

## Blue Mountain National Forest to Host Virtual Open House

The Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman (Blue Mountains) National Forests are providing an additional opportunity for the public to participate in a virtual open house on Dec. 7, 2023, from 4-7 p.m. This will be an unstructured information session designed to offer a chance for the public to learn about the revision process and assessment phase through conversations and informational materials, provide one-on-one discussion between participants and Forest Service staff, and a venue for the public to submit comments. Additional information about the open house is available at the end of this news release.

The Forest Service is eager to hear input on Tribal, individual, and community values. Public involvement will help the Forest Service gain local knowledge about existing forest conditions and understand concerns about community or resource impacts from proposed changes in the revised Forest Plans.

Additional engagement opportunities may be added and will be announced at that time and posted on the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision website. The website also includes information regarding the overall Forest Plan Revision process, including opportunities for engagement throughout each phase.

The Blue Mountains National Forests are in the process of revising the Land Management Plans (Forest Plans), which provide the overall strategic management direction and guidance for the Blue Mountains National Forests. Revising these Forest Plans represents a commitment to managing productive and sustainable forests for the American people.

The Blue Mountains National Forests are currently in the assessment phase, which is the first

phase of the Forest Plan Revision process under the 2012 Planning Rule. The purpose of the assessment phase is to gather existing relevant information on Forest conditions and trends and use this information to rapidly evaluate the sustainability of existing ecological, economic, and social conditions and trends within the context of the broader landscape. The evaluation will result in a document (referred to as the assessment) that will be the foundation for the Forest Service's work on developing the revised Forest Plans. In addition, as required by the 2012 Planning Rule, Forest Service staff are developing a preliminary proposed list for Species of Conservation Concern (SCC) and inventories for Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers.

A draft of the assessment proposed SCC list, Wilderness inventories, and Wild and Scenic River inventories will be shared for public input prior to moving forward to the next phase of the process, which is plan development. Once complete, the assessment is used to help identify the need to change the existing plan and to inform the development of plan components and other content.

The Blue Mountains National Forests are operating under Forest Plans that were signed in the 1990s. Multiple uses provided by the National Forests (including livestock grazing, timber harvest, forest recreation, tourism, and subsistence activities) are all important to economic and social life in the Blue Mountains area.

Additional information about the upcoming virtual open house, Forest Plan Revision process, documents, and the story map is available at <https://tinyurl.com/avjjesfn>.

## The Taste of the South food truck

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Deborah and Daniel Ficke - Contributed Photo

culinary world has been diverse as well. Previously managing food service for the Union Gospel mission in Salem and several assisted living facilities, he currently oversees the dietary department of the local hospital. With degrees in culinary arts, religion, and human service counseling and drug addiction, Dan is still figuring out his path. "I'm still trying to figure out what I want to be," he admits.

The couple's food truck has quickly gained a loyal following, with regular customers flocking to their establishment every weekend. Deborah delights in engaging with the patrons, stating, "I love the people, I love talking to people."

In order to minimize wait times, the Fickes smoke their meats and sides ahead of time. Their meticulous attention to detail and dedication to perfecting their recipes is evident, as they have spent months fine-tuning their menu based on feedback from dinners with friends. "You have to be very patient," Deborah emphasizes when discussing the menu development process.

The food truck has garnered rave reviews on

social media platforms, with Facebook and Google serving as platforms for satisfied customers to sing praises about their culinary creations. Encouraged by their success, the Fickes plan to extend their hours to weekdays, provided they can find dependable workers to support their expansion but are focused on the weekends.

Owning a small business of this magnitude holds a special appeal for Deborah, who relishes the autonomy that comes with being her own boss. "I think it's really cool to own a small business at this caliber. When you are working for yourself, it always feels better, even if you don't come out rich," she remarks.

Daniel agrees, noting that a food truck provides the perfect platform for their new venture. In an effort to contribute to the community, the couple collects only donations instead of accepting tips, which they promptly donate to various organizations.

The Fickes have certainly made a notable mark on the food scene in Heppner, and their future looks promising. With their culinary expertise, dedication, and passion for serving the community, it is no wonder that their food truck has become a local favorite. As they continue to refine their menu and expand their business, the Fickes are well on their way to becoming a staple in the community.



**\$275,000**  
 375 W Union Ave, Heppner  
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This single family home, spanning 1641 square feet, boasts a spacious dining room and living room along with 3 bedrooms and 1.5 bathrooms. Situated in a peaceful neighborhood, it is conveniently located close to the swimming pool, high school, baseball field, and downtown area. The property sits on a large lot with street access and also features a shop. Lot size 0.25 Acres. MLS#: 23224220

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