United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Salem District Office
1717 Fabry Road SE, Salem, Oregon 97306
http://www.or.blm.gov/salem

Dear Interested Public:

The Marys Peak Resource Area of the Salem District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is in the early stages of the Alsea Falls Meteorological Tower Environmental Assessment and would appreciate your consideration of and comments on the proposal. The enclosed Scoping Record provides maps and details on the proposal.

Submitting Comments

The purpose of this letter is to give you an opportunity to share any comments or concerns you may have about the project. The input you provide will help an interdisciplinary team of BLM natural resource specialists analyze the proposal. You may send your comments to the Bureau of Land Management (attention: Janet Myers) at the address above. Alternatively, comments may be submitted electronically to jmyers@blm.gov. We would appreciate your comments by March 21, 2016. Please complete and return the attached **Interest Response Form** if you would like to remain on the mailing list for this project.

Your interest in the management of public lands is appreciated and we encourage your participation during this public scoping process.

Sincerely,

/s/ Paul Tigan

Paul Tigan
Field Manager, Marys Peak Resource Area

Enclosure

* Note – Comments, including names and addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the same time as the EA during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware 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 your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Alsea Falls Meteorological Tower Scoping Record

Why Here and Now?

Oregon State University contacted the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in 2015 with an application to conduct research on BLM-managed lands in Benton County. After exploring several sites in the coast range using GIS, slope analysis, and field visits, the University identified this Douglas-fir forest as having the desired flat terrain for performing their research. The research site would measure carbon dioxide and water vapor exchange of Douglas-fir forests in western Oregon.

The site is located approximately five miles southwest of Alsea, Oregon on BLM-managed lands in the Matrix land use allocation. The area is forested land approximately one-half mile southeast of the Alsea Falls Recreation Site and approximately 600 feet west of the South Fork Alsea Access Road. The area surrounding the proposed site is a mix of forested and recreational lands managed by the BLM.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action is to issue a right-of-way grant that would authorize the proponent, Oregon State University, to construct a meteorological tower site to support the University's carbon uptake and energy exchange research. The authorization would be for the right to construct, operate, and maintain the site for 20 years. Construction would occur in late spring to summer of 2016 and last approximately one to two months. The total area of disturbance is approximately one half acre. The components include the tower, concrete foundations, guyed wires, fencing, equipment shed, access trail, and a tree-based solar array.

The 200–220 foot latticed monopole tower would be constructed of galvanized steel, measuring approximately 17 inches on each side of an equilateral triangle. The tower would be centered on a concrete foundation (approximately five feet in width, length, and depth). The tower would be anchored by three guyed wires approximately 150 feet from the base. The anchor points would consist of buried concrete blocks (approximately four feet in width, length, and depth) with steel anchor rods in the middle that the guyed cable would attach to. Concrete would be hand-mixed and poured on site.

A level area next to the concrete tower foundation would be constructed for a 10 foot by 12 foot equipment shelter that would be assembled on site. Power to the site would be via a tree-based solar array. Three solar panels would be hung in trees approximately 500 feet due west of the site. Mounting would be designed to minimize damage to the trees. A trench (approximately one foot wide and three feet deep) would be dug for the power cable to run between the trees and the equipment shelter.

The tower and equipment shed would be enclosed by a 30 foot by 30 foot chain link fenced area. No trees would be felled within this area, but some vegetation (primarily salal) would be cut.

The BLM has identified three conifer trees that pose safety hazards to personnel and the site. Prior to site construction, the BLM would cut these trees and leave them on site as coarse woody debris. No other trees would be cut.

The roads that provide primary access into the site are currently blocked and water barred. To facilitate vehicle access close to the tower site, approximately 800 feet of the 14-7-25.1 road and 600 feet of an existing skid road would be opened by removing the log barriers and feathering back the water bars. A temporary gate would be installed and an 18 inch type-S corrugated plastic pipe would be placed where road 14-7-25.1 intersects with the South Fork Access Road. After site construction is completed, the pipe and the gate would be removed, water bars would be reconstructed, and the log barriers would be replaced at their original locations.

A Bobcat-constructed trail (approximately 3 feet wide and 400 feet long) would facilitate transport of the tower and shelter components from the skid road to the site. This trail would not be actively maintained; it would be left to grow over and would only be used on an as-needed basis by the proponent to monitor the site.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the action is to provide Oregon State University with legal access to public land managed by the BLM. The need for the action is established by the BLM's responsibility under FLPMA to respond to a request for a Right-of-Way Grant for legal access.

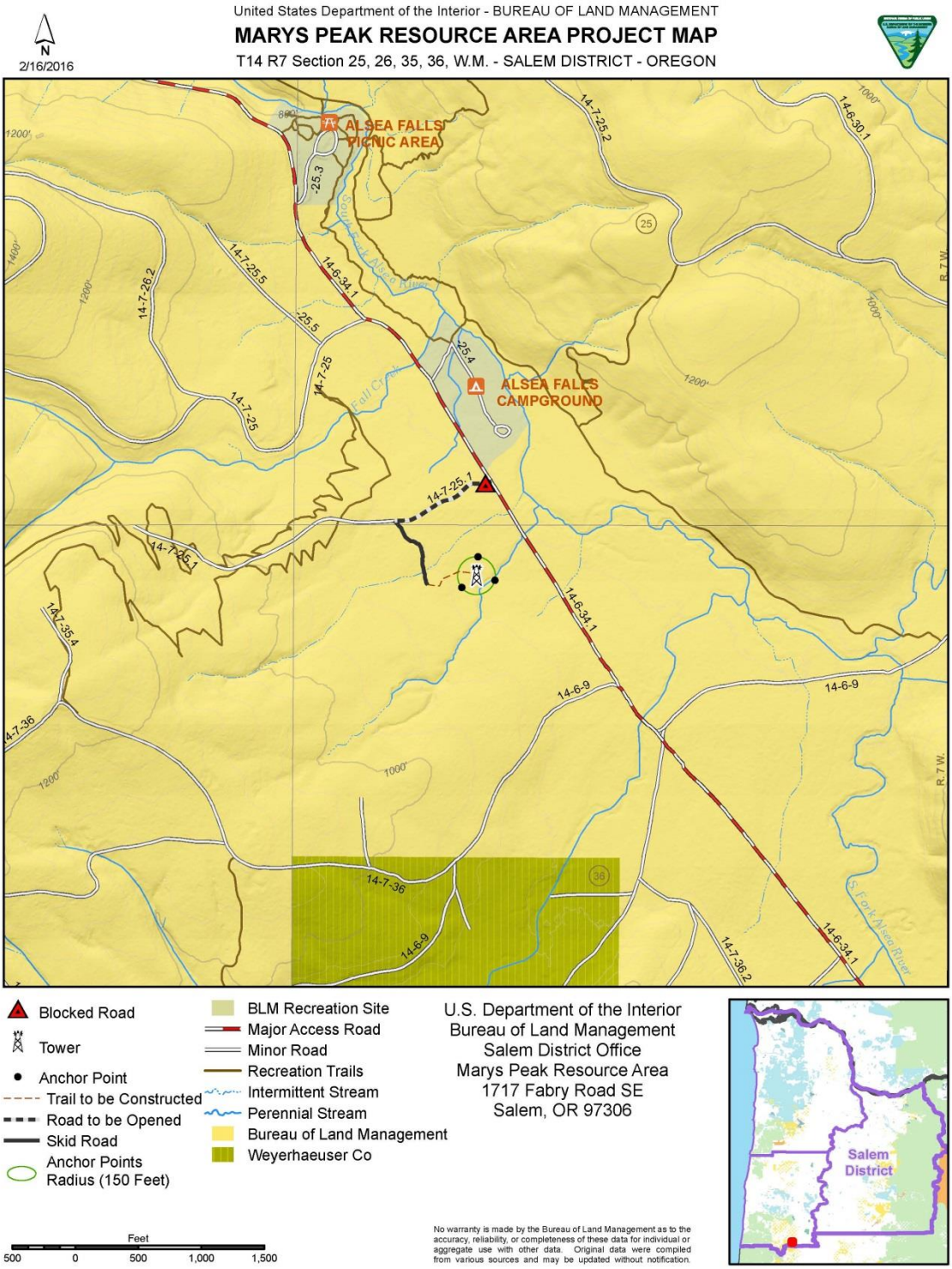
Decision to be Made

The BLM will decide whether to issue the right-of-way grant and, if so, under what terms and conditions. Factors to be considered in making this determination are:

- Whether the project conforms to law, policy, and management direction; and
- The degree to which the project may affect threatened or endangered species; and
- The degree to which the project may affect current and future recreation and management opportunities.

Initial Issues

The BLM has identified the following preliminary issues: threatened and endangered species, particularly avian species, visual resource impacts, and recreation impacts. The proposed action would occur adjacent to designated trails during the peak recreation season (summer 2016). Road work would occur on approximately 800 feet of road that is occasionally used for recreation.


United States Department of the Interior - BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MARYS PEAK RESOURCE AREA PROJECT MAP
T14 R7 Section 25, 26, 35, 36, W.M. - SALEM DISTRICT - OREGON
N
2/16/2016
ALSEA FALLS PICNIC AREA
ALSEA FALLS CAMPGROUND
South Fork Alsea River
Fall Creek
S. Fork Alsea River
14-7-25.2
14-6-30.1
14-7-25.5
14-6-34.1
14-7-26.2
14-7-25
14-7-25.1
14-7-35.4
14-7-36
14-6-9
14-7-36.2
R. 7 W.
Blocked Road
Tower
Anchor Point
Trail to be Constructed
Road to be Opened
Skid Road
Anchor Points Radius (150 Feet)
BLM Recreation Site
Major Access Road
Minor Road
Recreation Trails
Intermittent Stream
Perennial Stream
Bureau of Land Management
Weyerhaeuser Co
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Salem District Office
Marys Peak Resource Area
1717 Fabry Road SE
Salem, OR 97306
Salem District
Feet
500 0 500 1,000 1,500
No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources and may be updated without notification.

Interest Response Form

Complete and return the form below if you wish to receive future mailings related to this project.

I would like to be on the mailing list for the *Alsea Falls Meteorological Tower Environmental Assessment* as described in the attached letter.

Return this form to:

Bureau of Land Management
Marys Peak Resource Area
Attn: Janet Myers
1717 Fabry Road SE
Salem, OR 97306

Please Print Clearly:

Name: _____

Street: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

If you prefer to respond electronically, you may submit the above information to Janet Myers, Project Lead, at jmyers@blm.gov.