



File Code:

Date: November 15, 2014

Greetings,

I'd like to take this opportunity to provide an update on the Lava Restoration EA. As we approach the holiday season I reflect on where we were a year ago with this project: getting ready to issue the draft EA for the 30 day public comment period. The original plan was to respond to comments, make adjustments to the project if needed, and issue the final decision by May. Following the 30 day comment period, the Hood River News had a number of letters to the editor regarding this project. I realized my task at hand was to engage with community members who were concerned about the proposal. It is now six months beyond that decision date, and for what I believe is good reason. Overall, we have received 1,220 comments on the Lava project. As requested, I have also had meetings and visits to the field with a select few of you and learned much about your interests and concerns. This letter will highlight some of the key events which have informed my draft decision scheduled to come out this week.

In February, Whitney Olsker, Andy Tierney and I met with members of the Hood River Valley Residents Committee (HRVRC) to provide an overview of the project. Attending were Polly Wood, Peter Cornelison, Mike McCarthy, Larry Martin and Ron Cohen. The meeting was productive, allowed us the opportunity to meet each other for the first time, and begin building relationships. *(We also encouraged HRVRC to formally join the Hood River Collaborative Group, which they have done! Thank you Anne Saxby and Polly Wood.)*

In March I received a letter from HRVRC supporting the majority of the Lava project with the exception of the two huckleberry units (#52 and #53). Here are the key points from that letter; "These units bring a substantial amount of controversy to what could otherwise be a project we would likely be able to support. The Vista Ridge trail is one of the most spectacular hikes on Mount Hood. Popular recreation areas are no place for logging, and closing access to this world class trail to allow for logging is unacceptable."

In May I received a letter from Oregon State Representative Ann Lininger, House District 38 which said, "For Oregon to thrive, we need to strike a balance between logging and our need to protect key natural areas and clean water. I applaud efforts by the Forest Service to build consensus among competing interests. Given the information I have received from concerned community members, however, I encourage you to hold off on the Vista Ridge timber sale. We need to honor community-forged compromises."

In July Allie Wenzl - Mt. Hood National Forest Historian and Tribal Liaison, reached out to Clay Penhollow - Natural Resources Planner with The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (CTWS) to let him know I was considering dropping the huckleberry units. This prospect caused great concern for CTWS given the importance of huckleberry management to the tribe, especially



these higher elevation units which are anticipated to have greater huckleberry production rates than lower elevation units. My responsibility to uphold Treaty Rights and Trust Responsibilities with CTWS is my duty as a Line Officer, and I take this responsibility seriously. Clay and Robert Bruno – Acting Executive Director CTWS were willing to meet almost immediately which we scheduled. Unfortunately, fire season arrived that same week and we had to cancel the meeting. We rescheduled our meeting and fire again caused us to cancel.

In the meantime, Representative Ann Lininger and I were able to set up a meeting with her constituents; Erik Fernandez from Oregon Wild, and Polly Wood from HRVRC in August. Representative Lininger, her Administrative Assistant Janice Adler, Erik Fernandez, Allie Wenzel and I met in Portland to discuss the huckleberry units. Erik Fernandez offered a compromise: drop unit 52 at the Vista Ridge trailhead and add a previously analyzed huckleberry unit from the Red Hill project, unit 49. This proposal was refreshing and I was seriously interested in this compromise as was Representative Lininger.

In October Allie Wenzl, Whitney Olsker, Casey Gatz and I met with Clay Penhollow, Robert Bruno, and Roberta Kirk - Native Plants Specialist from CTWS. I shared the history of events and the proposed compromise for the huckleberry units. We had a rich dialogue and ultimately Robert, Clay and Roberta believed this compromise would be: 1. Good for the Tribal Elders; 2. Demonstrate “good will” between Oregon Wild and CTWS. We proceeded to have a field trip that same week to view units 49 and 52 with Clay, Roberta, Elmer Ward – Policy & Planning, and Susie Slockish: Language Teacher, Cultural and Heritage Program. We listened to tribal members share stories from their Elders about huckleberries and traditions handed down. At the end of the field trip we gathered for a group picture, acknowledged the importance of huckleberry management and expressed gratitude for time spent together in the forest that is important to us.



Left to Right: Roberta, Elmer, Allie, Whitney, Susie, Clay

Given the level of concern raised over the huckleberry units 52 and 53, the meetings I've had with you, the learning that has occurred for me, and the new relationships that have been established, I am prepared to issue the draft decision notice for the Lava project which will include dropping unit 52. My rationale for this is due to the social concerns about the proximity of this unit to the Vista Ridge Trailhead, the potential interruption to use of the trailhead for forest visitors, and visual concerns from local community members and other concerned citizens in Oregon.

In an effort to maintain my trust responsibilities with CTWS, I also intend to support a separate CE for unit 49, or another high elevation huckleberry unit that would serve as a replacement for unit 52. While CTWS is disappointed with this approach, they understand the importance of compromise and are willing to trust this "good faith effort".

I want to acknowledge the Hood River Collaborative Group and the ID Team for your dedication and hard work on the Lava Restoration project. The science presented in the analysis leaves me with no doubt that implementing this project as originally designed would serve to enhance huckleberry production while meeting Forest Plan standards and guidelines for visual quality in unit 52.

Collaboration takes time, listening and learning, asking questions, and for me considering options and ultimately making decisions. It's time for Lava to move forward. I realize my decision won't please everyone, however with this project I believe we have built relationships that will carry us to success. I look forward to the future and working on projects together that provide "for the greatest good".

Sincerely,

/s/ Janeen Tervo

JANEEN TERVO

District Ranger

Hood River Ranger District

Mt. Hood National Forest