

Starr Creek Road Scoping Record

Why Here and Now?

In 2013, Benton County Public Works applied for Secure Rural Schools Act Title II funding to connect Starr Creek Road and Hells Canyon Road in Benton County. The County identified this project as an opportunity to improve local access for residents, increase opportunities for emergency access (e.g., fire), and provide a fuel break for the surrounding area in case of wildfire.

Currently, each neighborhood has only one way for ingress or egress. The project would occur on approximately one mile section of road. The roads from the north (Starr Creek Road) and south (Hells Canyon Road) do not currently connect, although an old road bed is identifiable along much of the proposed route. Records indicate that portions of the road have been in existence since the 1930s and had been connected since the 1970s.

Following a joint site visit between the BLM and the County, additional benefits of the project were identified. Several portions of the existing road are in poor condition; steep slopes, improper road location, and insufficient drainage are contributing sediment to an adjacent stream. Road realignment would install and restore proper drainage to minimize issues regarding sedimentation and erosion.

The site is located approximately eight miles northwest of Monroe, Oregon in Benton County (T. 13 S., R. 6 W., Section 23, Willamette Meridian). Lands managed by the BLM are within the Matrix and Riparian Reserves land use allocations. The surrounding area is a mix of forested lands managed by the BLM, private residents, and private industrial landowners.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action is to issue a right-of-way grant to Benton County; this grant would authorize the road work necessary to connect the Starr Creek Road and Hells Canyon Road. To provide access, realignment of existing road and new road construction would occur. On BLM-managed lands, approximately 0.25 mile of existing road would be improved and 300 feet (0.06 mile) would be constructed. Rock would be applied to the entire length of the connector road. The BLM is not proposing any change to public access to the area, which is currently restricted by private gates on both sides.

The BLM and Benton County worked jointly to identify an alignment that meets the needs of the project in an environmentally sound manner. Road alignment has been adjusted from the original proposal to reduce the number of large trees (greater than 26 inches in diameter) that would need to be cut to facilitate the planned road work. The BLM estimates that 10 conifer trees would need to be felled. The BLM has not yet determined whether these trees would be sold, repurposed for another use (e.g., stream restoration), or a combination thereof. Forty foot clearing limits would be most common, though clearing limits would be expected to range from 30 feet to 80 feet.

Portions of the existing road bed not used for the proposed connector road would be obliterated. The roadbeds would be decompacted and regraded to match the existing slopes and drainage patterns. Additionally, the areas would be planted to reduce the risk of erosion and to re-establish shade in the long-term.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the action is to provide administrative and residential access across public land managed by the BLM consistent with existing right-of-way agreements and in conformance with the Salem District RMP. The proposed action would also address resource concerns with the existing road system. The need for the action is established by the BLM's responsibility under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act to respond to a request for a right-of-way grant for legal access.

Decision to be Made

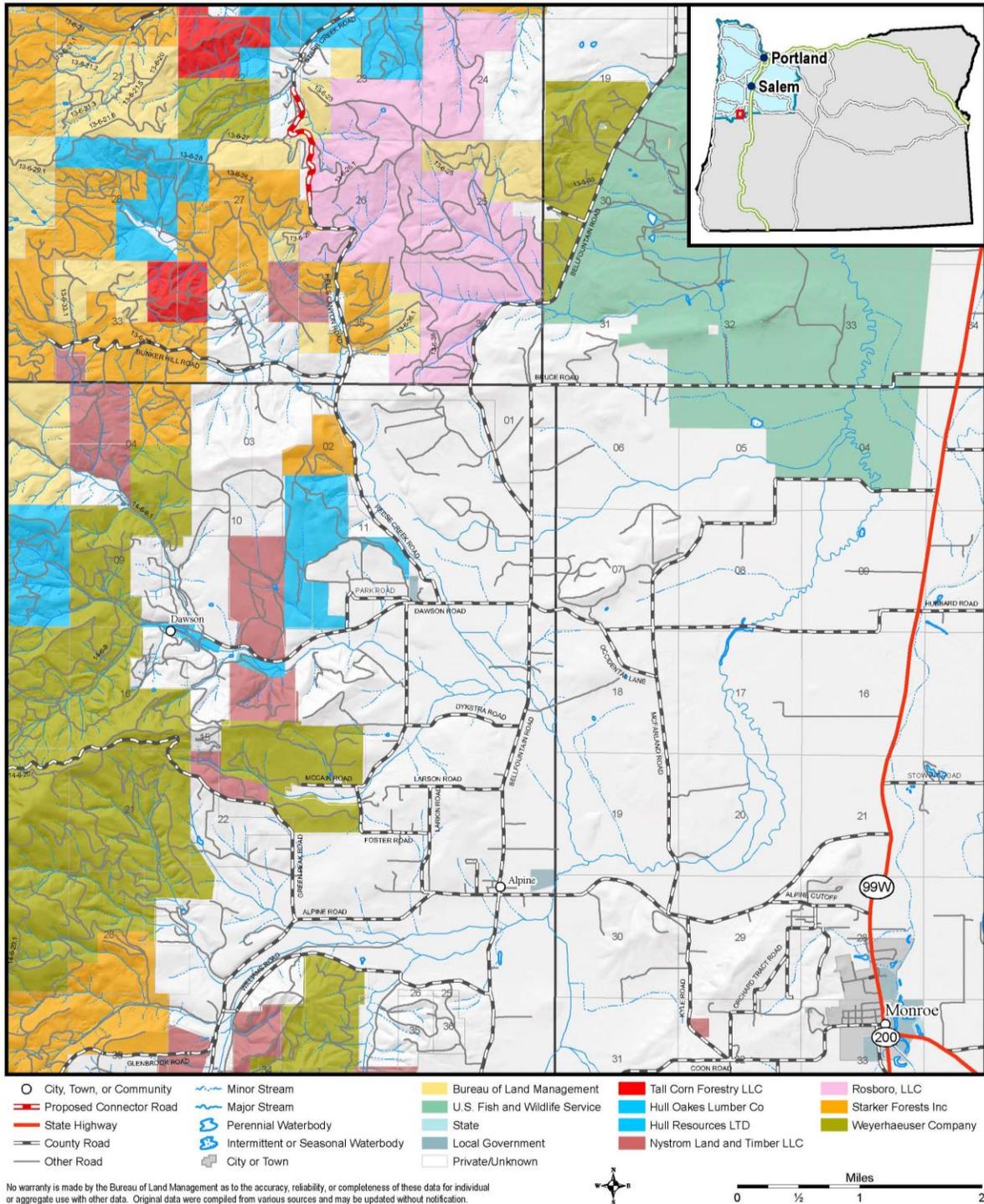
The BLM will decide whether to issue the right-of-way grant to build the road and, if so, under what terms and conditions. Factors to be considered in making this determination are:

- 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 analysis and approval of a project funded by the Resource Advisory Council, pursuant to Title II of the Secure Rural Schools Act.

Initial Issues

The BLM has identified threatened and endangered species and road activities within the Riparian Reserve as preliminary issues. Since portions of the proposed connector road require the removal of large trees in an older patch of forest, the BLM will determine the need for surveys, consultation, and additional design features to minimize the risk of adverse effects to species in the area.

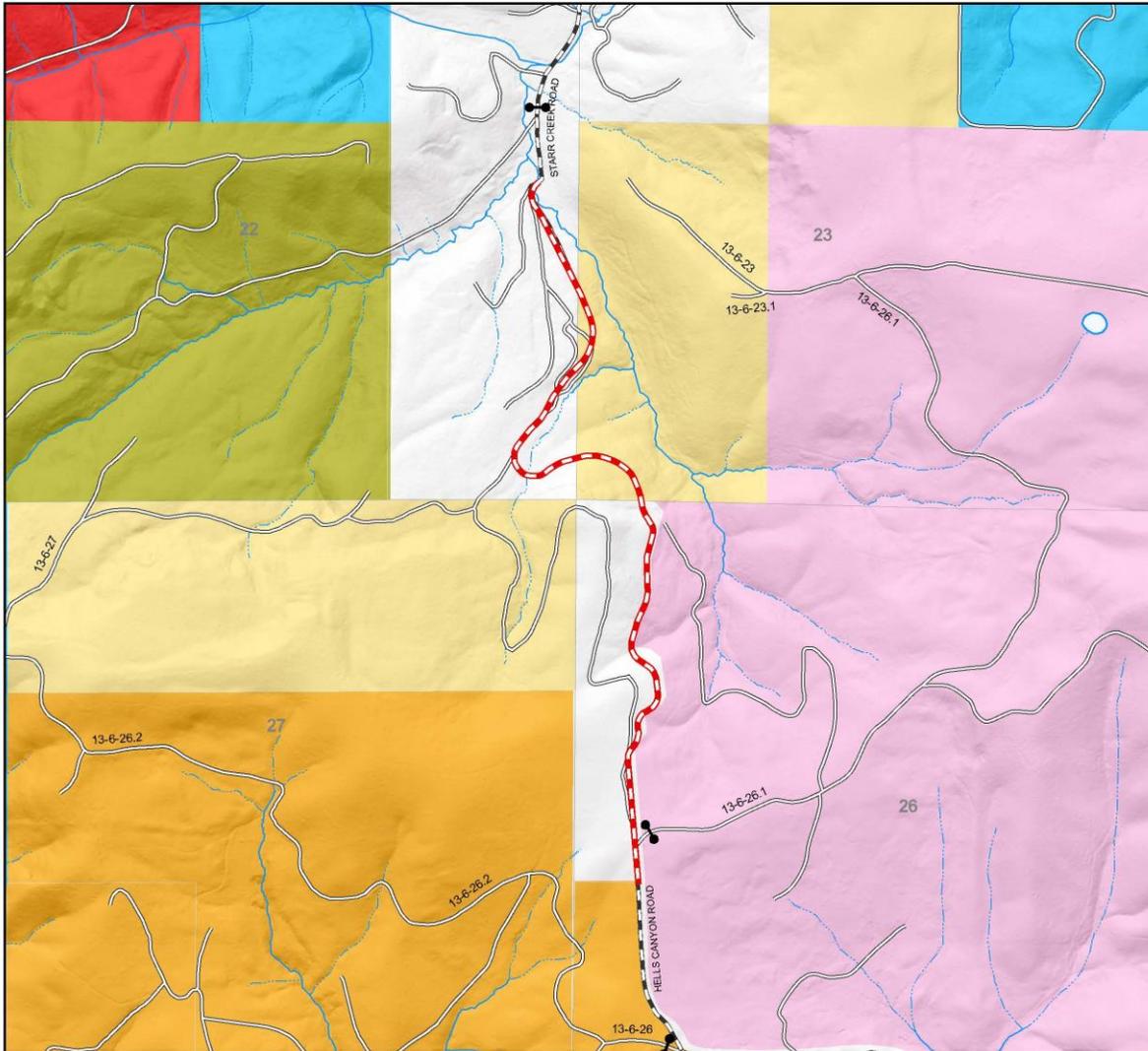
Map 1. Project Vicinity.



Map 2. Proposal to Connect Starr Creek Road and Hells Canyon Road

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Salem District Office
Marys Peak Field Office
1717 Fabry Road SE
Salem, OR 97306

United States Department of the Interior - BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MARYS PEAK FIELD OFFICE PROJECT MAP
T. 13 S., R. 6 W., Section 22, 23, 26, 27, W.M. - SALEM DISTRICT - OREGON



- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Gates | Bureau of Land Management |
| Proposed Connector Road | Private/Unknown |
| County Road | Tall Corn Forestry LLC |
| Other Road | Hull Oakes Lumber Co |
| Minor Stream | Rosboro, LLC |
| Major Stream | Starker Forests Inc |
| Perennial Waterbody | Weyerhaeuser Company |



6/22/2016

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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 *Starr Creek Road Realignment Environmental Assessment* as described in the attached letter.

Return this form to:

Bureau of Land Management
Marys Peak Field Office
Attn: Douglass Fitting
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 Douglass Fitting, Project Lead, at dfitting@blm.gov. He may also be reached by telephone at (503) 315-5918.