a higher degree of skill and challenge to travel. Other trail segments provide some challenge, and require a moderate level of physical ability and skill. Maintenance of trails primarily focuses on protecting resources and maintaining the condition of trail-associated facilities. Mountain bike and stock use levels are low but are present on designated routes. These users find trails challenging and difficult. Some former system roads are converted and maintained as system trails. Trail segments that transition into the Wilderness are managed to protect and perpetuate wilderness character, and provide more difficult and challenging experiences that require a higher degree of skill. New trails that disperse hikers along the Little North Santiam River above the Shady Cove and west of Opal Creek near Stoney Ridge are added to this area.

Medium Intensity Zone (*This zone includes the corridors from the Road 2209-2207 junction to Jawbone Flats, and along the Kopetski/Opal Creek Trail to Opal Pool*)

This zone is managed to provide visitors opportunity to recreate in a natural environment of high scenic integrity with limited facilities. The area has one scenic road and minimal developments primarily for site protection and enhancement of visitor understanding of the unique natural, cultural and historical features. This zone serves primarily as a day use destination with some overnight use occurring within this zone and in designated areas. Open campfires are restricted to designated sites. Use is limited to levels that existed on the date of enactment of the Opal Creek legislation.

Recreation use varies by season with usually not more than moderate numbers of people most of the time. During higher use periods on summer weekends and holidays, frequency of contact with other recreationists is moderate-to-high and low-to-moderate in duration. The best chance for solitude is during mid-week but the area remains generally quiet.



Waterfall on the Little North Santiam River near Merten Mill

The area generally appears natural and unmodified. Minimal facilities are present.

They are provided to protect resources, ensure visitor safety and disperse use including into the adjacent low use intensity zone. Recreation facilities may include trails, designated or hardened dispersed camp areas, primitive toilets, viewing platforms, boardwalks, and informational, directional, and interpretive signs or facilities. Facilities are rustic, simple and durable in design and constructed with native materials that blend with the natural landscape. Facility development is initiated in selected areas to accommodate use, minimize user conflicts; and for the enjoyment, understanding and protection of important historic, cultural and natural aspects of the area.

Management and law enforcement presence is evident. Presence of on-site visitor management controls such as informational and regulatory signs, barriers, and viewing platforms, is low to moderate. An information and education program to enhance visitors' knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of the SRA is apparent, and encourages appropriate and safe use.

Trails are primarily used by hikers and may provide some challenge but generally require a low to moderate level of physical ability and skill to travel. Other trail segments may require limited skill or little challenge to travel, and provide some access for people with disabilities. Maintenance of trails focuses on protecting resources, and maintaining the condition of trail-associated facilities including those that are provided for user comfort/conveniences and interpretive services. Mountain bikers and stock users are present on designated routes. Trail segments that transition into the Wilderness are managed to protect and perpetuate wilderness character, and provide more difficult and challenging experiences that require a higher degree of skill.

High Intensity Zone (*This zone follows the 2209 Road from the Forest Boundary, then continues up Road 2207 to Shady Cove Campground and eastward along Cedar Creek to the SRA boundary. It also includes a corridor following the Little North Santiam Trail*)

This zone is managed to provide visitors opportunity to recreate in a roaded natural environment of high scenic integrity with moderately but rustically developed facilities. Frequently there are numerous people present particularly during summer weekends, when contacts among recreationists are very high and may last for a moderate-to-long period of time. Most overnight use occurs in this zone and in designated areas.



Three Pools day use area

Overnight and day use developed facilities such as campgrounds, parking areas, picnic sites, sanitation facilities, vehicle control barriers, designated hardened camp areas, kiosks, river access, viewing platforms, boardwalks, hiking trails and trailheads, are provided. Developed recreation sites are located close to the road and provide the necessary infrastructure to accommodate concentrated recreation use and protect resource values. The development scale of facilities is low to moderate, and most are accessible by motor vehicle. Facility development is initiated in selected areas to accommodate increasing use, minimize user conflicts, and for the enjoyment, understanding and protection of important historic, cultural and natural aspects of the area. Where facilities exist, the view from the main road is natural appearing.

Facilities are designed for the enjoyment of the SRA's natural and cultural resources while preserving the focal points of interest, rather than serving as attractions in themselves. Facilities are subordinate to the focal attraction, are simple and durable in design, and harmonize with the surrounding natural environment. Facilities accommodate high concentrations of users, protect fragile natural resources and meet sanitary and safety needs. New and upgraded facilities comply with accessibility standards.

Management and law enforcement presence, and on site visitor management controls such as informational and regulatory signs, established parking areas, and barriers, are obvious. An information and education program to enhance visitors' knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of the SRA is very apparent, and encourages appropriate and safe use.



Little North Santiam River Trail

Trails are primarily used by hikers and provide some challenge and require a low to moderate level of physical ability and skill to travel. Some trail segments may provide access for people with disabilities. Maintenance of trails focuses on protecting resources, and maintaining the condition of trail-associated facilities including those that are provided for user comfort/conveniences and interpretive services. Mountain bike use is low but is present on designated routes. No stock use is present.

Appendix C

Scenic Integrity

Scenic Integrity

Desired Landscape Character: Appearance of the landscape to be retained or created over time, recognizing that a landscape is a dynamic and constantly changing.

Examples of desired landscape character:

- **“Natural-evolving”** landscape character expressing the natural evolution of biophysical features and processes, with very limited human intervention (such as inadvertent plant succession through fire prevention)
- **“Natural-appearing”** landscape character that expresses predominantly natural evolution, but also human direct (e.g. fire prevention, reforestation) or indirect human intervention including cultural features and processes.
- **“Historic”** landscape character expressing valued historic features that represent events and period of human activity in the landscape.

Scenic Integrity: State of naturalness or, conversely, the state of disturbance created by human activities or alteration. Scenic integrity indicates the degree of intactness and wholeness of the landscape character.

- **VERY HIGH:** refers to landscapes where the valued landscape character **“is”** intact with only minute if any deviations. A scenic integrity level that generally provides for ecological change.
- **HIGH:** refers to landscapes where the valued landscape character **“appears”** intact. Human activities are not visually evident. Deviations may be present but must repeat the form, line, color, texture and pattern common to the landscape character.

Appendix D

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

While the goal of the recreationist is to obtain satisfying experiences, the goal of the recreation resource manager becomes one of providing the opportunities for obtaining these experiences. By managing the natural resource settings, and the activities which occur within it, the manager is providing the opportunities for recreation experiences to take place.

Recreation Opportunity Settings are the combination of physical, biological, social, and managerial conditions that give value to a place. Thus, an opportunity includes qualities provided by nature (vegetation, landscape, topography, scenery), qualities associated with recreational use (levels and types of use), and conditions provided by management (developments, roads, regulations). By combining variations of these qualities and conditions, management can provide a variety of opportunities for recreationists.

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum: For management and conceptual convenience possible mixes or combinations of activities, settings, and probable experience opportunities have been arranged along a spectrum, or continuum. This continuum is called the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS). The spectrum provides a framework for defining the types of outdoor recreation opportunities the public might desire, and identifies that portion of the spectrum that any given area might be able to provide.

ROS Class	Descriptions
Primitive	Area is characterized by essentially unmodified natural environment of fairly large size. Interaction between users is very low and evidence of other users is minimal. The area is managed to be essentially free from evidence of human induced restrictions and controls. Motorized use within the area is not permitted. Extremely high probability of experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of humans. Independence, closeness to nature, tranquility, and self-reliance through the application of outdoor skills in an environment that offers a high degree of challenge and risk.
Semi-primitive Non-motorized	A predominately natural or natural-appearing environment of moderate-to-large size characterizes area. Interaction between users is low, but there is some evidence of other users. The area is managed in such a way that minimum on-site controls and restrictions may be present, but are subtle. High probability of experiencing solitude, closeness to nature, tranquility, self-reliance, challenge and risk. Access and travel is non-motorized on trails, primitive roads, or cross-country. Vegetative alterations; sanitation salvage units to be very small in size and few in number, widely dispersed and not obvious. No on site facilities except limited signing, sanitary and safety needs in native or rustic materials. Minimal to no site modifications. Interpretation through self-discovery. Some use of maps, brochures, and guide books.
Semi-primitive Motorized	A predominately natural or natural-appearing environment of moderate-to-large size characterizes area. Concentration of users is low, but there is often evidence of other users. The area is managed in such a way that minimum on-site controls and restrictions may be present, but are subtle. Motorized use is permitted. Moderate opportunity for solitude, tranquility, and closeness to nature. High degree of self-reliance, challenge and risk in using motorized equipment. Vegetation alterations very small in size and few in number, widely dispersed and not obvious. Limited facilities for signing sanitary and safety needs in native or rustic materials. Minimal site modification for facilities. Interpretation through very limited on-site facilities. Use of maps, brochures and guidebooks.
Roaded Natural	A predominately natural-appearing environment characterizes area. Interaction between users may be low to moderate, but with evidence of other users prevalent. Resource modification and utilization practices are evident, but harmonize with the natural environment. Conventional motorized use is provided for in construction standards and design of facilities. Opportunity to affiliate with other users in developed sites but with some chance for privacy. Self-reliance on outdoor skills of only moderate importance. Little challenge and risk. Some obvious on-site control of users. Access and travel is conventional motorized including sedan and trailers, RVs and some motor homes. Moderate site modification and amount and complexity of facilities for comfort and convenience of user. Interpretation through wayside exhibits. Use of primarily native-like or rustic material with some refinement in design. Some casual interpretation from Forest staff.
Roaded Modified	A substantially modified natural environment characterizes area. Resource modification and utilization practices are to enhance specific recreation activities and to maintain vegetative cover and soil. Sights and sounds of humans are readily evident, and the interaction between users is low. Facilities may be provided for special activities. Moderate densities of use are provided for away from developed sites. Opportunity to get away from others but with easy access. Feeling of independence and freedom but with little challenge and risk. Substantially modified natural environment where roads, landings, slash, and debris may be strongly dominant from within, yet remain subordinate from distant sensitive roads and highways. Conventional motorized access including sedan and trailers, RVs & motorbikes. Little on-site controls of users except for some gated roads. No on-site facilities except signing at major road junctions and occasional sanitary facilities for user health protection. Interpretation by simple wayside signs of native or rustic materials may be provided.

Appendix E

Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics (MIST)

Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics (MIST)

Guidelines

The following Preamble to the MIST Guidelines was written in 1993 by David F. Jolly, Regional Forester for the Northern Region of the USDA Forest Service. Some information in the MIST guidelines in this document have been reworded to be applicable to Pacific Northwest Forests.

PREAMBLE

Fire is a natural and primary disturbance in the ecosystems of the Northern Rocky Mountains. The Northern Region Forest Plans establish goals and standards for wilderness to maintain and protect the dynamics associated with natural and complete ecosystems.

Fire management activities which occur on these lands must conform to Forest Plan standards. These standards allow for the conduct of fire management activities such as prescribed natural fire and wildfire suppression. A desirable standard is to minimize the impact of the resources from suppression or holding actions. Each Northern Region National Forest should assure their Fire Management Action Plans adequately address the fire management standards appropriate for the land base they are dealing with.

The following Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics (MIST) guide is designed to assist Forest Service fire personnel when taking suppression action on wildfires located in wilderness, proposed wilderness, or lands with similar land management objectives. The guidelines are intended to reduce fire suppression impacts on the land while insuring the actions taken are timely and effective.

It is obvious MIST principles have application on other National Forest lands as well as those described above. Forest are encouraged to utilize them as circumstances permit. It will take a fair amount of coordination with other cooperators who protect National Forest land before this concept can be adopted on all lands.

DAVID F. JOLLY
Regional Forester
Northern Region

Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics

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CONCEPT

The concept of Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics (MIST) is to use the minimum amount of forces necessary to effectively achieve the fire management protection objectives consistent with land and resource management objectives. It implies a greater sensitivity to the impacts of suppression tactics and their long-term effects when determining how to implement an appropriate suppression response. In some cases MIST may indicate cold trailing or wet line may be more appropriate than constructed hand line. In another example, the use of an excavator may be used rather than a dozer. Individual determination will be dependent on the specific situation and circumstances of each fire.

MIST is not intended to represent a separate or distinct classification of firefighting tactics but rather a mind set of how to suppress a wildfire while minimizing the long-term effects of the suppression action. When the term MIST is used in this document it reflects the above principle.

Suppression actions on all wildfires within Forest Service protected wilderness in the Pacific Northwest Region will be those having a minimum impact on the physical resources associated with each site. In so doing, the principle of fighting fire aggressively but providing for safety first will not be compromised.

The key challenge to the line officer, fire manager and firefighter is to be able to select the wildfire suppression tactics that are appropriate give the fire's probable or potential behavior. The guiding principle is always least cost plus loss while meeting land and resource management objectives. It is the second part of this statement which must be recognized more than it has in the past. Appreciation of the values associated with the wilderness have been more difficult to articulate, but, nevertheless, are important. As this recognition emerges, actions must be modified to accommodate a new awareness of them.

These actions, or MIST, may result in an increase in the amount of time spent watching, rather than disturbing, a dying fire to insure it does not rise again. They may also involve additional rehabilitation measures on the site that were not previously carried out.

When selecting an appropriate suppression response, firefighter safety must remain the highest concern. In addition, fire manager must be assured the planned actions will be effective and will remain effective over the expected duration of the fire.

GOAL

The goal of MIST is to halt or delay fire spread in order to maintain the fire within predetermined parameter while producing the least possible impact on the resource being protected. These parameters are represented by the initial attack incident commander's size-up of the situation in the case of a new start or by the wildland fire situation analysis (WFSA) in the case of an escaped fire.

It is important to consider probably rehabilitation needs as a part of selection the appropriate suppression response. Tactics that reduce the need for rehab are preferred whenever feasible.

SUPPRESSION RESPONSIBILITY

As stated previously, safety is the highest priority. All action will be anchored to the standard fire orders and watch out situations. Safety will remain the responsibility of each person involved with the incident.

Initial/Extended Attack

Incident Commander – To understand and carry out an appropriate suppression response which will best meet the land management objectives of the area at the least cost plus loss. Insure all forces used on the fire understand the plan for suppression the fire in conjunction with MIST.

Keep in communication with responsible fire manager or line officer to insure understanding and support of tactics begin used on the fire. Evaluate and provide feedback as to the tactical effectiveness during and after the fire incident.

Project Fire

Type I / II Incident Commander – To carry out instruction give by the responsible line officer both verbally and through the WFSA. Establish and nurture a close dialogue with the resource advisor assigned to the fire team. Review actions on site and evaluate for compliance with land line officer direction and effectiveness at meeting fire management protection objectives.

Responsible Line Officer – To transmit the land management objectives of the fire area to the fire team and to define specific fire management protection objectives. periodically review for compliance.

Resource Advisor – To insure the interpretation and implementation of WFSA and other oral or written line officer direction is adequately carried out. Provide specific direction and guidelines as needed. Participate at fire team planning sessions, review incident action plans and attend daily briefings to emphasize resource concerns and management's expectations. Provide assistance in updating WFSA when necessary. Participate in incident management team debriefing and assist in evaluation of team performance related to MIST.

Implementation Guidelines

OPERATIONS

Fire Lining Phase

- Select procedures, tools, and equipment that least impact the environment.
- Give serious consideration to the use of water as a fireline tactic.
- If there is a risk that hose coming direct from a local unit's cache is contaminated with noxious weed seeds, order fresh hose from the regional cache.
- Resource Advisors, Operations Chief, and Logistics Chief should be cognizant of any equipment that is being moved from a non-wilderness fire to a wilderness fire and make attempts to clean equipment of noxious weed seeds prior to it being used in tile wilderness.

Ground Fuels:

- Allowing fire to burn to natural barriers.
- Use cold-trail, wet line or combination when appropriate. Constantly recheck.
- If constructed fireline is necessary, use minimum width and depth to check- fire spread.
- Consider the use of fireline explosives for line construction to meet the need for more naturally appearing stumps.
- Burn out and use low impact tools like swatter or 'gunny' sack.
- Minimize bucking and cutting of trees to establish fireline; Preferably move or roll material out of the intended constructed fireline area. If moving or rolling is not possible, or the down log is already on fire, build line around the log and let it be consumed.
- Use alternative mechanized equipment such as excavators, rubber tired skidders, etc. rather than tracked vehicles. Use high pressure type sprayers on equipment prior to assigning to incident to help prevent spread of noxious weeds.
- Constantly re-check cold trailed fireline.

Aerial Fuels, Brush, Trees, and Snags:

- Limb vegetation adjacent to the fireline only as needed to prevent additional fire spread.
- During fireline construction, cut shrubs or small trees only when necessary. If tree cutting occurs, cut stumps flush with the ground and camouflage the cut surface with soil or brush.
- Minimize felling or trees and snags unless they threaten the fireline or seriously endanger workers. In lieu of falling, identify hazard trees with either a lookout or flagging. Use glow-sticks during night operations.
- Scrape around tree bases near fireline if hot and likely to cause fire spread.

Indirect Attack:

- Do not fall snags outside the constructed fireline, unless they are an obvious safety hazard to crews working in the vicinity.
- On the intended burn-out side of the line, fall only those snags that would reach the fireline should they burn and fall over. Consider alternative means to falling, i.e. fireline explosives or bucket drops.
- Review consideration listed above for aerial fuels, brush, trees and snags.

Mop-Up Phase

Ground Fuels:

- Do minimal spading; restrict spading to hot areas near the fireline.
- Cold-trail charred logs near the fireline; do minimal tool scarring.
- Minimize bucking of logs to extinguish fire or to check for hotspots; roll the logs instead if possible.
- Return logs to original position after checking and when ground is cool.
- Refrain from making bone yards; burned and partially burned fuels that were moved should be returned to a natural arrangement.
- Consider allowing large logs to burn out. Use a lever rather than bucking to manage large logs which must be extinguished.
- Use gravity socks in stream sources and/or combination of water blivits and fold-a-tanks to minimize impacts to streams.
- Personnel should avoid using rehabilitated firelines as travel corridors whenever possible because of potential soil compaction and possible detrimental impacts to rehab work, i.e. water bars.
- Do not bring in any non-native materials to be used for sediment traps in streams. Use of non-native materials creates a risk that noxious weeds will be introduced to the area.
- Place absorbent cloth under pumps to avoid spilling fuel on the ground.
- Consider using infrared detection devices along perimeter (aerial or hand-held).

Aerial Fuels:

- Remove or limb only those fuels which if ignited have potential to spread fire outside the fireline.
- Before felling consider allowing ignited tree/snag to burn itself out. Ensure adequate safety measures are communicated if this option is chosen.
- Identify hazard trees with a lookout or flagging.
- If burning trees/snags pose a serious threat of spreading fire brands, extinguish fire with water or dirt whenever possible. Consider felling by blasting when feasible. Felling by cross-cut or chainsaw should be the last resort.
- Align saw cuts to minimize visual impacts from more heavily traveled corridors. Slope cut away from line of sight when possible.

LOGISTICS

Establishing and Setting Up Camp

- Whenever possible, avoid establishing spike or coyote camps in Wilderness. If Wilderness camps are unavoidable, use existing campsites where available.
- Coordinate with the Resource Advisor in choosing a site with the most reasonable qualities of resource protection and safety concerns. Select sites that are unlikely to be observed by Wilderness visitors. Avoid camping in wet meadows, along streams, or on lake shores.
- Consider impacts on both present and future visitors. An agency commitment to wilderness values will promote those values to the public.
- Layout camp components carefully from the start. Define cooking, sleeping, latrine, and water supplies.
- Limit travel ways within, to, and from camp.
- Minimize disturbance to land in preparing bedding and campfire sites. Do not clear vegetation, trench, or excavate a flat spot to create bedding sites.
- In small camp situations (1 crew), individuals should use the "cat-hole" method of disposing of human waste. Toilet sites should be located a minimum of 200 feet from water sources. Holes should be dug 6-8 inches deep.
- If a large number of firefighters are using a spike camp and the camp is being serviced by helicopter, fly in portable backcountry latrines, and fly out human waste as necessary. If the camp does not have air support, establish community latrines well away from water sources, rather than leaving it up to the individual.
- Place indoor-outdoor carpet, scrap, or other material on the ground to protect vegetation in the most heavily traveled areas of camp, i.e.: kitchen, campfire, and washing-up areas.
- Use stoves for cooking. If a campfire is built for warmth in the evening, build either a pit or mound fire. A fire shelter placed beneath the coals provides extra protection for the soil.
- If a large camp is employed, designate a common area for personnel to wash up. Provide fresh water, biodegradable soap, and a place for waste water.
- In small spike camps or coyote camps, carry water and bathe away from lakes and streams. Do not introduce soap, shampoo, or other personal grooming chemicals into waterways.
- Devise a plan for disposing of waste water from kitchen and washing areas.
- Store food properly so that it is not accessible to wildlife. Consider hanging food in trees at least 15 feet off the ground and 5 feet from the trunk of the tree, or store food in sealable containers. Store food away from the campsite (300 feet is ideal) to reduce the risk of human and bear conflicts.
- Do not let garbage and food scraps accumulate in camp. All garbage and food scraps need to be removed from the camp on a regular basis if the camp is being served by a helicopter, or properly stored if frequent removal is not possible.
- Resource advisors should work with cache personnel during the off-season to ensure that tents are cleaned of any noxious weed seeds prior to being sent to a wilderness fire.

Personal Camp Conduct

- Use “Leave No Trace” camping techniques
- Minimize disturbance to land when preparing bedding and campfire sites. Do not clear vegetation, trench, or excavate a flat spot to create bedding sites.
- Use established latrines where provided. If latrines are not available use the "cat-hole" method of disposing of human waste. Toilet sites should be located a minimum of 200 feet from water sources. Holes should be dug 6-8 inches deep.
- If a campfire is built for warmth in the evening, build either a pit or mound fire. A fire shelter placed beneath the coals provides extra protection for the soil. Avoid using rocks to ring fires.
- Use dead and down firewood. Use small diameter wood that burns down more cleanly. Don't burn plastics or aluminum - pack it out with the rest of the camp garbage.
- If a designated personal washing area is not provided, carry water and bathe away from lakes and streams. Do not introduce soap, shampoo, or other personal grooming chemicals into waterways.
- Keep a clean camp and store food and garbage so it is unavailable to bears. Ensure items such as empty food containers are clean and odor free, never bury them.
- Do not use nails in trees.
- Constantly evaluate the impacts that will occur, both short and long term.

AVIATION MANAGEMENT

One of the goals of wilderness managers is to minimize the disturbance caused by air operations during an incident.

Helispot Construction

- Wherever possible, locate helibases in weed free areas, to prevent the transport of noxious weeds into wilderness.
- When planning for helispots, determine the primary function of each helispot, i.e.: crew shuttle, logistical support, or both.
- If a helispot is only needed for logistical support to deliver and retrieve supplies or gear, consider using a long line remote hook in lieu of constructing a helispot.
- If a helispot is needed for crew shuttle, consider the minimum size helicopter that could do the job, if you have an option, and still meet suppression objectives.
- Use natural openings as much as possible. If some tree falling or cribbing is necessary, avoid high visitor use locations unless the modifications can be rehabilitated to be generally unnoticeable. Feather the opening so that it appears more natural looking. Consider directional falling of trees and snags.
- Buck and limb only what is necessary to achieve safe/practical operating space in and around the landing pad areas.
- Perform an aerial reconnaissance of the fire area and select potential helispots. In determining helispot locations, involve, at a minimum, the Air Operations Manager, responsible land manager or Resource Advisor, and the Helitack Foreman. Consider drawing a sketch and discuss which trees need to be cut to ensure a safe operation for the size of the helicopter deemed necessary or available.
- If a high level of resource impact is anticipated from a proposed helispot, evaluate carefully whether it is absolutely necessary and if there isn't an alternative Outside Wilderness.
- Provide specific instructions for the on-the-ground foreman and crew to use when constructing the agreed upon helispot.
- Whenever possible, the resource advisor should observe the construction of a helispot.

Retardant Use

- During initial attack, fire managers must weigh the non-use of retardant with the probability of initial attack crews being able to successfully control and contain a wildfire. If it is determined that use of retardant may prevent a larger, more damaging wildfire, then the manager might consider retardant use even in sensitive areas. This decision must take into account all values at risk and the consequences of larger firefighting forces' impact on the land.
- Consider impacts of water drops versus use of foam/retardant. If foam/retardant is deemed necessary, consider use of foam before retardant use.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Flammable / Combustible Liquids

- Store and dispense aircraft and equipment fuels in accordance with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and Health and Safety Code Handbook requirements.
- Avoid spilling or leakage of oil or fuel, from sources such as portable pumps, into water sources or soils.
- Store and liquid petroleum gas (Propane) downhill and downwind from fire camps and away from ignition sources.

Flammable Solids

- Pick up residual fusee debris from the fireline and dispose of properly.

Fire Retardant / Foaming Agents

- Do not drop retardant or other suppressants near surface waters.
- Use caution when operating pumps or engines with foaming agents to avoid contamination of water sources.

Fireline Explosives

- Remove all undetonated fireline explosives from storage areas and fireline at the conclusion of the incident and dispose of according to Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) and Fireline Blaster Handbook requirements. Properly dispose of all packaging materials.

FIRE REHABILITATION

Rehabilitation is a critical need. This need arises primarily because of the impacts associated with fire suppression and the logistics that support it. The process of constructing control lines, transport of personnel and materials, providing food and shelter for personnel, and other suppression activities has a significant impact on sensitive resources regardless of the mitigating measures used. Therefore, rehabilitation must be undertaken in a timely, professional manner.

During implementation, the resource advisor should be available for expert advise and support of personnel doing the work as well as quality control.

Rehabilitation Guidelines

- Pick up and remove all flagging, garbage, litter, and equipment. Dispose of trash appropriately.
- Clean fire pit of unburned materials and fill back in.
- Discourage use of newly established trails created during the suppression effort by veering with brush, limbs, small diameter poles, and rotten logs in a naturally appearing arrangement
- Replace dug-out soil and/or duff and obliterate any berms created during the suppression efforts.
- If impacted trails have developed slopes greater than six percent (6%), construct waterbars according to the following spacing guide:

Trail Percent Grade	Maximum Spacing Ft.
6-9	400
10-15	200
15-25	100
25+	50

- Where soil has been exposed and compacted, such as in camps, on user-trails, at helispots and pump sites, scarify the top 2-4 inches and scatter with needles, twigs, rocks, and dead branches. It is unlikely that seed and fertilizer for barren areas will be appropriate, in order to maintain the genetic integrity of the area. It may be possible, depending on the time of year and/or possibility of a rainy period, to harvest and scatter nearby seed, or to transplant certain native vegetation.
- Blend campsites with natural surroundings, by filling in and veering latrine with soil, rocks, and other natural material. Naturalize campfire area by scattering ashes in nearby brush (after making sure any sparks are out) and returning site to a natural appearance.
- Where trees were cut or limbed, cut stumps flush with ground, scatter limbs and boles, out of sight in unburned area. Camouflage stumps and tree boles using rocks, dead woody material, fragments of stumps, bolewood, limbs, soil and fallen or broken green branches. Scattered sawdust and shavings will assist in decomposition and by less noticeable. Use native materials from adjacent, unimpacted areas if necessary.
- Remove newly cut tree boles that are visible from trails or meadows. Drag other highly visible woody debris created during the suppression effort into timbered areas and disburse. Tree boles that are too large to move should be slant cut so a minimal amount of the cut

surface is exposed to view. Chopping the surface with an axe or Pulaski, to make it jagged and rough, will speed the natural decomposition.

- Leave tops of felled trees attached. This will appear more natural than scattering the debris.
- Consider using explosives on some stumps and cut faces of the bolewood for a more natural appearance.
- Consider, if no other alternatives are available, helicopter sling loading rounds and tops from a disturbed site when there has been an excessive amount of bucking, limbing, and topping.
- Tear out sumps or dams, where they have been used, and return site to natural condition. Replace any displaced rocks or streambed material that has been moved. Reclaim streambed to its predisturbed state, when appropriate.
- Walk through adjacent undisturbed area and take a look at your rehab efforts to determine your success at returning the area to as natural a state as possible. Good examples should be documented and shared with others!

DEMOBILIZATION

Because demob is often a time when people are tired or when weather conditions are less than ideal, enough time must be allowed to do a good job. When moving people and equipment, choose the most efficient and least impactful method to both the landscape and fire organization mission. An on-the-ground analysis of “How Things Went” will be important.

POST-FIRE EVALUATION

Post-fire evaluation is important for any fire occurrence so management can find out how things went. Identify areas needing improvement, to formulate strategies and to produce quality work in the future. This activity is especially important in wilderness and like sensitive areas due to their fragility and inclination to long-term damage by human impacts.

Resource advisors and functional specialists such as wilderness rangers will be responsible for conducting the post-fire evaluation. They are the people who have the experience and knowledge to provide information required to make the evaluation meaningful and productive.

Post-fire evaluation will consist of data collection, documentation, and recommendations. This process and report will, in most cases, be fairly simple and to the point. It should be accomplished before an overhead team departs from the fire. The evaluation emphasis should be on the MIST actions and not the effects of the fire.

Evaluation will be completed on wildfires exceeding 100 acres and on a sample of fires less than 100 acres. It is appropriate to evaluate a diversity of fires, ranging from a spot fire suppressed by smoke chasers or jumpers to a large project fire managed by an overhead team.

Data Collection / Documentation / Recommendations

This phase will be completed by a review of the rehab plan and visit to the fire site as soon after demobilization as possible. An inventory of camps and helispots will be completed. This will also include an objective overview of other areas covered by the rehab plan.

Observations will be documented in a brief report to the lien officer with a copy to the appropriate incident commander. In the report, the evaluator will include recommendations for the ensuing fire suppression activities on similar lands. It is important that the evaluator recognize and commend the initial attack forces or overhead team for positive activities. Make special note of the extra efforts and sensitivity to suppression impacts.

Appendix F

Public Comments Received / Response to Comments

Response to Comments

Resource Themes	Comment	Response
Limit overnight camping in all areas	Recommend limiting overnight camping in all use intensity zones via permits	Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.
Unrestricted day use hiking in all zones	Day hike use does not need to be restricted to a number of people at this time. [in all intensity zones]	Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.
Expand facilities to allow for increased use	In the future there will be a greater demand for facilities – especially parking. May want to look at the possibility of an expanded parking area (pared) with designated stalls and an area for vehicle turn around.	Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.
No overnight camping in moderate zone	Better access will increase the number of people visiting Opal Creek. Therefore overnight camping should be forbidden in that area, and accommodate instead in defined campgrounds at Shady Cove and Cedar Creek and Pearl Creek. This will also reduce fire danger and alleviate the garbage problem.	Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.
Eliminating historical recreation use -- may violate legislation.	On page 22 of the PMP in the “Standards” section, “Recreation activities at not less than the levels in existence on the date of enactment of P.L. 104-333 shall be permitted”. Though limited in extent, rockhounding has occurred in areas of the SRA	Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.
Eliminating historical recreation use -- may violate legislation.	People actively used up to 4" dredges in the waters of the Little North Fork river prior to 1998. In accordance to the legislation you cannot reduce recreation prior to that date.	Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.
Overcrowding & inappropriate behavior at 3-Pools	The Three Pools Area is heavily degraded due to over- and irresponsible use.... Behavior improves when potential misbehavior-types feel their identity is known. The user-fee monies would help to defray clean-up costs and the policing of this area. Police cadets, working with regular law enforcement personnel, could help in the administration of this program. They also could help in environmental education and , because of their youth, serve	The decision on whether or not to use "user fees" will be considered after the Management Plan has been approved and strategies are being implemented. We are currently working with Marion County to have more enforcement in the area.

Resource Themes	Comment	Response
Sanitation	Permanent sanitation facilities, such as composting toilets, should be installed in high and moderate traffic zones to protect ecosystem and water quality. Human waste is one of the greatest potential threats to water quality, so the plan should especially address how it can be contained and disposed of properly.	Adding new sanitation facilities, providing that funding is available, can be achieved with any of the alternatives.
Sanitation	Permanent sanitation facilities, such as composting toilets, should be installed in high and moderate traffic zones to protect ecosystem and water quality.	Adding new sanitation facilities, providing that funding is available, can be achieved with any of the alternatives.
Sanitation	New outhouses	Adding new sanitation facilities, providing that funding is available, can be achieved with any of the alternatives.
Sanitation	Permanent sanitation facilities, such as composting toilets, should be installed in high traffic zones. This will facilitate protection of the ecosystem in general and water quality specifically.	Adding new sanitation facilities, providing that funding is available, can be achieved with any of the alternatives.
Sanitation	Permanent sanitation facilities (such as composting toilets) should be installed in high and moderate traffic zones to protect ecosystem and water quality.	Adding new sanitation facilities, providing that funding is available, can be achieved with any of the alternatives.
Sanitation	If nothing is to be done about the level of usage at the Opal Creek trailhead, then facilities need to be developed. Otherwise the USFS will be responsible for the up to 300 people who defecate and urinate within the SRA per summer weekend. I have seen toilet paper and feces littered about the road between Jawbone Flats and the Gate	Adding new sanitation facilities, providing that funding is available, can be achieved with any of the alternatives.
Sanitation	Should be toilet facilities at this location as well [location?]	Adding new sanitation facilities, providing that funding is available, can be achieved with any of the alternatives.
Provide rock climbing opportunities	I think there should be consideration of some of the rock-climbing opportunities in the area (trails to sites, directions, etc.)	This action can be achieved with any of the alternatives.
Eliminate dispersed camping in all zones	There should be an on-going effort to eliminate "informal" roadside camping areas and restore unauthorized areas to a primitive state.	Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.

Resource Themes**Comment****Response**

Need actions to maintain use in moderate zone at enactment level

If usage is limited to levels that existed on the date of enactment of Opal Creek legislation, then the management plan must work to reduce the amount of usage in the medium use zone, as usage has greatly increased since November 1998.

The proposed management plan does recommend limiting use in the moderate zone. If the decision is made to implement the proposed action then strategies will be determined at that time on how to limit use.

Affect of use limit in moderate zone on new special use permits and inholders

How does maintaining visitors numbers in the medium zone affect the FOOC?

Tracked through the affects analysis.

Affect of use limit in moderate zone on new special use permits and inholders

Within the medium intensity zone, the proposed plan limits use to levels that existed on the date of enactment of the Opal Creek legislation. This may affect the amount of educational activities and programs conducted by the Friends of Opal Creek, a current inholder at Jawbone Flats as well as other new permits.

Tracked through the affects analysis.

Is limiting use in moderate zone best to manage use?

If the number of designated camp and campfire areas is reduced, this may displace some campers or potentially create impact to new undisturbed areas.

This is "affects analysis".

Is limiting use in moderate zone best to manage use?

Recreation: #2, what is the measurement system and does it include FOOC operations?
How is this interpreted (numbers or amount of use vs. types of use)?
Would resource impacts be monitored, and use adjusted when impacts fall below desired resource conditions?

Tracked through the affects analysis.

Is limiting use in moderate zone best to manage use?

Moderate Intensity: Use is limited to the levels at date of enactment. Does this imply permits? How will the FS do this?

The proposed management plan does recommend limiting use in the moderate zone. If the decision is made to implement the proposed action then strategies will be determined at that time on how to limit use.

Is limiting use in moderate zone best to manage use?

Maintaining numbers to current level in moderate zone may not be desirable. May be able to manage use in other ways to meet social and resource issues.

Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.

Allow non-motorized equipment in all streams in SRA

All non-motorized equipment should be allowed in all of the SRA!!!...#6, it states that only pans can be used, no sluice boxes are allowed.

Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.

Allow non-motorized equipment in all streams in SRA

Sluice boxes should be allowed whenever recreational mining is permitted. A sluice box does not require the use of motor.

Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.

Resource Themes**Comment****Response**

Allow non-motorized equipment in all streams in SRA

Allowing ONLY panning is a very restricted corridor is too restrictive...Certainly panning and sluicing should be able to occur anywhere in the SRA...eliminate the specific designation of a recreational panning corridor and allow recreational mining as recognized by current state law

Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.

Allow non-motorized equipment in all streams in SRA

As a historical mining area panning and sluicing should be allowed in the entire area.

Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.

Allow panning, sluicing, & dredging in all streams in SRA

I think the proposed limitation on gold panning, and the prohibition on sluice boxes/recreational dredges, etc. should be reconsidered. As long as operations are confined to the wet stream channel and high-banking is prohibited, there is no reason not to allow the full range of recreational panning opportunities throughout the entire

Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.

Allow panning, sluicing, & dredging in all streams in SRA

We would like to continue using 4" dredges & sluice boxes on our existing claims for recreational mining.

Existing claims are administered in accordance with laws and regulations, including the 1872 Mining Act.

Allow panning, sluicing, & dredging in all streams in SRA

But disagree as to banning recreational gold mining. Dredges can be used to remove trash from the streams and create fish habitats. A high banker isn't that noisy and it doesn't pollute the streams when used properly. Gold panning is a fun family activity and educational, also. Sluice boxes have no motor and don't create a mess.

Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.

Allow panning, sluicing, & dredging in all streams in SRA

We strongly disagree with not being able to use a sluice especially.

Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.

Allow panning, sluicing, & dredging in all streams in SRA

Recreational mining is a very good family camping experience. I can't see why more restrictions are necessary.

Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.

Allow panning, sluicing, & dredging in all streams in SRA

I have been doing recreational mining (panning, sluicing, dredging, etc.) in the Opal Creek SRA for years. I strongly object to any rules or laws that would restrict such recreation.

Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.

Trespass on existing claims in defined corridor

I feel that if you encourage recreational panning in your proposed area, there could be legal problems with the claim holders.

Tracked through the affects analysis.

Trespass on existing claims in defined corridor

By forcing people into a narrowly defined corridor among existing claims could result in trespass. The general public may not recognize (or respect) claim markers if they understand the area is "open" to recreational panning

Tracked through the affects analysis.

Resource Themes**Comment****Response**

Limit recreational mining to panning within a specified location

I strongly request language limiting the panning for gold in Cedar Creek and the lower little North Fork to “hand panning”, and prohibiting the use of any mechanical dredge.

Supports the proposed action.

Limit recreational mining to panning within a specified location

Recreational mining should be limited to panning only.

Supports the proposed action.

Allow recreational rock hounding throughout the SRA

I disagree with the exclusion of rockhounding under descriptions of current and historical recreation activities within the SRA in the Proposed Management Plan (PMP). I also disagree with the characterization of rockhounding as only occurring within a “designated corridor”.

Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.

Panning only throughout the SRA

I believe that panning for gold should be allowed throughout the area--but no other method, including 3" sluice boxes.

Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.

Existing Mining Claims

Pre-existing claims prior to SRA shall need to continue with what is recreational & included up to 4” dredges. The hand non-motorized sluice shall need to continue as well.

Existing claims are administered in accordance with laws and regulations, including the 1872 Mining Act.

Existing Mining Claims

And also the fact this will eliminate the use of dredging on already valid claims.

Existing claims are administered in accordance with laws and regulations, including the 1872 Mining Act.

Existing Mining Claims

Also as legal claim holders we should not be limited to non-motorized methods we now have only a 6 week window when we can use a small dredge.

Existing claims are administered in accordance with laws and regulations, including the 1872 Mining Act.

State Scenic Waterways

Nonmotorized equipment would be acceptable also the corridor you have laid out is not acceptable as all Oregon Waterways are open to recreational panning this include Wilderness areas.....

The State Scenic Waterways legislation is permissive regarding whether an activity will occur.

State Scenic Waterways

Furthermore, if you check the scenic waterway act covering Quartzville Creek it includes up to 4” dredges which sets a precedence in this matter of limiting the type of recreational mining equipment.

The State Scenic Waterways legislation is permissive regarding whether an activity will occur.

Restrict discharging firearms in all zones

I object to hearing guns fired nearby when I'm hiking, and so I suggest that the Low and Very Low Intensity Zones also include a prohibition of discharging firearms.

Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.

Resource Themes**Comment****Response**

Allow discharging of firearms in moderate & high zones during hunting season

We wish to express our opposition to the proposed complete prohibition of discharge of firearms in the areas of the Opal Cr. SRA designated as High Use or Medium Use. Such a prohibition will eliminate hunting as a recreational use in those areas throughout the full year. Generally, Oregon firearms hunting seasons for game birds and big game begin in August and extend through November.

Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.

Allow discharging of firearms in moderate & high zones during hunting season

I wish to express my opposition to the proposed complete prohibition of discharge of firearms in the areas of the Opal Cr. SRA designated as High Use or Medium Use. Such a prohibition will completely eliminate hunting as a recreational use in the areas designated High and Medium Use.

Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.

Allow discharging of firearms in moderate & high zones during hunting season

I disagree with regards to recreation/hunting. On pg. 20, subsection #6, under recreation, it states there will not be any hunting in the medium or high density areas. You may not have the intent to shut down hunting but this has far reaching implications which could impact hunting on public lands.

Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.

Opposes all firearm restrictions except for current CFR restrictions.

I oppose the gun restrictions as I understand them. Campground Restrictions should be more than adequate.

Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.

Opposes all firearm restrictions except for current CFR restrictions.

We feel that there should be no discharge in developed recreation sites like Shady Cove Campground and the Three Pools area. That prohibition is currently normal USFS practice and we support it fully. However, we feel the recreation activity of hunting with firearms can be accommodated by considering another alternative.

Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.

Opposes all firearm restrictions except for current CFR restrictions.

I feel that there should be no discharge of weapons in developed recreation sites like Shady Cove Campground and the Three Pools area. That prohibition is currently normal USFS practice and I support it fully. However, I feel the recreational activity of hunting with firearms can be accommodated in that portion of the High and Medium Use areas outside of the developed recreation sites by considering another alternative.

Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.

Bow Hunting

I disagree with regards to recreation/hunting. On pg. 20, subsection #6, under recreation, it states there will not be any hunting in the medium or high density areas. I assume that it is for public safety. One, does that include bow hunting?...

The proposed management plan allows for bow hunting to occur.

Resource Themes**Comment****Response**

Bow Hunting

Allowing bow hunting in all Use Areas is hardly defensible. A large segment of the public does not approve of bow hunting, as this technique does not produce a humane death in the game animal in most cases. Most Opal Creek recreationists do not want to see bow hunters when visiting this area. Therefore, limit its practice to Very Low and Low Use Areas. The archers would still have plenty of game habitat. Also, it would not be wise to mix bow hunters with other recreationalists in the heavily use areas because of diverse user potential conflicts, and safety considerations are important, too.

Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.

Bow Hunting

Only bow hunting should be allowed.

Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.

Allow hunting, but no target shooting

Tranquility is supposed to be inherent in Wilderness and near-Wilderness areas. Allowing gunfire, other than during licensed hunting season, in the Very Low Use and Low Use Areas would be very unnerving and would certainly distract from a Wilderness experience users were seeking.

Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.

Allow hunting, but no target shooting

My proposed alternative is: Allow hunting by licensed hunters during the lawfully designated hunting seasons and prohibit of firearms target practice in that portion of the designated High and Medium Use areas outside the developed recreation areas. I feel that my proposed alternative places emphasis on prohibition of the improvident use of firearms in the designated High and Medium Use areas, while also allowing recreational hunting by license hunters only during legal hunting season and then only in that portion of the designated High and Medium Use areas outside developed recreation sites. It puts the focus on the irresponsible target practice

Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.

Resource Themes**Comment****Response**

Allow hunting, but no target shooting

We propose another alternative for the use of firearms in the designated High Use and Medium Use areas, but outside the developed recreation sites with in those designated areas. We propose: Allow hunting by licensed hunters during the lawfully designated hunting seasons and the prohibition of firearms target practice. We feel that my proposed alternative places emphasis on prohibition of the improvident use of firearms in the designated High and Medium Use areas, while also allowing recreational hunting by license hunters only during legal hunting season and then only in that portion of the designated High and Medium Use areas outside developed recreation sites. It puts the focus on the irresponsible target practice and vandalism.

Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.

ADA Access to Jawbone Flats and Opal Pool

I found no reference to American's With Disabilities Act. Would it be possible for OC Management to announce 2 or 3 days per season when someone would be at the closed gate to let handicapped people in and out? Or might handicapped people make appointments to get through the gate?

The proposed management plan allows for ADA improvements to occur. However, the Opal Creek legislation (Public Law 104-333) limits what improvements can occur behind the gate on Forest Road 2209.

ADA Access to Jawbone Flats and Opal Pool

The shuttle would periodically carry visitors to and from trailheads or as far as Jawbone Flats, reducing traffic and maintenance and preserving or improving access, especially people with disabilities.

The Opal Creek Legislation (Public Law 104-333) limits access behind the gate on Forest road 2209 to administrative use by the Forest Service and to the owners of Jawbone Flats to access their property. Therefore, a shuttle such as described, is not allowed under the legislation.

ADA Access to Jawbone Flats and Opal Pool

The shuttle would periodically carry visitors to and from trailheads or as far as Jawbone Flats, reducing traffic and road maintenance and preserving or improving access, especially for people with

The Opal Creek Legislation (Public Law 104-333) limits access behind the gate on Forest road 2209 to administrative use by the Forest Service and to the owners of Jawbone Flats to access their property. Therefore, a shuttle such as described, is not allowed under the legislation.

ADA Access to Jawbone Flats and Opal Pool

The shuttle would periodically carry visitors to and from trailheads or as far as Jawbone Flats, reducing traffic and maintenance and preserving or improving access. Additionally, such a shuttle would enable younger students and older or mobility limited people the opportunity to visit this unique area. At present I cannot easily bring my elementary students into the area, since they cannot walk the 6 mile gate to Opal Pool round trip.

The Opal Creek Legislation (Public Law 104-333) limits access behind the gate on Forest road 2209 to administrative use by the Forest Service and to the owners of Jawbone Flats to access their property. Therefore, a shuttle such as described, is not allowed under the legislation.

Resource Themes	Comment	Response
ADA Access to Jawbone Flats and Opal Pool	At present, visits to Opal Creek itself are limited to two categories of people: 1) Personal friends or customers of the Jawbone Flats in holder, and 2) Vigorous young adults who can walk 6 miles roundtrip in addition to the distance they hike at their Opal Creek destination. Senior Citizens and families with young children are totally eliminated.	The proposed management plan allows for ADA improvements to occur. However, the Opal Creek legislation (Public Law 104-333) limits what improvements can occur behind the gate on Forest Road 2209.
ADA Access to Jawbone Flats and Opal Pool	An ideal situation would be to close off 2207 and 2209 at the junction and use a shuttle system to get people into to and from trailheads during peak season...It would also provide a way for disabled or injured people to see some places they normally wouldn't be able to make it to.	The proposed management plan allows for ADA improvements to occur. However, the Opal Creek legislation (Public Law 104-333) limits what improvements can occur behind the gate on Forest Road 2209.
ADA Access to Jawbone Flats and Opal Pool	The administrative use road should foster handicapped access and be controlled to protect Jawbone Flats resource for future public use and possible revenue to the SRA.	The proposed management plan allows for ADA improvements to occur. However, the Opal Creek legislation (Public Law 104-333) limits what improvements can occur behind the gate on Forest Road 2209.
Convert roads to trails	Poor quality roads encourage off road vehicles (i.e. road. 2207); perhaps having some roads closed and become part of the trail system would be considered.	Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.
Convert roads to trails	ONRC encourages maintaining the current trail system and converting roads into trails.	Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.
Limit trail development in low & moderate zones	I would prefer very little, if any, trail development in the low and medium use zones beyond what's there now. New trails in the Opal creek watershed might lead to negative impacts on the Opal creek Wilderness.	Tracked through the affects analysis.
Construct new trails only if existing trails are overused	New trail construction should only be considered if trails in both the Wilderness and SRA are overused.	Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.

Resource Themes	Comment	Response
Develop trails to disperse use	A connecting trail from the Little North Fork Trail to the Opal Creek trail should be built to disperse hiker traffic and impacts.	Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan allows for additional trails to be constructed. The location of additional trails will be considered in the Transportation Plan that will be developed after the SRA Management Plan is approved.
Develop trails to disperse use	Build a connecting trail from the Little North Fork Trail to the Opal Creek trail. This would disperse hiker traffic and thus impacts.	Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan allows for additional trails to be constructed. The location of additional trails will be considered in the Transportation Plan that will be developed after the SRA Management Plan is approved.
Develop trails to disperse use	A trail should be cut that links the Little North Fork trail to the Opal Creek trail. This would help disperse hikers a little better throughout the system. This would take impact off of the current trails and disperse the automobile traffic during peak season and high use times.	Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan allows for additional trails to be constructed. The location of additional trails will be considered in the Transportation Plan that will be developed after the SRA Management Plan is approved.
Develop trails to disperse use	The Little North Santiam Trail should be extended to meet the Mike Kopetski/Opal Creek trail. This would help disperse the usage in the medium use zone, provide for more recreational opportunities, and serve those who desire longer-term stays in a natural setting rather than in a campground setting.	Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan allows for additional trails to be constructed. The location of additional trails will be considered in the Transportation Plan that will be developed after the SRA Management Plan is approved.
Develop trails to disperse use	I fully support loop trail concepts	Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.
Develop trails to disperse use	I fully support loop trail concepts	Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.
Develop trails to disperse use	A connecting trail from the Little North Fork Trail to the Opal Creek trail should be built to disperse hiker traffic and impacts. The standards section of the current plan says only that connecting trails should be considered, while this trail is recommended in the plan's "desired future condition."	Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan allows for additional trails to be constructed. The location of additional trails will be considered in the Transportation Plan that will be developed after the SRA Management Plan is approved.

Resource Themes	Comment	Response
Allow bikes on Battle Axe Trail	Concern about encouraging mountain bikes on Battle Axe/Opal Creek Trails because they enter wilderness.	Tracked through the affects analysis.
Allow bikes on Battle Axe Trail	Bicycles should be allowed to the upper Gate (at the Wilderness Boundary) on the mining roads into the Battle Axe drainage. They should be excluded from the trails.	Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.
Access Roads	Locked gates, maybe do keep dry campers out, but also quick response to fire fighting rigs is slowed. Some older folks can't hike anymore, but still love to drive the back roads.	Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.
Access Roads	Road from Elkhorn (NSF boundary) should remain unimproved.	Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.
Access Roads	Road 2207 should be rerouted away from Opal Lake in order to minimize impact within the watershed.	Specific road and trail projects will be addressed in a Transportation Plan after the SRA Management Plan is approved. The Transportation Plan will implement the SRA Plan objectives. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at that time.
No ORV's in SRA to preserve quiet	There should be no off-road vehicle use in any portion of the SRA.	Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.
No ORV's in SRA to preserve quiet	I would hope that the use of off-the-road vehicles or snowmobiles would not be allowed in the SRA management plan. Keeping this area as a quiet retreat with a minimum of disruption to the environment. Poor quality roads encourage off road vehicles (i.e.	Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.
Reduce dust on 2209 & other existing roads	Also on page 24 #9, about the dust. Because of the popularity of the hiking trail and Elkhorn lake above our place, the traffic has increased a lot and we are getting a lot of dust blowing towards our house.	Tracked through the affects analysis.
Reduce dust on 2209 & other existing roads	Road 2209 should be paved up to the closed gate to avoid dust problems.	Specific road and trail projects will be addressed in a Transportation Plan after the SRA Management Plan is approved. The Transportation Plan will implement the SRA Plan objectives. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at that time.

Resource Themes	Comment	Response
Management of 2209 beyond the gate	No vehicle traffic on weekends, very limited on weekdays, past the closed gate on 2209.	Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.
Management of 2209 beyond the gate	Road 2209 past the closed gate should be more foot-friendly (jagged gravel now), as should trail on the other side of the road (lots of root ends to trip on).	This action can be achieved with any of the alternatives.
Access for fire & emergency services	All roads that exist should remain for fire protection or any emergency use that comes up.	Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.
Reduce traffic & maintain access in moderate zone	The transportation plan should seek ways to reduce traffic during busy seasons, particularly summer weekends, while maintaining or improving access to the moderate use zone.	Specific road and trail projects will be addressed in a Transportation Plan after the SRA Management Plan is approved. The Transportation Plan will implement the SRA Plan objectives. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at that time.
Reduce traffic & maintain access in moderate zone	The transportation plan should seek ways to reduce traffic during busy seasons, particularly summer weekends, while maintaining or improving access to the moderate use zone.	Specific road and trail projects will be addressed in a Transportation Plan after the SRA Management Plan is approved. The Transportation Plan will implement the SRA Plan objectives. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at that time.
Reduce traffic & maintain access in moderate zone	The transportation plan should seek ways to reduce traffic during busy season, particularly summer weekends, while maintaining or improving access to the moderate use zone. A shuttle bus system should be established on summer weekends, closing the 2209 road at the junction with 2207.	Specific road and trail projects will be addressed in a Transportation Plan after the SRA Management Plan is approved. The Transportation Plan will implement the SRA Plan objectives. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at that time.
Reduce traffic & maintain access in moderate zone	Road 2209 often is busier than rush-hour on Highway 22...Road 2209 should be closed at the split of road 2207 and road 2209.	Specific road and trail projects will be addressed in a Transportation Plan after the SRA Management Plan is approved. The Transportation Plan will implement the SRA Plan objectives. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at that time.

Resource Themes	Comment	Response
Allow stock on roads in high use zones	I still don't understand the proposed ban on stock within the high-intensity zone. Several homes in the area have stock, and it seems unnecessary to have them trailer the stock to a trailhead, instead of riding them up.	Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.
Allow stock on roads in high use zones	By excluding stock from the High Intensity Zone you have blocked ingress and egress for the local residents who use their horses along roads 2209 and 2207 to access the area...ban stock from the same areas you ban motor vehicles in the high intensity use area. Blocking access to horses or other stock along a road that can be used by all other forms of travel is unacceptable and probably illegal.	Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.
Maintain roads for safety	There should be regular scheduled maintenance, in order to keep the roads safe for travelers. Bi-yearly grading (prior to busy season and again in the fall), and/or filling in large holes with gravel should become normal practice. I have witnessed many people driving all over the roads (specifically 2207 and 2209) avoiding potholes or swerving suddenly to miss large holes that could possibly damage a vehicle. These, coupled with increased visitorship pose some very serious safety concerns.	Specific road and trail projects will be addressed in a Transportation Plan after the SRA Management Plan is approved. The Transportation Plan will implement the SRA Plan objectives. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at that time.
Restrict campfires in dispersed areas	One of the biggest challenges of managing recreation in the SRA and Wilderness area for decades to come will be protecting the forest from escaped campfires. It will be absolutely essential to analyze how to best reduce risk of escaped campfires. More signage and explicit bans are appropriate in many areas.	Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.
Restrict campfires in dispersed areas	Open fires should be banned outside hardened campsites during the industrial fire season as declared by the US Forest Service or State of Oregon Forestry which ever is most restrictive.	During times of high fire danger, the Forest Service does prohibit all campfires on National Forest lands, with the exception of those in designated campgrounds such as Shady Cove. All of the alternatives would allow for this to occur in the Opal Creek SRA. Since Opal Creek is on National Forest lands, the Forest Service has the responsibility to determine when to invoke campfire restrictions.
Restrict campfires in dispersed areas	Within the hard to access areas, i.e.. the medium, low, and very low use zones there should be no campfires allowed.	Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.

Resource Themes	Comment	Response
Provide for designated fire pits	No fires at all except in hardened, designated areas.	Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.
Provide for designated fire pits	It just isn't worth the risk to the forest to allow folks to build a fire almost anywhere. This should only be allowed in hardened, established fire rings.	Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.
Provide for designated fire pits	As a last resort, constructing rings in which fire can be easily contained may be the best course of action in others.	Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.
Provide for designated fire pits	Camp fires should be permitted only in hardened fire rings.	Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.
Provide for designated fire pits	Campfires in unauthorized pits are a greater hazard.	Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.
Provide for designated fire pits	Campfires should be permitted only in hardened fire rings, and should generally be discouraged wherever possible.	Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.
Provide for designated fire pits	Too many illegal firepits up there, campfires only in developed pits, please.	Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.
Provide for designated fire pits	Campfires should be permitted only in hardened fire rings and should be banned completely when fire risk is significant.	Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.
Does not meet legislation	I believe salvage logging should be allowed in cases of insect, disease, blowdown and fire.	The Opal Creek Legislation (Public Law 104-333), prohibits the cutting and selling of live, dead, or dying trees, except for public safety, for the removal of hazard trees, and for activities related to the administration of the SRA. Therefore, the Forest Service does not have the option to do otherwise.

Resource Themes	Comment	Response
Does not meet legislation	Gate on 2209 to Jawbone Flats (area between) should be “very low” use. All remaining zones should be lowered by 1 zone. Lets push for wilderness.	Lowering use in each zone by one category would not comply with the Opal Creek Legislation (Public Law 104-333), as it would result in limiting use to lower numbers than what existed on date of enactment.
Economic Development	Private economic and/or industrial development in the SRA will be detrimental to its natural values.	All management actions within the Opal Creek SRA , including economic development, must comply with the Opal Creek legislation (Public Law 104-333) and ensure that Opal Creek’s natural values are maintained.
Economic Development	Please consider Limiting economic growth that would destroy – commercialize the North Fork.	All management actions within the Opal Creek SRA , including economic development, must comply with the Opal Creek legislation (Public Law 104-333) and ensure that Opal Creek’s natural values are maintained.
Enforcement and Protection	Increase policing, patrols and security for the SRA. I’ve noticed littering, speeding, reckless driving, and people stealing large rocks.	The proposed management plan and all of the alternatives allow for increased law enforcement pending adequate funding. The degree to which an alternative depends upon increased law enforcement and the subsequent effects will be tracked through the affects analysis.
Enforcement and Protection	Another factor is if you made that regulation [discharging firearms] how would you sign the woods to a wandering hunter that happened in the area, how would you enforce it?	The specifics of how this regulation would be signed and enforced would be considered following the approval of the final SRA
Enforcement and Protection	All the historic structures now located on public lands need to be maintained and protected from vandals.	The proposed management plan and all of the alternatives allow for increased law enforcement pending adequate funding. The degree to which an alternative depends upon increased law enforcement and the subsequent effects will be tracked through the affects analysis.
Enforcement and Protection	Enforcing fire restrictions should be one of the primary foci of law enforcement.	Forest Service law enforcement officers do have the primary responsibility of enforcing fire restrictions. This primary responsibility can be achieved with all of the alternatives.

Resource Themes**Comment****Response**

Enforcement and Protection

We stopped to look at the 3 pools day use area and found the natural, scenic aspect to be unique and beautiful, HOWEVER, the area was completely trashed. The people who treat this area with such disrespect should be fined heavily and their access denied. Are you able to enforce your rules?

The degree to which we are able to enforce rules and regulations is largely dependent upon funding. For us to enforce regulations, we must have an adequate number of officers in the field when the violations are occurring. We are attempting to increase our presence at Three Pools.

Enforcement and Protection

I have witnessed the increased usage of the area and the toll it has taken environmentally and in lost lives due to inappropriate use, poor roads, and little police protection and enforcement....I am concerned however about the limited resources in the area with regard to fire, fish & game, and police protection...I am concerned about the Little North Fork's ability to handle any increase in traffic....Please consider in your plan:...increase police enforcement & Repair and maintenance of the LNF road.

The proposed management plan and all of the alternatives allow for increased law enforcement pending adequate funding. The degree to which an alternative depends upon increased law enforcement and the subsequent effects will be tracked through the affects analysis.

Enforcement and Protection

I am concerned that leaving downed trees will result in an un-enforceable edict, requiring law enforcement effort, administrative overhead, etc, to address a problem that really is not one at all.

Tracked through the affects analysis.

Increase law enforcement

The access and use problem at Three Pools during middle and late summer is serious. Although I've not been there for years, I've heard that the area is often overcrowded and is used by the sorts of recreationists who drink, play loud music, litter and get rowdy and generally perpetrate values incompatible with a scenic recreation

Access and use is addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would Be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan. The underage drinking, littering, and other unacceptable behavior is dependent upon our ability to enforce rules and regulations. Enforcement of regulations is considered in the proposed management plan and all of the alternatives. We are making efforts to increase our law enforcement presence at Three Pools.

Project level

Areas of high ecological fragility like the Guts Gibbs tree, the Opal Pool overlook, and others should have consideration for either a boardwalk or platform to use so that they don't become loved to

Site specific projects will be addressed in separate analyses after the SRA management plan is approved. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at

Resource Themes**Comment****Response**

Project level

The map of the area in the plan continues to ignore that section of the Opal Creek legislation that is on BLM land. It needs to be included and addressed in the final plan.

We believe that you are referring to the section of the Elkhorn Wild and Scenic River that is on BLM land. The SRA Management Plan does not address the management of the Wild and Scenic River. The BLM and the Forest Service will jointly conduct the analysis for the Wild and Scenic River Management Plan starting in January of 2002.

Project level

Boardwalks and platforms should be built to protect high-use areas in the forest (such as those surrounding large trees in the redwoods or on the Oregon Coast).

Site specific projects will be addressed in separate analyses after the SRA management plan is approved. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at

Project level

A shuttle should be developed at the split to take people from the split to the trailhead...Rather than a shuttle have horse drawn carriages run by local entrepreneurs that take people to and from the split and up to the trailheads and jawbone. This will help minimize impact, boost the local economy, and set a precedent for other such natural areas.

Site specific projects will be addressed in separate analyses after the SRA management plan is approved. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at

Project level

Also, boardwalks and platforms should be built to protect high-use areas in the forest, resembling platforms surrounding large trees in the redwoods or on the Oregon Coast.

Site specific projects will be addressed in separate analyses after the SRA management plan is approved. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at

Project level

Put in shuttle system at 2207 Road -- new gate plus shuttle to Jawbone during high season; pave road from USFS 2209 to Fork, plus parking area; similar to Denali

Site specific projects will be addressed in separate analyses after the SRA management plan is approved. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at

Project level

Loop trail from LN Fork Trail to Kopetski Trail with 2 new bridges (Stony Ridge Trail and near Gibbs Tree).

Site specific projects will be addressed in separate analyses after the SRA management plan is approved. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at

Project level

Raised walkways in lieu of new trails along road to disperse traffic; platforms at big impacted trees (i.e. Gibbs Tree) so they all don't die soon.

Site specific projects will be addressed in separate analyses after the SRA management plan is approved. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at

Resource Themes**Comment****Response**

Project level	Boardwalks and platforms should be built to protect high-use areas in the forest, resembling platforms surrounding large trees in the redwoods or on the Oregon coast.	Site specific projects will be addressed in separate analyses after the SRA management plan is approved. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at
Project level	A shuttle bus system should be established on summer weekends, closing the 2209 road at the junction with 2207.	Site specific projects will be addressed in separate analyses after the SRA management plan is approved. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at
Project level -- Mine closures	I suggest that boardwalks and platforms should be built to protect high-use areas in the forest, resembling platforms surrounding large trees in the redwoods or on the Oregon Coast, and similar to boardwalks in Olympic National Park in WA.	Site specific projects will be addressed in separate analyses after the SRA management plan is approved. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at
Project level -- Mine closures	Mine openings scheduled to be closed for safety, should not be done with chemical materials such as foam plugs or concrete walls, nor should they be sealed fully in some other manner.	Site specific projects will be addressed in separate analyses after the SRA management plan is approved. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at
Project level -- Mine closures	No chemical materials such as foam plugs, should be used in the mine closures. Installing bat gates, rather than sealing off some of the mine entrances would be a great way to provide habitat for a diversity of bats and other animal species.	Site specific projects will be addressed in separate analyses after the SRA management plan is approved. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at
Project level -- Mine closures	Open mines within the SRA should not be blasted, plugged, or otherwise impact fully closed. Bat gates should be erected on the mines to allow for passage of wildlife and other species, but not for human entry, unless other provisions for human entry are specified.	Site specific projects will be addressed in separate analyses after the SRA management plan is approved. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at
Project level -- Mine closures	Several mine openings are scheduled to be closed for safety, but no chemical materials such as foam plugs, should be used in the closures.	Site specific projects will be addressed in separate analyses after the SRA management plan is approved. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at

Resource Themes**Comment****Response**

Project level -- Mine closures

I would like to see bat gates installed on some (or all, ideally) of the mines slated for closure...Sealing these off would eliminate a lot of valuable habitat. If it is a matter of human safety, these gates can be made narrow enough to keep humans out, while allowing the critters to continue living in and using them. If mines do end up getting sealed off, I would hope chemical treatments (i.e. foam plugs) would not be used.

Site specific projects will be addressed in separate analyses after the SRA management plan is approved. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at

Active Mining Claims

Under minerals 5) extractions of common minerals prohibited. Can claim holder use gravel where available to maintain roads and trails? I feel we should as we are legal in-holders.

Provide written response to the comment or question.

Consistent with the management plan

Continue offering strong protection of the forest ecosystem, its threatened and endangered species, and habitat functions, including the prohibition against commercial timber cutting. Continue to work to maintain the high water quality.

The Opal Creek legislation (Public Law 104-333) prohibits the cutting and selling of trees, with exceptions as stated in the legislation. The Willamette National Forest Plan, the proposed SRA Management Plan, and the alternatives all provide for protecting the ecosystem, threatened and endangered species, and high quality water.

General comment & affirmation

Continued strong protection of the forest ecosystem, its threatened and endangered species, and habitat functions, including the prohibition against commercial timber cutting;
- maintenance of exceptionally high water quality;
- the recommendation that inholders form partnerships with the Forest Service for management, education, research and other

The Opal Creek legislation (Public Law 104-333) prohibits the cutting and selling of trees, with exceptions as stated in the legislation. The Willamette National Forest Plan, the proposed SRA Management Plan, and the alternatives all provide for protecting the ecosystem, threatened and endangered species, and high quality water.

General comment & affirmation

My wife and I agree generally with the proposed management plan.

Thank you for your comment.

General comment & affirmation

The plans were reasonable to me. I like the high use, moderate use, and low use designation for areas. Thanks for all the hard work.

Thank you for your comment.

General comment & affirmation

Interested in educational opportunities; I teach alternative education/high school age

We will keep your name on our mailing list, to notify of potential opportunities.

General comment & affirmation

Clean up restrooms so they're more private and pleasing to the nose and skin (bottom and hands).

Keeping the restroom clean and smelling good is always a challenge. We will try to do better in the future.

Resource Themes**Comment****Response**

General comment & affirmation	Residents and/or owners of structures should be included in outreach efforts soliciting input on the SRA or future management	We have been attempting to maintain an extensive mailing list of everyone who is interested in Opal Creek. We apologize if your name was not included in the past. We have added the names and addresses for many of the landowners in Opal Creek area. There is also a representative for Adjacent Landowners on the Advisory Council that can represent your interests at Council meetings.
General comment & affirmation	The only CCC camp on the Little N. Fork in the mid 30's was located on the road at the entrance to the Willamette National Forest.	Thank you for this information.
General comment & affirmation	The comment by staff that there are no dams in the Opal Creek basin is in error. Henline Creek has a concrete dam a short distance upstream from the top of the falls.	Thank you for this information.
General comment & affirmation	I support continued strong protection of the forest ecosystem, its threatened and endangered species, and habitat functions, including the prohibiting against commercial timber cutting	The Opal Creek legislation (Public Law 104-333) prohibits the cutting and selling of trees, with exceptions as stated in the legislation. The Willamette National Forest Plan, the proposed SRA Management Plan, and the alternatives all provide for protecting the ecosystem, threatened and endangered species, and high quality water.
General comment & affirmation	I support the maintenance of exceptionally high water quality	The Willamette National Forest Plan and the Proposed Scenic Recreation Management plan allows for this occur.
General comment & affirmation	I support the recommendation that inholders form partnerships with the Forest Service for management, education, research, and other purposes.	Partnerships will play an important role in successfully implementing a management plan. The Forest Service will be looking at all opportunities to form mutually beneficial partnerships with all types of groups, organizations, and individuals, including
General comment & affirmation	I have studied the Proposed Management Plan for Opal Creek and have found it to be well balanced. I agree with the proposal as presented.	Thank you for your comment.

Resource Themes**Comment****Response**

Interpretation, Education,
Research

Education and Research as required by legislation should be done in a way that benefits local communities. Local communities should have priority for these programs. Utilizing existing infrastructure like that of Jawbone Flats for education and research should be prioritized to minimize development impact within the SRA.

Specifics regarding interpretation and environmental education will be addressed in the Interpretation Plan. The Interpretation Plan will implement the SRA Management Plan objectives. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at that time.

Interpretation, Education,
Research

What sort of educational facilities are going to be present. Much of the medium use zone is old growth (late successional) forest, a rarity around the world. How does the USFS plan on educating the public about what makes old-growth forests unique and different from a managed second growth stand. I suggest a partnership with Jawbone Flats for education, or an interpretive center in Jawbone Flats for education.

Specifics regarding interpretation and environmental education will be addressed in the Interpretation Plan. The Interpretation Plan will implement the SRA Management Plan objectives. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at that time.

Interpretation, Education,
Research

I hope that the Forest Service's professed desire for "balanced" historical coverage of the Opal Creek area includes factual documentation of how the Forest Service spent many, many years seeking to clearcut the heart of the Opal Creek wilderness area.

A response was previously sent addressing the history of Opal Creek and Forest Service laws, regulations, and policies.

Interpretation, Education,
Research

I do believe that it is in everyone's best interest to form partnerships between inholders and the Forest Service for management, education, research and other purposes

Partnerships will play an important role in successfully implementing a management plan. The Forest Service will be looking at all opportunities to form mutually beneficial partnerships with all types of groups, organizations, and individuals, including

Interpretation, Education,
Research

I strongly encourage development of an interpretive and education plan for the area in order to promote learning, appreciation and respect for the area. It is essential to promote respect for our natural areas and resources and this is an ideal area in which to promote this learning.

The Forest Service will develop an Interpretive Plan, which can include environmental education. This will be completed following the approval of the final SRA Management Plan.

Interpretation, Education,
Research

Fire education should be the primary foci of other LEO's and other agency staff.

Fire education is a primary responsibility of Law Enforcement Officers and other agency personnel.

Resource Themes**Comment****Response**

Interpreting Mining History

All mines that are to be closed should be done so with bat friendly gates that can be opened for interpretative displays or underground study and research.

An Interpretive Plan will be developed after approval of the final SRA Management Plan. The Interpretive Plan will consider interpreting the mines and mining history of Opal Creek. However, it is doubtful that we will allow the public to enter the mines once they have been closed. The purpose for closing the mines is that they are considered unsafe. The method used for closing mines will be considered on a case-by-case bases, and will follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

Interpreting Mining History

The mines that are currently accessible and relatively safe to visit should be left open and have information interpretive kiosks; other more remote mining sites should also be left as they are now and perhaps left off the map for "discovery" later.

An Interpretive Plan will be developed after approval of the final SRA Management Plan. The Interpretive Plan will consider interpreting the mines and mining history of Opal Creek. However, it is doubtful that we will allow the public to enter the mines once they have been closed. The purpose for closing the mines is that they are considered unsafe. The method used for closing mines will be considered on a case-by-case bases, and will follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

Interpreting Mining History

Using gates for mine closures would allow future consideration of interpretive activities inside stable safe mine openings.

An Interpretive Plan will be developed after approval of the final SRA Management Plan. The Interpretive Plan will consider interpreting the mines and mining history of Opal Creek. However, it is doubtful that we will allow the public to enter the mines once they have been closed. The purpose for closing the mines is that they are considered unsafe. The method used for closing mines will be considered on a case-by-case bases, and will follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

Resource Themes**Comment****Response**

Interpreting Mining History

Some of these mines should be used for education and interpretation. The mining is such a valuable piece of local history, and visitors would benefit greatly from a couple of these mines being converted to educational tools. If there are any that are on an accessible trail that visitors use fairly frequently, these should be stabilized and made safe so that they can be gone in with a guide or interpreter.

An Interpretive Plan will be developed after approval of the final SRA Management Plan. The Interpretive Plan will consider interpreting the mines and mining history of Opal Creek. However, it is doubtful that we will allow the public to enter the mines once they have been closed. The purpose for closing the mines is that they are considered unsafe. The method used for closing mines will be considered on a case-by-case bases, and will follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

Provide appropriate individual response

I may have missed it, are there any plans or allowance for stocking the Little North Fork within the SRA with fish? Hatchery, native, non-native, none?

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife have no plans to stock the Little North Fork within the SRA with fish. This Little North Fork within the SRA is managed as a wild fish refuge, specifically for winter steelhead.

Provide appropriate individual response

There should be a partnership with the Lyons (Stayton) fire district and volunteer fire department to provide local residents with information regarding forest fire safety (brush setbacks, etc).

This a good idea. The private land owners can work directly with either Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) or the local fire district to initiate the partnership. ODF has responsibility for wildfires on private lands, so they would be the first point of contact.

Provide appropriate individual response

Upon successful resolution of litigation, I would support an effort to bring the Bornite mining area into the SRA.

Since the SRA is a Congressionally Designated Area, the United States Congress would make the decision on whether or not to include additional acreage in the SRA.

Provide appropriate individual response

With regards to facilities, what type of facilities are planned to be created.

Plans for new facilities or existing facility improvements will be considered after the final SRA Management Plan is approved. We will consider your comment at that time.

Resource Themes**Comment****Response**

Provide appropriate individual response

My personal experience is that if certain activities within highly regulated land use areas are not designated as permitted, they are often interpreted by many people as prohibited.

There are many activities allowed on National Forest lands. Generally it is easier to list the exceptions or what is not allowed. Ensuring that people understand that an activity is owed unless posted as prohibited is something that the Forest Service should consider when providing information.

Provide appropriate individual response

What projects that will support the communities of the North Santiam Canyons will be considered? None are mentioned. Does this mean that at this point there are none being considered? Who will decide what projects and partnerships will be considered. Will the public be allowed to comment on these projects and partnerships?

Specific projects are not being considered until after a final plan has been approved, since a final plan may determine what projects are appropriate. The USDA Forest Service has the responsibility for deciding what projects will be implemented and what partners will be involved. The Advisory Council will provide advice to the Forest Service regarding the projects. The Forest Service will also gather public input on the implementation of projects.

Provide appropriate individual response

The usage zones seem more to be infrastructural levels rather than the actual amount of use. How does the USFS plan to meet these usage zones? The management plan doesn't seem to address the specifics of how to reach those desired zones.

The intent of the "use zones" was to address both the use and the infrastructure. Only Alternatives #2 (the Proposed Management Plan) and Alternative #5 place restrictions on use. There are variety of methods available to restrict use, such as designating campsites, implementing a permit system, and or charging fees. Alternative #2 (the Proposed Management Plan) and Alternative #5 allow for these and other methods to be used to limit use. Which method to use would be decided on a case-by-case bases.

Provide appropriate individual response

Ban/Prohibit any logging, mining, or oil/natural gas drilling within SRA as there are already too many other places available for the this kind of destructive activity

The legislation establishing the Opal Creek SRA (Public Law 104-333) prohibits, in general, the cutting and selling of trees, and withdraws the area from mineral entry except for valid existing rights on the date of enactment.

Resource Themes

Comment

Response

Provide appropriate individual response

Although within the proposed wilderness boundary, the Silver King Mine site and falls historically has had road access to a trail head within a 1/3 mile of parking. The road was open prior to legislation, was recently closed, and is a good opportunity to be reopened

The Wilderness Act of 1964 prohibits roads and the use of mechanized equipment within Wilderness boundaries. Keeping a road open to access a destination within a Wilderness is not discretionary. In 1998, when the Opal Creek legislation was implemented, we were required by law to block all roads into the Opal Creek Wilderness to mechanized access. As funding permits we will also obliterate these roads to protect the watershed and enhance the Wilderness setting.

Provide appropriate individual response

A Fire Management Plan for the SRA should include opportunities for public input, be reviewed by the Advisory Council and be based on Best available science, including science covering ecosystem functions.

In general, the Advisory Council actually developed the Fires Management Plan for the Opal Creek SRA. The Advisory Council went through the same process as did Willamette National Forest employees for recommending whether or not fire was beneficial and should be suppressed or allowed to burn under certain condition. The Advisory Council considered the biological factors and weighed them against the social factors in making their recommendation to suppress all fires. This very process is providing the public an opportunity to comment on the Advisory Councils recommendation.

Provide appropriate individual response

As this management plan will become public law 104-33 when approved, and can become a base for making decision in the future on new scenic areas.

The Management Plan does not become Law. Only Congress make laws regarding Federal lands. It does, however, amend the Willamette National Forest Plan. The methods to change, revise, or amend a National Forest Plan is to go through a public process similar to the process we are currently going through. The Forest Supervisor or Regional Forester makes the decision on whether or not to revise or amend a National Forest Plan. Their decision can be appealed. There decision is not precedent setting.

Provide appropriate individual response

Also I ask that you consider removing the ban on bicycles on the Kopetski Trail. I see no good reason to ban bicycles, when the road is occasionally used for vehicles by "Friends of Opal Creek".

Addressed in Alternative #6 -- Allow Additional Use Above What Is In The Proposed Management Plan.

Resource Themes**Comment****Response**

Provide appropriate individual response

I disagree with the plan not to salvage timber, diseased timber, or burned timber. The proposed plan makes no sense in its present form.

The Opal Creek Legislation (Public Law 104-333), prohibits the cutting and selling of live, dead, or dying trees, except for public safety, for the removal of hazard trees, and for activities related to the administration of the SRA. Therefore, the Forest Service does not have the option to do otherwise.

Provide appropriate individual response

I disagree with no roads in the Wilderness areas in-so-far-as it applies to the Silver King Mine. There was an access road to within a mile of the Mine and just because it was damaged by flood is not an excuse for closing it permanently. That is one of the few areas of interest that was accessible to SENIOR CITIZENS, and I'm one.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 prohibits roads and the use of mechanized equipment within Wilderness boundaries. Keeping a road open to access a destination within a Wilderness is not discretionary. In 1998, when the Opal Creek legislation was implemented, we were required by law to block all roads into the Opal Creek Wilderness to mechanized access. As funding permits we will also obliterate these roads to protect the watershed and enhance the Wilderness setting.

Provide appropriate individual response

What is your permanent e-mail address?

You can send e-mail regarding Opal Creek to either: drosetti@fs.fed.us, or rcrist@fs.fed.us, or jcox@fs.fed.us. Either of the three Forest Service employees at these e-mail addresses can provide you with information on Opal Creek.

Provide appropriate individual response

The bridge that was recently built over Opal Pool was rustic in design, but the treated wood continues to drip copper arsenic and other chemicals into Opal Creek.

The Forest Service no longer uses copper arsenic as a preservative for bridges. The preservative applied to the Opal Pool bridge was done while the wood was wet; there, the preservative was not immediately absorbed by the wood. There was a small amount of preservative that seep from the wood, but the amount was so small that it was not harmful to fish or to the water.

Provide appropriate individual response

In terms of timber cutting, who exactly decides when it's appropriate to cut because of "public safety, administration, or hazard removal"? Is this the discretion of the forest service?

The decision on when to cut trees for public safety, administration, or hazard removal rests with the USDA Forest Service.

Provide appropriate individual response

I like the idea of the Opal Creek Scenic Rec. Area. But does that imply that the Forest Service is managing for ugliness in other

Provide written response to the comment or question.

Resource Themes**Comment****Response**

Provide appropriate individual response

Some of the language regarding Bornite Project's activities elicit vision of scenic degradation and noise and air pollution.

The language regarding the Bornite Project is stated in Public Law 104-333 which established the Opal Creek SRA and Wilderness, and the Elkhorn Wild and Scenic River.

Provide appropriate individual response

My main concern is the part in the management plan that talks about land acquisition, (c), page 39, and condemnation. I have had my property for over 20 years, and the last 7 years we have been remodeling, so we can move up there full time. I have invested a lot of money and time in it for our future. I don't want to lose my future for some scenic recreation area.

You are referring to a statement in the Opal Creek legislation (Public Law 104-333) regarding acquiring private land within the Opal Creek Wilderness and SRA boundaries. Currently there are only two tracts of private land within the Opal Creek boundaries -- a tract at Jawbone Flats owned by the Friends of Opal Creek, and a tract in the Opal Creek Wilderness owned by Times-Mirror. Your land is outside of the Opal Creek boundary and would not be affected by the Opal Creek legislation.

Provide appropriate individual response

Increase use and Opal Creek advertisement has brought increase in vandalism, litter and property destruction, intruders and motor vehicle accidents (referring to outside SRA). If increases in use are to happen, we must be considered as a part of the Opal Creek Community. please consider a safe crosswalk at Evans Creek

We do recognize that there are effects to private landowners from Opal Creek and the other non-Forest Service recreation sites on the Little North Fork Road. There is a member of the Opal Creek Advisory Council that represents adjacent landowners interests. The Forest Service, however, only has the authority to take management actions, such as providing facilities on National Forest System lands. A crosswalk at Evans Creek would be outside of Forest Service authority.

Provide appropriate individual response

It is suggested that the relationship of the Elkhorn Wild & Scenic River to the Opal CK SRA be discussed in the EA. Will there be a separate management plan for the W&S River.

The effects of the proposed action and alternatives on the Wild and Scenic River will be discussed in the EA. A separate management plan will be developed in cooperation with Bureau of Land Management for the Elkhorn Wild and Scenic River. We expect to start the process in February 2002.

Resource Themes**Comment****Response**

Provide appropriate individual response

A current problem in the community is that Dobermans and sometimes other dogs are allowed to run freely near the cement bridge at Elkhorn and near the trailhead (west end) for LNF trail #3338. This user conflict, with dogs harassing hikers must be addressed and solved.

You are correct, we do need to address this situation, and we do have methods currently available to us. We can have our Law Enforcement Officers and Marion County Sheriff to check the trailhead for dogs that are harassing hikers.

Provide appropriate individual response

It's ridiculous that the Forest Service is charging citizens to park at the Opal Creek trailhead, when the Friends of Opal Creek maintain the trails. Visitors to Jawbone Flats, which is private land, are required to pay the Forest Service.

The money collected from the Northwest Forest Pass fee demo project is used for a variety of trail management activities in addition to trail maintenance. Monies collected from the Northwest Forest Pass has gone towards enlarging the parking area at the trailhead, providing sanitation facilities at the trailhead, funding our trails crew to maintain the high use trails such as the Little North Santiam Trail, and funding Marion County Sheriff's Cadets to patrol the trailhead. The monies collected from the Northwest Forest Pass and our appropriated funding for trails is not sufficient to maintain all of the trails on the Detroit District. Therefore, we continue to work with volunteers such as the Friends of Opal Creek to help maintain some of our trails.

Provide appropriate individual response

Also on June 18th 2001 the mining rep was absent from the meeting and sluicing was dropped from the Plan without proper

Advisory Council Charter procedures for decision making were followed. The Charter states that if a quorum (seven members) is present, then decisions can be put to vote.

Non-traditional Forest Product harvesting

I think the prohibition on firewood harvest of blow-down and administratively fallen trees is too restrictive.

The Opal Creek Legislation (Public Law 104-333) prohibits the cutting and selling of trees. This is being interpreted to include the cutting and selling of firewood.

Non-traditional Forest Product harvesting

All harvest of non-traditional forest products should be incidental or according to tribal rights. No permits should be issued for harvest or boughs, mushrooms, bear grass, or other forest products.

Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.

Resource Themes	Comment	Response
Vegetation and Fire Management	Wildfires affect public and firefighter safety, and property. Wildfire is not desirable in such areas where recreation developments and popular recreation sites exist, and adjacent private and public lands. Old growth forests are a scenic attribute that many visitors would like to see preserved within the SRA, and protected from catastrophic wildfire.	Supports the proposed action.
Vegetation and Fire Management	Retention of all down wood and increase in fuel loading along travel routes and recreation sites poses fire hazard risk.	We do have the option of managing fuels if the management techniques comply with the Opal Creek legislation (Public Law 104-333) and the Final Opal Creek SRA Management Plan.
Vegetation and Fire Management	Reduced opportunities to treat fuels under the proposed plan could lead to increased fuel loading and risk of catastrophic fire, which could adversely affect the recreation potential of the SRA.	We do have the option of managing fuels if the management techniques comply with the Opal Creek legislation (Public Law 104-333) and the Final Opal Creek SRA Management Plan.
Vegetation and Fire Management	There is no provision for managing fuels to reduce the likelihood of a large scale stand replacing fire.	We do have the option of managing fuels if the management techniques comply with the Opal Creek legislation (Public Law 104-333) and the Final Opal Creek SRA Management Plan.
Define cutting allowed by legislation	With regard to Timber Cutting, I think the wording should specifically define what and when timber should be cut or at least come to the narrowest definition for timber cutting. If the timber cutting objective can be avoided without cutting, then the without cutting option should be pursued	Addressed in Alternative #7 -- Administrative Cutting Of Trees.
Define cutting allowed by legislation	The Proposed Plan's permission of tree cutting for public safety, administration or hazard removal should be defined as explicitly and narrowly as possible, and cutting should be avoided if the same objectives can be achieved without it.	Addressed in Alternative #7 -- Administrative Cutting Of Trees.
Define cutting allowed by legislation	The Proposed Plan's permission of tree cutting for public safety, administration or hazard removal should be defined as explicitly and narrowly as possible. Cutting should be generally avoided if the same objectives can be achieved without cutting trees.	Addressed in Alternative #7 -- Administrative Cutting Of Trees.
Define cutting allowed by legislation	I think this [appropriate cutting] needs to be tightened up a little, with these terms being defined more specifically. All cutting should be avoided if the same objectives can be met without removing trees.	Addressed in Alternative #7 -- Administrative Cutting Of Trees.

Resource Themes	Comment	Response
Define cutting allowed by legislation	The proposed Plan's permission of tree cutting for public safety, administration, or hazard removal should be defined as explicitly and narrowly as possible.	Addressed in Alternative #7 -- Administrative Cutting Of Trees.
Allow fire to play a natural role	...the long-term goal being to integrate practices that lead to looking at fire as an essential, natural ecosystem process that shapes the environment by natural change	Addressed in Alternative #4 -- Allow Fire to Play Its Natural Role.
Allow fire to play a natural role	Long-term, the only way to restore the forest's natural fire regime is to allow fire to play a role.	Addressed in Alternative #4 -- Allow Fire to Play Its Natural Role.
Allow fire to play a natural role	It is a natural area where human impacts are supposed to be minimal and not interrupt the natural patterns, texture, feeling, etc., and fire is a natural part of the forest ecosystem and natural pattern, therefore fire it would seem should be allowed within the SRA.	Addressed in Alternative #4 -- Allow Fire to Play Its Natural Role.
Fire suppression methods	...suppression strategies should follow the Forest Service standards for "Minimal Impact Suppression Tactics," and should specifically prohibit the use of mechanized fire suppression (i.e. bulldozers), chemical fire retardants, cutting of large-diameter trees (especially big "soft" snags), and deliberate high-severity backfiring or burnout actions.	Addressed in Alternative #3 -- Apply Light on the Land Fire Suppression Techniques.
Fire suppression methods	Fire control plans should be clear that, if there is access for aerial water supply (dipping, etc) on the Little North Fork or any of the local lakes, it should be allowed, if supplies from Detroit Lake are too far away	The Willamette National Forest Plan and the Proposed Scenic Recreation Management plan allows for this occur.
Fire suppression methods	Chart a path away from suppression in the long-term. Suppression strategies must follow the FS standards for "Minimal Impact Suppression Tactics" and should specifically prohibit use of mechanized fire suppression (bulldozers), chemical fire retardants, cutting of large diameter trees (especially big soft snags), and deliberate high severity backfiring or burnout actions. Such industrial, large scale suppression activities can cause more damage than a fire itself.	Addressed in Alternative #3 -- Apply Light on the Land Fire Suppression Techniques.

Resource Themes	Comment	Response
Fire suppression methods	Due to past fire suppression activities by the US Forest Service an unnatural condition exists with a high likelihood of catastrophic fire. A fire that could damage private property, the eco-system and put lives in jeopardy. Aggressive fire prevention and suppression must be used until such time as a balance eco-system has been restored.	Supports the proposed action.
Fire suppression methods	With fire suppression, it's important for the management plan to explicitly prohibit the use of mechanized fire suppression equip (i.e. bulldozers), chemical fire retardants, cutting of large diameter trees and snags, and deliberate high-severity backburn action. Management should be consistent with the forest service "Minimal Impact Suppression Tactics" for the short-term	Addressed in Alternative #3 -- Apply Light on the Land Fire Suppression Techniques.
Fire suppression methods	If fire suppression should occur (which would be an interruption of the natural patter) what means will be used. Certainly not chemical fire retardants, or bulldozers, new roads, or chainsaws I hope.	Addressed in Alternative #3 -- Apply Light on the Land Fire Suppression Techniques.
Insects, disease, and noxious weeds	The SRA should allow biological and/or chemical control of non-native insect pests	The Willamette National Forest Plan and the Proposed Scenic Recreation Management plan allows for this occur.
Monitoring & Inventory	One thing that should be addressed however, is long-term data collection/monitoring of the area. In order to know what impacts are occurring due usage, a baseline is needed of conditions as they are now.	Monitoring plan will be developed after the SRA management plan is approved. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at that time.
Monitoring & Inventory	Management techniques must be employed to keep and restore the integrity of heavily impacted natural areas within the SRA. These heavily impacted areas need to be identified immediately for inclusion in the management plan.	Detroit District personnel have competed an inventory of the dispersed recreation areas within the Opal Creek SRA, including the amount of impact. In some cases, specific actions cannot be taken until the Management Plan has been approved.
Monitoring & Inventory	A base line to establish the level of recreation use at the date of enactment needs to be established immediately!	Detroit District personnel have been working on establishing a base line. We do not have much data on actual use in 1996. Most of our data has been collect since 1998.

Resource Themes	Comment	Response
Monitoring & Inventory	The plan currently has no evaluation section, and no specific means of evaluating whether its goals and standards are being met. Particularly in the area of water quality, a vigorous monitoring regime should be established, with periodic monitoring and reporting of water quality and other ecological conditions as well as other physical and usage conditions, with objectives to assess how and whether the standards and goals of the plan are being met.	Monitoring plan will be developed after the SRA management plan is approved. The Forest Service and the Advisory Council will consider your comment at that time.
Wild and Scenic Rivers	Desired condition does not address eligible W&SR's. Environmental assessment will need to address how the proposed plan would affect the eligibility of W&SR's.	Tracked through the affects analysis.
Ability of the area to function as an LSR	What are the effects to the area functioning as an LSR? How does the legislation impact the species addressed in the NWFP, and what mitigations should be applied?	Tracked through the affects analysis.
Ability of the area to function as an LSR	What are the affects on LSR since it was part of a larger LSR? Need to evaluate the CDA and legislation against the objectives of the LSR.	Tracked through the affects analysis.
Essential habitat unit for fish	Is this area within the critical habitat unit? If so what are the affects?	Tracked through the affects analysis.
Scenery	When maintaining current trails and structures, or in building new structures, it is essential to maintain the rustic and wild characteristics of SRA and Wilderness Areas. This means no only designing facilities that are rustic, but selecting the proper materials that enhance the rustic character of the area as well.	Addressed in Alternative #5 -- Further Restricts Use That Would be Allowed Under the Proposed Management Plan.
Management Plan Implementation Funding	Interpretation, education and research activities: The USFS has had no funding specifically for these types of opportunities, services or programs in the past, and this would be an additional cost of implementing the proposed plan.	Rarely is the Forest System funded by Congress to fully implement a Management Plan. It is unlikely that the Forest Service will have sufficient funding to fully implement the proposed management plan; therefore, volunteers, partnerships, and grants will be very important for implementation.
Management Plan Implementation Funding	Implementation of the proposal would cost more than traditional funding levels for road systems.	Rarely is the Forest System funded by Congress to fully implement a Management Plan. It is unlikely that the Forest Service will have sufficient funding to fully implement the proposed management plan; therefore, volunteers, partnerships, and grants will be very important for implementation.

Resource Themes

Comment

Response

Management Plan
Implementation Funding

Roads: #9, this is costly-who pays for it? How is dust abated, what are acceptable levels of dust?

Rarely is the Forest System funded by Congress to fully implement a Management Plan. It is unlikely that the Forest Service will have sufficient funding to fully implement the proposed management plan; therefore, volunteers, partnerships, and grants will be very important for implementation.

Management Plan
Implementation Funding

The cost of maintaining trail standards or constructing new trails as proposed in the management plan is more than current funding levels allow.

Rarely is the Forest System funded by Congress to fully implement a Management Plan. It is unlikely that the Forest Service will have sufficient funding to fully implement the proposed management plan; therefore, volunteers, partnerships, and grants will be very important for implementation.

Facilities and development

I also fully support the concept of the very low-intensity area being completely undeveloped in all respects.

Supports the proposed action.

Facilities and development

Although certain amenities might have to be maintained in high use areas, a minimum of structures and roads is desirable.

The Willamette National Forest Plan and the Proposed Scenic Recreation Management plan allows for this occur.