# 🚨 The Forest Plan Is Open – Now It’s Time to Speak Up! 🚨

Deadline to comment: October 6, 2025

The future of the Blue Mountains — including the Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests — is being decided right now. The Forest Service has released its Preliminary Draft Forest Plan, and the public comment period is OPEN. This is your opportunity to shape how millions of acres of public lands are managed for the next 15–20 years.

## ⚠ What’s Wrong with the Plan – And How to Fix It

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| Issue | Corrective Action to Request in Comments |
| The plan is nearly identical to the 2018 version that was withdrawn because it failed to meet community needs. | Stop the current planning process and revise the plan, addressing the same deficiencies identified by USDA leadership in 2019, rather than recycling past language. |
| It quietly limits motorized access by using zoning and “suitability” rules that set up future road closures ignoring years of public comment not to restrict motorized access. | Remove or revise suitability designations to maintain current open routes and motorized use. |
| Cross-country travel is effectively banned in most areas, ending a long-standing use tradition, via the acceptance of the designation of routes as a standard in the plan. | Protect existing cross-country motorized travel opportunities throughout three forests, especially for subsistence, hunting, and firewood gathering. Desired Conditions, objectives, and standards should be written to do so.  |
| Roads built before October 1976 can still be closed, despite their historic use and importance to local access. | The plan should prohibit closure, decommissioning, or obliteration of any road constructed before October 1976. |
| The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) is used to label large areas as non-motorized, even without site-specific analysis. | This plan should complete a site-specific NEPA analysis and public engagement before applying ROS classifications that restrict existing motorized access. |
| The plan reduces grazing opportunities by lowering allowable forage and changing suitability designations. | Maintain current grazing AUM levels as the 1990 plan and suitability designations. |
| Subsistence use is not protected, threatening access for hunting, firewood, and gathering needed for rural living. | Include a binding plan standard protecting subsistence uses and ensuring access for local residents to continue traditional activities, not just Tribal communities. |
| The Plan sets the legal foundation for future Travel Management closures, despite claims that “Travel Management is not in this plan.” | Remove all plan-level motorized use restrictions that predetermine Travel Management outcomes; require those decisions to be made only through separate public processes.  |
| Local public input from past processes has been ignored, including over 1,000 comments supporting open access. | Incorporate prior public comments into the current planning record and respond substantively to all recurring concerns before issuing the Draft EIS. |
| New special designations like Research Natural Areas and recommended wilderness further restrict traditional uses. | Limit or remove new restrictive designations from the plan. |
| It undermines wildfire prevention by locking up lands and reducing active management in some zones. | Allow full access for fuel reduction, thinning, and active management across all management areas, including areas currently proposed for restrictions. Remove all language that supports the closure and decommissioning of roads. |
| The public comments by staff have convoluted the “interim” no-closure policy with the standards in the revision document and the interim guidance can be reversed at any time after adoption. | Include a permanent plan standard prohibiting reductions in current access levels for the life of the plan. |
| The Blues Intergovernmental Council (BIC) was used in a way that appears to violate the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). | Suspend the use of the BIC information in the plan development until it is restructured to comply with FACA requirements for balanced representation and transparent public participation. |

## ✍️ How to Comment

Use a Template or Write Your Own:

Editable DOCX template: <https://9c7ea9cb-a132-4c4c-a451-271d590af4f9.usrfiles.com/ugd/9c7ea9_9b24f480c9f74e9aa83cbed78ec4eef9.docx>

Printable PDF version: <https://9c7ea9cb-a132-4c4c-a451-271d590af4f9.usrfiles.com/ugd/9c7ea9_987cb52f1ac544f8a0edbdc25569f283.pdf>

Submit Your Comments:

Online (Preferred): <https://cara.fs2c.usda.gov/Public/CommentInput?Project=64157>

Email: sm.fs.bluesforests@usda.gov

Mail: Umatilla National Forest Supervisor’s Office
Attn: Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision
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