

## SCOPING/INFORMATION PACKAGE

### **Revenue-Ninemile Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Route Designation**

Coeur d'Alene Field Office

This information package summarizes a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposal to designate approximately 7.7 miles of existing roadways and trails in the Silver Valley area of Shoshone County, Idaho, as open seasonally to motorized vehicle use. Federal actions must be analyzed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant laws and regulations to determine potential environmental consequences.

The purpose of this report is to inform interested and affected parties of the proposal and to solicit comments to assist with the NEPA review of the proposal. Analysis of the proposal is ongoing, and will be documented in an environmental assessment (DOI-BLM-ID-C010-2013-0021-EA). Comments received in response to this invitation will be used to identify potential environmental issues related to the proposed action and to identify alternatives that meet the purpose of and need for the project.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will also use this public participation opportunity under the NEPA to assist the agency in satisfying the public involvement requirements under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (16 U.S.C. 470(f)) pursuant to 36 CFR 800.2(d)(3). The information about historic and cultural resources within the area potentially affected by the proposed route designation will assist the BLM in identifying and evaluating impacts to such resources in the context of both NEPA and Section 106 of the NHPA.

The BLM will consult with Indian tribes on a government-to-government basis in accordance with Executive Order 13175 and other policies. Tribal concerns, including impacts on Indian trust assets and potential impacts to cultural resources, will be given due consideration. Federal, State, and local agencies, along with tribes and other stakeholders that may be interested in or affected by the proposed route designation that the BLM is evaluating, are invited to participate in the scoping process and, if eligible, may request or be requested by the BLM to participate in the development of the environmental analysis as a cooperating agency.

**Location:** Revenue Gulch/Ninemile Cemetery; Boise Meridian, T. 48 N., R. 4 E. Sections 21, 22, and 23 (see Map 1).

#### **Purpose and Need for Action**

Under the Coeur d'Alene RMP (2007), all motorized vehicle use within the project area is "limited" to designated routes. Since there are currently no designated routes within the project area, by default the existing routes and ways are closed to motorized vehicle use. However, during field visits in the fall of 2009, the BLM identified, mapped, and assessed viable motorized routes. This proposal would allow limited types of motorized use on some of the existing primitive routes in the area while protecting big game winter and security habitat with a seasonal restriction. These routes, if designated and properly maintained, would allow additional motorized access to public land, reduce resource impacts from use of unmaintained/unauthorized trails, and provide a valuable recreational resource for the public in the Silver Valley.

## **Existing Condition**

Revenue Gulch provides a diverse array of habitat types that make it highly suitable for use by numerous wildlife species. Past timber sales and fuels projects have created large and productive brush fields on south facing slopes that are highly valuable to big game animals. In addition, the matrix of forested and open habitats provides good hiding cover in close proximity to forage areas making this project area particularly valuable to elk during vulnerable times of the year such as calving, winter, and hunting season.

As shown on Map 1, numerous primitive roadways have been constructed in the area over time for timber harvest and fuels management activities, as well as for an access route along an existing high-voltage power line corridor owned by Avista Corporation. Avista maintains a right-of-way (ROW) for maintenance access along their power line corridor. Active Electronics also holds a ROW for a communication site within the project area. Active Electronics accesses the site via the main road from the west side access point.

The east and west entry routes to the area pass through private lands although BLM owns an easement and manages the western entrance road. An existing gate is already installed on that access. Timber harvest and road construction has recently occurred on private lands adjacent to and northeast of the project area. U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands adjacent to the north have seen little management activity in recent years, and there are no USFS designated routes crossing from USFS to BLM lands in the project area.

## **Proposed Action**

Under the proposed action, the BLM would designate approximately 7.7 miles of existing roads and routes as open to motorcycles, ATVs, and UTVs. Motorized use on these routes would be subject to a seasonal use restriction to protect security habitat for big game during the hunting season and to reduce disturbance to elk on winter range habitat. The BLM would modify the gate on the western access road with a width restrictor to allow access to motorcycles, ATVs, and UTVs, during the open season from approximately May 15th to August 15th. The BLM would also complete route maintenance, standard drainage improvements, and signing prior to allowing motorized vehicle use. Route maintenance would be conducted with a "SWECO" trail machine (4' wide miniature bulldozer). The BLM would not designate routes that are not deemed viable or are of questionable access/recreational value. Initial project work and signing would be conducted during the snow-free months of 2015, if funding is available.

## **Preliminary Issues**

Issues identified to date:

- Recreation Opportunities
- Damage to cultural resources
- Degradation to wildlife habitat, in particular, big game winter range and security habitat

- Spread of noxious weeds
- Soil Erosion
- Aquatic habitat degradation

### **Preliminary Alternative Development**

The BLM may use comments received in response to this scoping invitation to modify the proposed action or develop alternatives. Thus far, in addition to the proposed action, the BLM has identified the following preliminary alternatives.

*No Action:* Under this alternative, the BLM would not designate or maintain any motorized routes or access points.

*Enforced Closure:* This alternative would be similar to no action, except that the BLM would install gates to prevent use of existing routes.

### **Decision to be Made**

The Coeur d'Alene Field Manager will decide whether or not to implement the proposed action. Best management practices and project design features are being built into the proposed action to minimize adverse effects.

### **Public Input Needed**

Comments are specifically requested on the proposed action, preliminary issues, and alternatives.

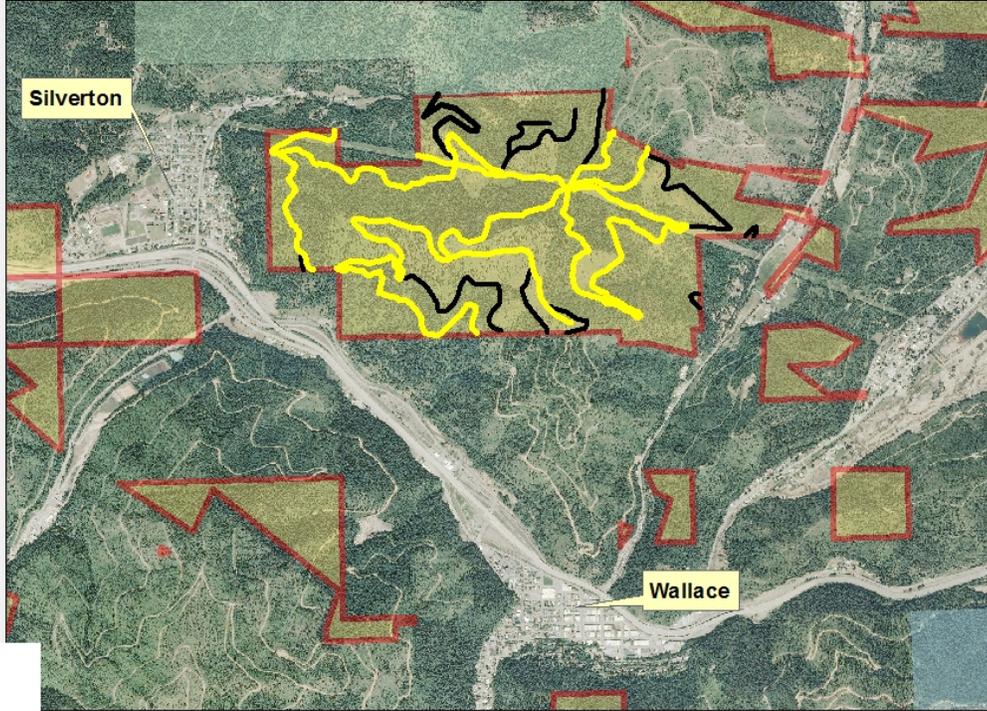
Comments made on this proposal would be most helpful if they are received **by September 9, 2013** and are directly relevant to the proposal and project area. The BLM will not reject public feedback outside established public involvement timeframes; however, these comments may be considered secondary to comments received in a timely manner and may only be assessed to determine if they identify concerns that would substantially alter the assumptions, proposal, design, or analysis presented in the EA.

Comments sent electronically should be sent by email to **BLM\_ID\_RevenueTMP@blm.gov** or by postal mail to BLM Coeur d'Alene Field Office, ATTN: Revenue Gulch Travel Management 3815 Schreiber Way, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815. Please identify whether you are submitting comments as an individual or as the designated spokesperson on behalf of an organization. Issues that are outside the scope of the proposal will not be addressed at this planning level.

*Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.*

The primary contact for questions and comments for this analysis is Carrie Hugo, Wildlife Biologist. She can be reached by email or phone, **BLM\_ID\_RevenueTMP@blm.gov** or (208)-769-5048.

# Proposed Revenue Gulch/Nine Mile Route Designation



- Legend**
- BLM
  - PRIVATE
  - STATE
  - IDAHO FISH & GAME
  - TRIBE
  - USFS
  - WATER

- Open/Limited Use/ Seasonal Routes
- Undesignated Routes



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