

Elk Foundation conservationist says...

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# Logging of roadless areas not economical

According to the Forest Incentives Program administered by the U.S. Forest Service, land eligible for financial assistance is required to grow at least 50 cubic feet per acre per year; that is if reforestation is to be provided on those lands.

The Office of Management and Budget requires that a 10 per cent capitalization rate must be applied to all budgetary expenditures. That is a 10 per cent return per year over the life of the expenditures.

There are five alternatives proposed in the Heppner Land Use Plan (Draft) and all five alternatives lose the taxpayer money.

According to table 12 on page 154, the Forest Service is now investing \$2,023,263.00 to harvest 34 million board feet of timber on the planning unit; a cost of \$59.50 per thousand board feet. Our return on this investment is \$1,556,576.00, earning the U.S. \$46.00 per thousand board feet. For each thousand board feet of timber sold the U.S. loses \$13.50 on the Heppner District.

Alternative E, the preferred alternative by the Forest Service, proposes to harvest 39.3 million of timber at an estimated cost of \$2,385,513.00, or \$60 per thousand board feet. Estimates show our return on this investment will be \$1,803,384.00 or \$45.88 per thousand board feet representing a loss under Alternative E of \$14.12 per thousand board feet harvested.

As currently proposed, management of this planning unit under Alternative E loses 23 cents for each dollar invested each year.

In conclusion, the timber resources in the roadless areas on the Heppner District is currently uneconomical to manage as proposed.

Why is this? Why should the public lands be sold for timber, facing ruin of elk herds and destruction of water sheds for a loss economically? Why does every alternative the Forest Service propose have to lose money?

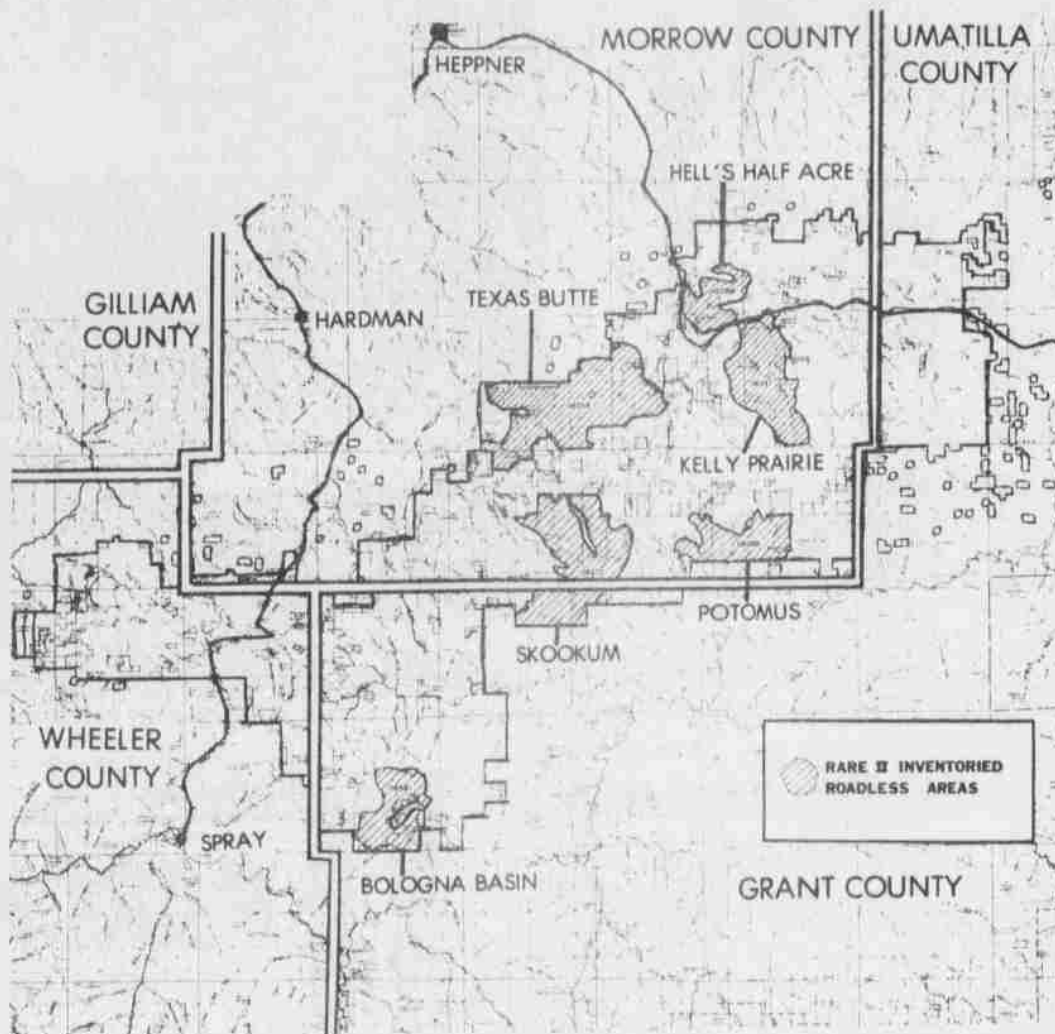
Under Alternative E, the Forest Service proposes to build 446 miles of new road. This represents an investment of \$10,238,000 (estimated from an average of \$23,000.00 per mile). At an assumed project longevity of 20 years this represents a \$512,900. per year investment in new road construction. It seems to make more sense investing money on more economic lands rather than logging and road building in these last roadless areas, and in the process maintain present elk herds while putting what is actually tax dollars to work on better management of what the Forest Service has already managed.

Developing, roading and harvesting the Heppner District roadless areas will result in a net loss of \$159,484.00 per year to the Forest Service and ultimately the taxpayer.

## Roadless area cost/benefit compared

Roadless Area	Annual Harvest	Benefit	Road Cost	Return to Taxpayer
Kelly Prairie	2.2 mmbf	\$100,936.00	\$132,000.00	\$31,064.00—Loss
Texas Butte	4.1 mmbf	\$188,108.00	\$246,000.00	\$57,892.00—Loss
Hells Half Acre	0.9 mmbf	\$41,292.00	\$54,000.00	\$12,708.00—Loss
Potamus	0.4 mmbf	\$18,352.00	\$24,000.00	\$5,648.00—Loss
Spookum	0.4 mmbf	\$18,352.00	\$67,700.00	\$49,348.00—Loss
Bologna Basin	0.2 mmbf	\$9,176.00	\$12,000.00	\$2,824.00—Loss

## Proposed Wapiti Wilderness consisting of 6 roadless areas in the Heppner Unit



## Preferred alternative impact questioned

ALT. E Heppner Land Use Plan (Draft)  
If implemented would have these impacts on soil and water:

Soil—45.7 acre feet of sediment (erosion) as compared to 32.4 acre feet if roadless areas are managed as wilderness.

Water—Alt. E will produce 290,000 acre feet, plus sedimentation would be extreme, would cause severe impact on existing anadromous fish habitat (steelhead). With wilderness management 281,000 acre feet, 9,700 acre feet less than Alt. E, but would maintain existing anadromous fishery's and protect critical soils from erosion.

Elk—Oldgrowth-Watersheds  
Found within the 367 pages of the Heppner Land Use Plan (Draft), these three resources are only vaguely discussed and their value is not emphasized as important.

This land use plan as presented would be almost totally non-understandable and misleading to the layman, after this writer has waded through nine of these documents reviewing their contents.

What makes this plan misleading and hard reading? The fact that the Forest Service has based the majority of this plan on computer readouts, (coefficients) which refer to the amount of, or consequence of, a resource or use that can be expected from one acre of land in one year under a certain management prescription. The coefficients are based on data put into the computer that pertain to the individual landtype and its potential productivity, based on research of the landtypes potential.

The problem is the data is very general in scope and does not deal with site-specific detail or actual facts of the individual acres of land on the unit. Because of this, the Forest Service usually portrays an overly optimistic attitude towards the concerns of conservationists who are dealing with the site-specific facts of individual acres and not just a general attitude about the area being managed.

The second problem with the land use planning process and Rare II has been the time frame involved, which was insufficient and has not allowed various user groups to actually work together and more openly discuss their concern.

In an interview in La Grande, Oregon with the Observer, Asst Secretary of Agriculture Rupert Cutler, stated, "The department wants to move away from the polarization of industry and wilderness advocates. We want all people whether their interest is wildlife, forage, water, mining or wilderness, to be sitting around the same table. We want them looking at the maps and pointing out their special areas of concern. A major concern is getting public involvement into the wilderness review."

When Mr. Cutler said, "We want them looking at the maps and pointing out their special areas of concern," he was speaking about the site-specific concerns pertaining to individual areas and acres of land.

Let's now look at Alt. E, the preferred alternative of the Forest Service, and review the land allocations.

Elk—From pages 17-18 of the draft land use plan it is

stated, "Elk respond somewhat differently to man's activities in the Heppner Planning Unit than in other portions of the Umatilla Forest. In most acres of the forest, cover manipulation achieved through timber harvest benefits elk populations on a majority of landtypes. In the Heppner Unit, cover is more limited than in other portions of the forest. Cover manipulation may still benefit elk in the Heppner Unit, but generally benefits occur on a lower percentage of landtypes and the magnitude of the benefit is considerably less."

It has been this writer's continued objection that timber management within remaining roadless areas will have no benefit to the elk. My objection is based on the landtypes and elevations found within the roadless areas, and impacts on elk and wilderness.

The Forest Service, on page 89, Table 8 of the draft plan, illustrates the potential resource effects of wilderness and nonwilderness management including the Forest Service's figures showing potential for elk.

sportsmen. A great deal of concern was expressed by local area sportsmen during the early 70's when extensive logging and roading was done in the Dividewell through the Gilman Ranch area of the Ukiah District. Road density here is about 6 miles of road per square mile. The overall road mile density is projected at 3.1 miles per square mile in Alt. E; that is 1,319 miles for 424 square miles of the planning unit; a road every 1760 feet. One-hundred-eighty miles or an average of 2.5 miles or road per square mile is proposed for the roadless areas.

To further illustrate the value of the roadless areas the following table shows what the land use plan intends to achieve by manipulation by timber management.

The Forest Service, on page 89, Table 8 of the draft plan, illustrates the potential resource effects of wilderness and nonwilderness management including the Forest Service's figures showing potential for elk.

## Forest Service figures show better elk population of 664 with management

Kelly Prairie		Potamus	
Wd	N-Wd	Wd	N-Wd
112	161	34	35
Texas Butte		Skookum	
Wd	N-Wd	Wd	N-Wd
213	288	82	91
Hells Half Acre		Bologna Basin	
Wd	N-Wd	Wd	N-Wd
40	51	29	38

## ...don't show current elk population of 3,000

Cont. on page 8

## Good Sam Club to form here

An organizational meeting for a Southern Morrow County

Good Samaritan RV Club is set for Tuesday, May 8 at 7:30 p.m., West of Willow Restaurant.

Good Sam clubs across the nation provide a tie for recreational vehicle travelers and local chapters often form

monthly caravans for group trips.

Don Clark of La Grande, Good Sam regional director, will be at the meeting to explain the purpose and goals of the club. The public is invited to attend.

**Heppner Elks**  
358  
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