

Sugar Pine timber sale document approved

The Resource Management Interdisciplinary Team (RMIDT) recently approved a decision document for the 2008 Sugar Pine Timber Sale and additional projects gained approval through the small project assessment (SPA) process.

The projects include a timber harvest on allotment 102-A and stream restoration work on Beaver Creek. RMIDT also released a project assessment pertaining to the clean-up of contaminated soil at the old BIA road

maintenance shop.

RMIDT unanimously passed a resolution to approve the Sugar Pine Timber Sale. The document assessing the sale's impacts had already been released for tribal member comment and after a 30-day review it was approved as recommended by the technical staff from Natural Resources and Forestry.

The Sugar Pine Timber Sale will target a harvest volume of approximately 19 million board feet. The project area is just over 2,100 acres in size. Maps

and assessments of the project are available through the Forestry Branch office.

A project approved by RMIDT under the SPA process would allow for the harvest of approximately 45,000 board feet of timber on allotment 102-A south of Simnasho. Another SPA approved by RMIDT will allow for restoration of eroded streambanks on Beaver Creek at Fawn Flat.

Both of these projects are located on lands designated as condition use, which means Tribal Council approval is re-

quired before they can be implemented.

The assessment released for 30-day public review involves clean-up of a steep slope in the Warm Springs community previously used as a dump site for used motor oil. Samples will be tested and contaminated soils will be deposited of at an appropriate location off-reservation. Comments should be directed to Bill Reynolds, acting BIA environmental coordinator, in the Natural Resources office.

Bear Springs: 'over 1,000 on-reservation jobs'

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Moreover, the financial risk of use and occupancy projects is relatively low."

Preliminary analyses prepared by Peterson Economics, a firm specializing in the economics of real estate developments, estimate that the Bear Springs resort would provide the tribes \$256 million dollars in net cash flow over 14 years and create 1,000 on-reservation jobs. Of these about 500 would be temporary construction jobs during the 12- to 14-year build-out period, another 275 would be permanent jobs in services and resort operations, and 250 more would crop up through small independent businesses spawned by the project, such as firewood providers, home repair and maintenance, landscaping services, and other support industries to the homeowners and builders.

Once completed, the project is also estimated to return \$10 million in tax revenues to the Tribe annually, for as long as the leases continue.

Attributes of Bear Springs area

Economic planners are focusing on Bear Springs for a variety of reasons. From the tribal perspective, the area receives relatively little traffic, though some members do use it for hunting and grazing.

If it gets further along, the project would go through the tribes' Integrated Resources Management Plan analysis and approval process, ensuring protection of natural, cultural, archaeological and other resources.

One major issue would lie in how to structure the leases to satisfy both the potential homeowners, who want security for their investment, and the tribes, which want to retain sovereign control over the property.

But preliminary work has identified no significant species or environmental issues. Bear Springs would also be relatively easy to develop. The tribes own the property and has no access issues to work out with other jurisdictions.

Meanwhile, from the development perspective, the setting is "nearly ideal for a resort community," according to the latest Peterson report.

The spot consists of a high mesa with several gently sloping ravines and broad valleys. Meadows lie scattered throughout and support a variety of native grasses and wildflowers. Some locations offer views of Mt. Hood, Mt. Jefferson, and two of the Sisters.

Land use planner Lamoine Eiler, who evaluated the area for homes and recreational use and mapped out a preliminary development concept, was deeply impressed by the property.

"This is one of the best sites that I have been on in quite some time," he says. "I highly recommend this site for a destination resort."

Planners cite proximity to Portland, the airport, and the Mt. Hood ski areas as giving Bear Springs unique advantages that other Central Oregon properties do not possess, while rivaling them in natural beauty.

Challenges and next steps

Important questions and obstacles need to be addressed, however. If Tribal Council approves the research request, Ventures would work under the direction of a specially-appointed committee to gather more information through land use planners, engineers, economists, lawyers, and market analysts.

One major issue would lie in how to structure the leases to satisfy both the potential homeowners, who want security for their investment, and the tribes, which want to retain sovereign control over the property.

Researching the experience of other tribes that have used long-term leases would be one part of the information-gathering phase.

Planners have already been in touch with the Agua Caliente band of the Cahuilla Indians, which owns about half of the land in Palm Springs, California.

Ventures staff were slated to make their appeal to fund the next stage of Bear Springs research at this week's Wednesday Council session.

The funding request includes money for other economic initiatives as well, such as Tectonite market development and strategic planning for the sawmill, and takes the form of a supplemental budget request for economic development.

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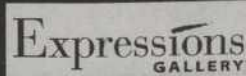


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