Dear Community Member:

The Hood River Ranger District will be participating in a collaborative effort to identify possible fuels reduction activities near Evans Creek in the East Fork Hood River watershed. The collaborative effort will focus in and around the wildland-urban interface surrounding private lands near the Cooper Spur Ski Area (see enclosed map). These lands have been identified as priority areas for fuels reduction. The current condition of the area includes overstocked stands, insect and disease killed trees, and increasingly high levels of hazardous fuels. We are eager to work with local interested parties and user-groups to devise solutions and develop recommendations for reducing fuel loads and the risk of fire severity in the area.

We have identified you as an individual, agency, or organization that might be interested in participating in this collaborative group. Our hope is to have a relatively small group of active participants, representing different stakeholders, such as adjacent landowners, representatives from federal, state, local and tribal governments, local watershed groups, and conservation groups to form a collaborative working group.

An initial meeting and field trip is scheduled for July 23, 2005. The meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m. at the Hood River Ranger District located in Mt. Hood, Oregon, in the conference room. We will spend about an hour orienting participants to the project area, fuels-related concerns, and the purpose of the collaborative effort. We will leave the office around 10:00 a.m. and spend until 1:00 p.m. in the field in the Cooper Spur area to look at conditions on Forest Service land as well as private land that has already received some fuel reduction treatment. We should be back to the Hood River Ranger District by 1:30 p.m. If you are a private landowner who has done some thinning or clearing on your property and are willing to share the results as part of this field trip, please let us know.

Future meeting dates and times would be developed by the collaborative working group once it is established, but we anticipate the group convening around 3-4 times.

If you are interested and have the time to commit to this collaborative effort, please contact Erin Black at (541) 352-6002 ext. 634; email: ekblack@fs.fed.us, or Leo Segovia at (541) 352-6002 ext. 638; email: lsegovia02@fs.fed.us. If you do not have the time to be involved as a collaborative working group member, but are interested in the project and would like to receive any updates, please let us know.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

EAINA L. BAMBE
District Ranger