



File Code: 1950

Date: November 4, 2016

Dear Interested Citizen,

The Barlow and Hood River Ranger Districts of the Mt. Hood National Forest is in the early stages of planning the Crystal Clear Restoration (CCR) project which is located south of White River between Clear Lake and the McCubbins Gulch area in Oregon. The legal description of the planning area is: T. 4 S., R. 8.5 E.; T. 4 S., R. 9 E.; T. 4 S., R. 10 E.; T. 5 S., R. 8.5 E.; T. 5 S., R. 9 E. T. 5 S., R. 10 E.; T. 5 S., R. 11 E.; Willamette Meridian. The project includes parts of the Upper White River, Middle White River, Clear-Frog Creek, Middle Beaver Creek, and Wapinitia Creek Subwatersheds within the White River, Middle Deschutes River, and Beaver Creek Watersheds. This project would involve timber harvest and other fuel treatments in previously managed, and recently unmanaged stands. Please see the attached map which displays the location of the proposed project.

Your Involvement

The purpose of this letter is to invite your participation during our preliminary public scoping process. Any comments you may have at this early stage of project development are welcome. In particular, if you have information you feel the Forest Service may not be aware of, or have concerns regarding this proposed action, please send that information in writing to the address at the end of this letter. Other opportunities to comment will occur as the project takes shape over the coming year. We anticipate that the level of review necessary for this proposal will be covered through an Environmental Assessment (EA).

We will use comments received to inform the planning process. Also, any significant issues that are identified would be considered to develop alternatives to the proposed action. Those who respond to this invitation for comments will be notified when more detail is available. These opportunities include the scoping period; the public comment period on the Draft EA; and the pre-decisional objection period on the Draft Decision Notice. In the event that you choose not to comment but would still like to be informed on the status of this project, please let us know.

Project Overview

The overall goal for the CCR project is to conduct vegetation restoration activities within the planning area to improve the health and vigor of forested stands while reducing the risk of human-caused fires spreading from high risk areas onto non-federal lands. Additional goals for this project are to provide a location for fire suppression personnel to actively engage a fire safely.

The potential underlying needs within CCR are:

- Improve stand health by increasing resiliency to insects and disease;
- Enhance diversity within plantations;
- Enhance and restore pine/oak habitat;



- Provide opportunities to safely engage an active fire near private land;
- Reduce or maintain levels of hazardous fuels, including surface, ladder, and crown fuels to reduce the risk of unwanted effects of wildfire on NFS lands and adjacent privately owned land;
- Create defensible space in the communities throughout the Wildland Urban Interface to meet the objectives and goals of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan;
- Move the landscape toward more historic conditions to reduce fuel loading and restore forest resiliency;
- Move tree species composition to a higher proportion of fire tolerant ponderosa pine, western larch and Douglas-fir;
- Improve and maintain forage for deer and elk; and,
- Provide forest products consistent with the Northwest Forest Plan goal of maintaining the stability of local and regional economies, and to supply forest products in a cost effective manner.

Forest Plan Land Use Allocations

The three primary Forest Plan land use allocations in the planning area are Scenic Viewshed (B2), Deer and Elk Winter Range (B10), and Wood Product Emphasis (C1). The following is a brief summary of the goals of these land allocations, their existing and desired conditions, and how the needs described above fit within the management direction prescribed by the Mt. Hood National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan), as amended by the Northwest Forest Plan.

Approximately 39% of the planning area is within the Scenic Viewshed (B2) land use allocation (Forest Plan, pages 4-218 thru 4-220). The goal for this land use allocation is to provide attractive, visually appealing forest scenery with a wide variety of natural appearing landscape features. Within the main corridor of Highway 216, vegetation should be comprised of primarily multi-age, multi-species stands with a diverse understory of natural plant associations. The foreground should contain numerous large diameter trees with small, natural appearing openings.

The Timber Emphasis (C1) land use allocation encompasses approximately 45% of the planning area. The goal for this land is to provide lumber, wood fiber, and other forest products on a fully regulated basis, based on the capability and suitability of the land (Forest Plan, pages 4-289 thru 4-290).

The Deer and Elk Winter Range (B10) land use allocation encompasses approximately 14% of the planning area. The goal of this area is to provide high quality deer and elk habitat for use during most winters and to provide for a stable population of mule deer and Rocky Mountain elk (Forest Plan, pages 4-273 thru 4-276). Also, this area should maintain healthy forest conditions through a variety of timber management practices, as well as provide dispersed summer and developed recreation opportunities.

The planning area also contains Special Old Growth (A7) and Key Site Riparian (A9) land use allocations; however, these land allocations only represent a small percentage of the planning area. Although Wilderness (A2) and Designated Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River Area (B1) are located within the planning area, no activities are proposed to occur in these land allocations.

A secondary land use allocation in the planning area is the Pileated Woodpecker/Pine Marten Habitat Area (B5), which occurs on approximately 11% of the project area. Where land use allocations overlap, the more stringent standards and guidelines would apply.

The Northwest Forest Plan land use allocations overlap allocations within the Forest Plan. This planning area includes Riparian Reserve (14%), Late-Successional Reserve (8%), Administratively Withdrawn (<1%), Congressionally Reserved (1%), and the majority of the area is Matrix (77%). Potential vegetation resilience and restoration opportunities would be located in Matrix or Late-Successional Reserve areas, but not within Administratively Withdrawn, Congressionally Reserved, or Riparian Reserve areas.

Questions or comments may be directed to:

Mail: Casey Gatz
Hood River Ranger Station
6780 Hwy 35
Mt. Hood, OR 97041

Email: comments-pacificnorthwest-mthood-barlow@fs.fed.us

Phone: (541) 352-1255

I am requesting your comments concerning this project. If you have any site-specific knowledge or concerns about the area in question, please bring them to our attention. Your input will help us improve the planning and design of the project, and to identify potential issues of concern at the earliest possible stage.

Thank you for your time and interest in the management of the Mt. Hood National Forest.

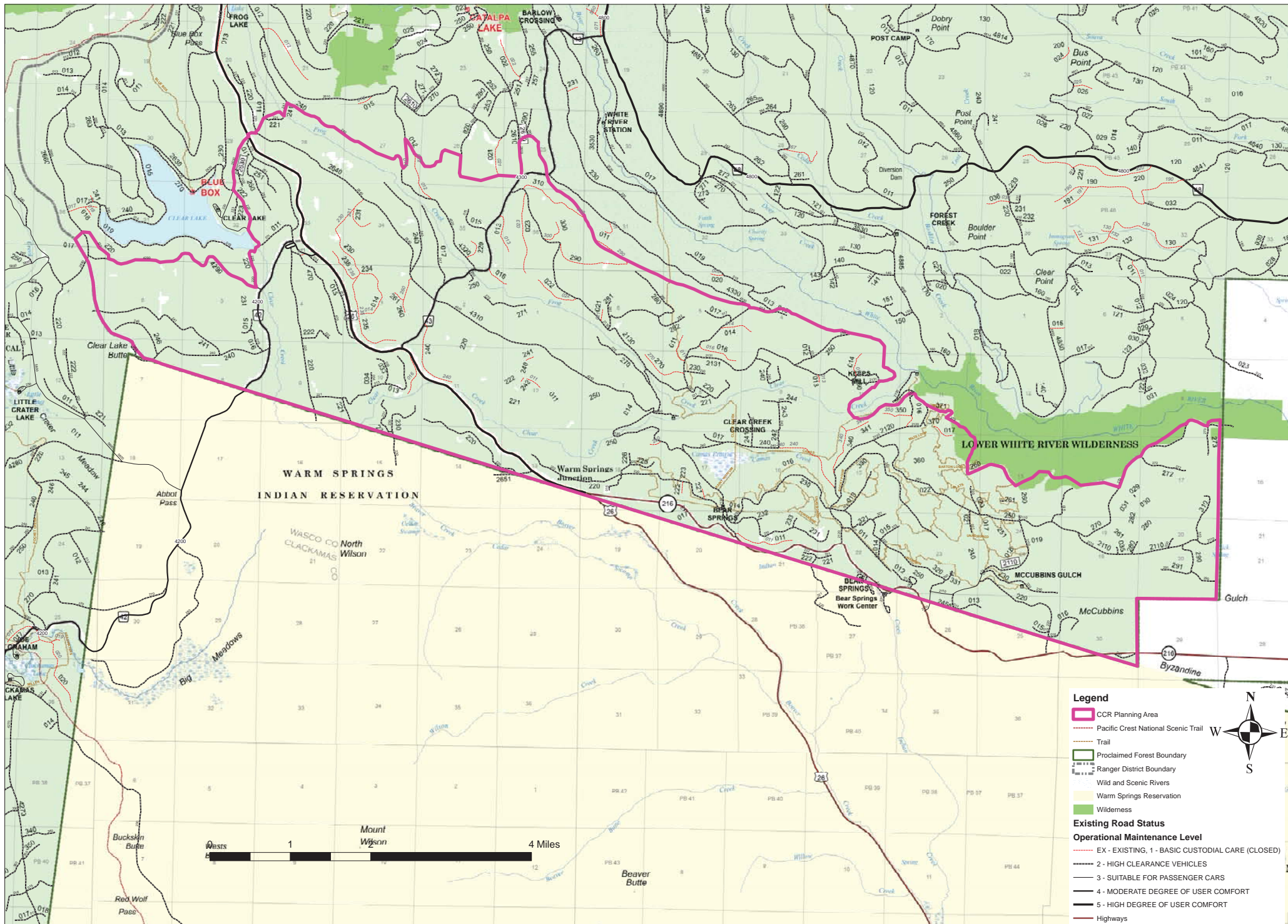
Sincerely,



LISA A. NORTHROP

Forest Supervisor

CCR Planning Area



Legend

- CCR Planning Area
- Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail
- Trail
- Proclaimed Forest Boundary
- Ranger District Boundary
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Warm Springs Reservation
- Wilderness

Existing Road Status

Operational Maintenance Level

- EX - EXISTING, 1 - BASIC CUSTODIAL CARE (CLOSED)
- 2 - HIGH CLEARANCE VEHICLES
- 3 - SUITABLE FOR PASSENGER CARS
- 4 - MODERATE DEGREE OF USER COMFORT
- 5 - HIGH DEGREE OF USER COMFORT
- Highways

