



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Mt. Hood National Forest

Hood River Ranger District
6780 Highway 35
Mt. Hood-Parkdale, OR 97041
541-352-6002
FAX 541-352-7365

File Code: 1950

Date: December 2, 2013

Dear Interested Citizen,

The Hood River Ranger District on the Mt. Hood National Forest (the Forest) has identified you as an individual, agency, or organization that has shown interest in the planning process for **Lava Restoration**. The Lava Restoration project is located on the Hood River Ranger District within the East Fork, Middle Fork and West Fork Hood River Watersheds. The legal description for the project is: T1S, R8.5 – 9E; Willamette Meridian.

Project Overview

The Lava Restoration proposal is to improve forest conditions in the East Fork, Middle Fork and West Fork Hood River Watersheds utilizing a variety of vegetative and road treatments. The Proposed Action includes vegetative treatments of approximately 1,908 acres including plantation thinning, sapling thinning, planting, firewood removal and huckleberry enhancement. All thinning activities proposed in this project would apply variable density thinning, which allows flexibility in achieving overall treatment objectives while enhancing stand structural diversity.

This project would also decommission approximately 2.1 miles of unneeded roads over several years, as implementation funding becomes available. The roads would not be decommissioned until after the proposed vegetative treatments have occurred. Road decommissioning includes active (i.e., mechanical) and/or passive (i.e., inactive) methods. As part of this treatment the beginning portion of a decommissioned road would be blocked to obstruct vehicles from entering the decommissioned road. If hydrologic and ecological processes are adversely impacted by the road, then the decommissioned road would be stabilized and restored to a more natural state. A decommissioned road would be removed from the Forest's transportation system and would no longer receive any maintenance. In addition, 15.4 miles of road would have a year round closure and 7.0 miles of road would have a seasonal closure, where roads would only be open during huckleberry harvesting season.

The Preliminary Assessment for this project is now complete. It is available for viewing at the Mt. Hood National Forest website: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/mthood/projects>.

Opportunity for Public Comment

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral, and electronic comments concerning this action will be accepted for 30 calendar days following publication of a legal notice in *The Oregonian*. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for this proposal. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. Regulations prohibit extending the length of the comment period.

On March 27, 2013, a final rule revising 36 CFR Part 218 was published in the Federal Register and became effective on that date. The new rule replaces the previous appeal rules defined in 36 CFR 215, and expands the use of the pre-decisional objection process used for projects authorized under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003. The new rule provides the public an opportunity



to comment and express concerns on projects before decisions are made, rather than after. The Forest Service believes this aligns with our collaborative approach to forest management and increases the likelihood of resolving those concerns, resulting in better, more informed decisions.

The new rule provides the public an opportunity to seek higher level review of unresolved concerns before the project decision has been signed, rather than having to appeal a signed decision. Individuals and entities who have submitted specific written comments at this stage will be eligible to object. Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted written comments specific to the proposed project or activity unless the objection concerns an issue that arose after the opportunities for comment. Comments received during this public review of the Preliminary Assessment will be considered, and a revised EA and draft Decision Notice will be released for a 45 day review and objection period. For more information on 36 CFR Part 218, see the Federal Register, Volume 78, No. 59, March 27, 2013.

Written comments should be submitted to the Responsible Official, Janeen Tervo, District Ranger c/o Andrew Tierney, 6780 Highway 35, Mount Hood/Parkdale, OR 97041 or by FAX: (541) 352 - 7365. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00AM to 4:30PM Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Oral comments can be provided to Project Lead, Andrew Tierney, only during normal business hours via telephone (541) 467 - 5103, or in person. Those submitting electronic comments must put the project name in the subject line, and must either submit comments as part of the e-mail message or as an attachment only in one of the following three formats: Microsoft Word, rich text format (rtf) or Adobe Portable Document Format (pdf), and must do so only to the following e-mail address: comments-pacificnorthwest-mthood-hoodriver@fs.fed.us. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to a comment, a verification of identity will be required for objection eligibility. If using an electronic message, a scanned signature is one way to provide verification. E-mails submitted to e-mail addresses other than the one listed above, in other formats than those listed, or containing viruses, will be rejected.

It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period. It is the responsibility of persons providing comments by electronic means to ensure that their comments have been received. Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to object must meet the information requirements of 36 CFR 218.

Anyone wishing to obtain additional information on this project should contact Andrew Tierney at (541) 467 - 5103 or atierney@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,



JANEEN TERVO
District Ranger

cc: Jennie O'Conner Card