



United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service

Zigzag Integrated Resource Project

Recreation Report

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for:
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1.0-Introduction

This report examines the potential impacts of the Zigzag Integrated Resource Project to recreation opportunities and experiences within the planning area.

While many popular recreation sites and opportunities exist within the planning area boundary, proposed actions have been designed to ameliorate disruptions to recreational activities to the greatest extent possible. Proposed units are generally located away from recreation sites and trails. Project design criteria have been developed to minimize impacts to recreation such as limiting project activities to exclude weekends and holidays and to occur outside of peak recreation seasons. Access during peak visitation season to most recreation sites and trailheads within the planning area would remain open throughout the duration of project implementation. Displacement of visitors to the Mt. Hood National Forest as a result of proposed actions and corresponding impacts to tourism-based economies in the vicinity of the planning area are expected to be negligible.

Effects to some recreation resources within the planning area would include loss of access in the short-term to ensure the safety of forest visitors during harvest related activities. Restricted access to recreation opportunities would not occur simultaneously, but rather over a period of 3-5 years as project implementation commences. When appropriate, press releases would be made in advance of recreation related closures. Mt. Hood National Forest social media outlets and relevant agency websites would also be updated to reflect recreation related impacts.

A reroute of Top Spur Trail #785 and the associated relocation of Top Spur Trailhead is one of the proposed actions included as part of the Zigzag Integrated Resource Project. Information pertinent to this project would be disclosed and analyzed as part of this report.

Implementation of proposed actions comply with Forest Plan standards and other relevant guidelines for recreation within affected land use allocations. Pertinent recreation resources and indicators to be analyzed include Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS), developed recreation facilities, dispersed recreation opportunities, trails, wilderness, and wild and scenic rivers.

2.0 – Analysis Framework

2.1 – Resource Indicators and Measures

Resource indicators and measures used to disclose effects to recreation resources focusses on applicable ROS class as well as access and impairments to recreations assets including developed recreation facilities, dispersed recreation opportunities, trails, wilderness areas, and wild and scenic rivers.

2.2 - Methodology

Information regarding the existing condition of these resources and their associated recreation use was gathered from various information sources including maps, management plans, databases, and local managers.

Effects of no action as well as proposed actions were analyzed for possible changes and impediments to recreation resources or experiences. Impacts to recreation have been reviewed on a case-by-case basis and are described in more detail in the effects section of this report.

3.0 – Existing Condition

The planning area encapsulates some of the Mt. Hood National Forest's most iconic and popular recreation destinations. Recreational use within the planning area is extensive with heavy use occurring throughout both summer and winter months. The area's proximity to the Portland metropolitan area has resulted in high demand for recreational opportunities and the planning area hosts many busy summer and winter trails, campgrounds, day use sites, and general forest areas popular for dispersed camping and gathering of special forest products. Recreation opportunities within the planning area are as varied as they are plentiful ranging from developed high-use sites such as Trillium Lake to lesser known primitive areas and opportunities to experience solitude within designated wilderness.

3.1 – Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) is a system for classifying and managing recreation opportunities based on the following criteria: physical setting, social setting, and managerial setting. The combination of these three criteria results in seven different ROS classes: Primitive, Semiprimitive Nonmotorized, Semiprimitive Motorized, Roded Modified, Roded Natural, Rural, and Urban. Each class is defined in terms of the degree to which it satisfies certain recreation experience needs. This is measured based on the extent to which the natural environment has been modified, the type of facilities provided, the degree of outdoors skills needed to enjoy the area, and the relative density of recreation use (USDA 1990). While several ROS classes are found within the planning area, proposed actions would only occur in Roded Natural and Roded Modified settings. These ROS settings provide for the following recreation experiences:

Roded Natural: This ROS is characterized by predominantly natural-appearing environments with moderate evidences of the sights and sounds of humans. These evidences usually harmonize with the natural environment. Interaction between users may be moderate to high, with evidence of other users prevalent. Resource modification practices are evident but harmonize with the natural environment. Conventional motorized use is allowed and incorporated into construction standards and design of facilities.

Roaded Modified: These areas are characterized by predominately natural appearing environments with high evidence of the sights and sounds of humans. Such evidence may not harmonize with the natural environment. Interaction between users may be moderate to high, with evidence of other users prevalent. Resource modification and utilization practices are evident and may not harmonize with the natural environment. Conventional motorized use is allowed and incorporated into construction standards and design of facilities (USDA 1990).

Existing conditions within the planning area meet both Roded Modified and Roded Natural ROS classifications as they pertain to physical, social, and managerial settings.

3.1.2 – Developed Recreation Facilities

The following recreation sites comprise developed recreation opportunities in the vicinity of proposed actions:

- Riley Horse Camp
- McNeil Campground
- Lost Creek Campground/Day Use
- Trillium Lake Campground/Day Use

Developed recreation facilities within the planning area are operated by concessionaire under a special use permit administered by the Mt. Hood National Forest. The operating season for these sites is typically mid-May through late September. Other developed recreation facilities exist within the planning area, though access and experiences relative to these sites would not be impacted by proposed actions.

3.1.3 – Dispersed Recreation

Opportunities for dispersed recreation including camping, hunting, fishing, rock climbing, and gathering of special forest products such as berries and mushrooms occur throughout the project area.

Dispersed camping (camping outside of developed campground facilities) is permissible in many locations. However, the Mt. Hood National Forest does not actively manage dispersed sites. Visitors occupy campsites on a first-come first-served basis and dispersed campsites are prevalent across the Forest. With the planning area dispersed camping is most popular in the vicinity of Old Maid Flats and near Trillium Lake.

Other dispersed recreation opportunities and gathering of forest products occur throughout the planning area and take place in general forest areas not actively managed for recreation related activities. Access to dispersed recreation areas is generally via Forest Service system roads and is subject to existing seasonal road restrictions and snow cover.

3.1.4 – Trails

While an extensive trail system exists within the planning area, a smaller subset of trails are in actual proximity to proposed actions. For the purpose of this report, effects are only analyzed for trails where there is reason to believe impacts would occur. Specific trails included in this analysis are:

- Trillium Lake Loop Trail #761
- Kinzel Lake Trail #665
- Hunchback Trail #793 (east trailhead)
- Jackpot Meadows Trail #492
- Salmon River Trail #742 (east trailhead)
- Dry Fir Trail #674A
- Veda Lake Trail #673
- Eureka Peak Trail #671
- Cast Creek Trail #773
- Burnt Lake Trail #772
- Frenches Dome Trail #776C
- Horseshoe Trail #774

A reroute of Top Spur Trail #785 and the associated relocation of Top Spur Trailhead is one of the proposed actions included as part of the Zigzag Integrated Resource Project. The impetus for this project stems from the current trail alignment and trailhead location which are entirely within a riparian area. The current Top Spur Trail alignment is straight uphill along and across Clear Fork, a headwater of the Sandy River. This has resulted in problematic drainage, poor trail sustainability, and created undesirable impacts to water quality and riparian function in a drainage that hosts listed species under the Endangered Species Act.

3.1.5 – Wilderness & Wild and Scenic Rivers

The planning area encompasses portions of the Mt. Hood Wilderness and the Salmon-Huckleberry Wilderness. The planning area also hosts three congressionally designated Wild and Scenic Rivers: The Salmon River, Zigzag River, and Sandy River.

The intent of wilderness designation is to preserve and protect the wilderness area in its undeveloped and natural condition; to allow natural processes to operate freely; and to provide opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation (Wilderness Act of 1964). The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System was established to preserve certain rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations (Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968).

Proposed actions are not planned to occur in designated wilderness, inventoried roadless areas, or within the Zigzag Wild and Scenic River corridor. Actions are proposed within the Wild and Scenic Salmon River and Sandy River corridors congruent with applicable standards and guidelines. Recreation related impacts to Wild and Scenic River values are assessed in the effects portion of this report.

3.2 - Environmental Consequences

3.2.1 – Effects of No Action

No action within the planning area would not have a significant impact on recreation as it occurs today. Existing facilities, recreation opportunities, and associated access would remain unchanged. Existing issues with trail sustainability and undesirable impacts to riparian function due to the current location of Top Spur Trail would persist.

3.2.2 - Effects of Proposed Action

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)

Proposed actions would have no effect on the ROS applied to the planning area. The desired condition and experience identified for Roaded Natural and Roaded Modified ROS settings would remain unchanged. Proposed actions would not influence interactions between users or alter the environment to such a degree they would fail to meet applicable ROS guidelines.

While temporary closures to some recreational assets would displace visitors, resulting crowding at other sites is expected to be negligible. Project design criteria have been developed to minimize displacement of visitors by limiting project activities to exclude weekends and holidays. In addition, activities that have the greatest potential to impact recreation will be scheduled to occur outside of peak recreation season (Memorial Day-Labor Day). Access during peak visitation season to most recreation sites and trailheads would remain open throughout the duration of project implementation and anticipated closures would be spread over a period of 3-5 years and not occur all at once.

Within the Roaded Natural settings proposed actions would reduce canopy cover but continue to provide a predominantly natural appearing environment in the long term. Within Roaded Modified settings there is an expectation that settings would be substantially modified. As such, proposed actions would not alter the ROS to such a degree it would fail to meet Roaded Modified or Roaded Natural standards.

Developed Recreation Facilities

Proposed actions would impact access to some developed recreation facilities. Weekday recreationists visiting Trillium Lake outside of the summer operating season could experience temporary closures. Closures would ensure public safety while harvest related activities occur. Access to Trillium Lake via Forest Service Road 2656 would be restricted for up to two weeks preceding the annual winter road closure. Winter closure of 2656 occurs every year on December 1st or when snow amounts limit access, whichever comes first. Closures or otherwise restricted access to developed recreation sites are not expected during the May-September operating season.

While restricted access to other developed recreation facilities within the planning area is not anticipated, roads accessing these sites would be utilized as haul routes and harvest related activity would likely be perceptible. Weekday recreationists visiting other recreation facilities outside of operating season could experience logging related traffic and activity.

While temporary closures are anticipated short-term impacts to some developed recreation facilities, improved access is also expected as a result of proposed actions. Road maintenance and reconstruction activities are anticipated to occur on many roads that access recreation opportunities and proposed harvest units within the planning area. For additional information on USFS system roads within the planning area, refer to the Transportation Specialist Report.

Dispersed Recreation

Effects to dispersed recreation as a result of road and area closures would occur within the planning area. Access to dispersed recreation areas would be impacted temporarily in some areas to ensure public safety. Those looking to dispersed camp, collect forest products, hunt, or fish within the planning area could experience restricted access within and in proximity to active units and on access roads while harvest activities commence. Roads accessing some areas would be utilized as haul routes and harvest related activity could be perceptible to those visiting dispersed areas on weekdays.

Access to some dispersed recreation areas would also be impacted by road decommissioning proposed as part of the Zigzag Integrated Resource Project. While approximately 2 miles of USFS system roads are proposed to be decommissioned, resulting impacts to dispersed recreation access are expected to be minimal. Road sections to be decommissioned consist of several short sections of road that receive little use. Many are overgrown and impassible in their current state to passenger vehicles. Decommissioned roads would remain accessible by foot once project implementation is complete. For additional information on USFS system roads within the planning area, refer to the Transportation Specialist Report.

Access to dispersed recreation areas near Trillium Lake including Mud Creek Loop, Sherar Burn Rd, and Trillium Airstrip via Forest Service Road 2656 would be restricted for up to two weeks preceding the annual winter road closure. Winter closure of 2656 occurs every year on December 1st or when snow amounts limit access, whichever comes first. When appropriate, press releases would be made in advance of recreation related closures. Mt. Hood National Forest social media outlets and relevant agency websites would also be updated to reflect recreation related impacts.

While temporary road closures are anticipated, with short-term impacts to some dispersed recreation opportunities, improved access is also expected as a result of proposed actions. Road maintenance and reconstruction activities are anticipated to occur on many roads that access dispersed recreation areas and proposed harvest units within the planning area. For additional information on USFS system roads within the planning area, refer to the Transportation Specialist Report.

Proposed actions include forest thinning in units along Forest Service Road 2613 (Sherar Burn Rd) for the purpose of huckleberry enhancement. This would result in increased availability of huckleberries throughout treated units and improve berry picking opportunities in the future.

Trails

Proposed actions would affect system trails within the project area in terms of access. Weekday recreationists visiting the planning area outside of the busy summer season could experience restricted access to the following trails:

- Trillium Lake Loop Trail #761
- Kinzel Lake Trail #665
- Hunchback Trail #793 (east trailhead)
- Jackpot Meadows Trail #492
- Salmon River Trail #742 (east trailhead)
- Dry Fir Trail #674A
- Veda Lake Trail #673
- Eureka Peak Trail #671
- Cast Creek Trail #773
- Burnt Lake Trail #772
- Frenches Dome Trail #776C
- Horseshoe Trail #774.

Of these trails, three transect harvest units: Jackpot Meadows, Veda Lake, and Eureka Peak. Equipment crossings on Veda Lake and Eureka Peak Trails would result in temporary disturbances to trail corridors and closures. One temporary road would cross Jackpot Meadows Trail resulting in short-term impacts to trail tread and temporary trail closures. Project design criteria require trail segments impacted by temporary road and equipment crossings be rehabilitated to previously existing conditions. Decreased density of forest canopy is also an expected result of forest thinning activities and a more open appearance may be perceptible to those utilizing trails that transect units after harvest has occurred.

Access to listed trails would be impacted temporarily in some areas to ensure public safety. Roads leading to trails in proximity to or within active units would be subject to temporary closures. Roads accessing some trails would be utilized as haul routes and harvest activity could be perceptible to those recreating on weekdays near active units. Access to trails via Forest Service Road 2656 would be restricted for up to two weeks preceding the annual winter road closure. Winter closure of 2656 occurs every year on December 1st or when snow amounts limit access, whichever comes first. There are no anticipated closures or restrictions proposed for recreationists making use of winter trails or sno-parks within the planning area. When appropriate, press releases would be made in advance of recreation related closures. Mt. Hood National Forest social media outlets and relevant agency websites would also be updated to reflect recreation related impacts.

While temporary road closures are anticipated short-term impacts to listed trails, improved access is also expected as a result of proposed actions. Road maintenance and reconstruction activities are anticipated to occur on many roads that access trailheads and proposed harvest units within the planning area. For additional information on USFS system roads within the planning area, refer to the Transportation Specialist Report.

The relocation of Top Spur Trailhead and resulting realignment of Top Spur Trail is a proposed action included in the Zigzag Integrated Resource Project. Relocating the Top Spur Trailhead approximately 2,000ft beyond its current location on Forest Service Road 1828-118 and the associated trail reroute would greatly reduce unwanted riparian impacts and increase overall trail sustainability. The proposed site for the Top Spur Trailhead relocation would make use of a landing site included in the Zigzag Integrated Resource Project once harvest related activities were complete. The existing trail and trailhead would remain accessible during project implementation. Indirect effects associated with relocating Top Spur Trailhead would be an improved parking area capable of accommodating a vault-style toilet facility, reduced roadside congestion due to existing parking overflow, and improved emergency access.

Wilderness & Wild and Scenic Rivers

Actions proposed as part of the Zigzag Integrated Resource Project would not occur within designated wilderness, inventoried roadless areas, or within the Zigzag Wild and Scenic River corridor. As such, impacts to these resources are not anticipated. However, proposed actions would occur within designated segments of the Salmon and Sandy River corridors.

Five proposed units are located either entirely or partially within Segment 1 of the Salmon Wild and Scenic River. This portion of the Salmon River is classified as recreational (Salmon River Management Plan 1993). Three helicopter log landings and two smaller service landings will be located within Segment 2 of the Upper Sandy Wild and Scenic River. Segment 2 of the Upper Sandy Wild and Scenic River is also classified as recreational (Upper Sandy River Management Plan 1994). Per the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, designated rivers are classified as wild, scenic or recreational based on levels of development and accessibility adjacent the river corridor at the time of designation. As defined by the Act, recreational river areas are those rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past (Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968). Of the three classifications of wild and scenic rivers (wild, scenic, and recreational) human development and access are most prevalent in sections classified as recreational.

In addition to protecting a river's free-flowing nature, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act also requires management actions protect and enhance the Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) for which the river was designated. ORVs are a river's rare, unique, or exemplary features that differentiate it from other regional or national rivers. The ORVs for the Salmon River are scenery, recreation, fisheries, wildlife, hydrology, and botany/ecology (Salmon River Management Plan 1993). ORV's for the Sandy River are scenery, recreation, fisheries, geology, and botany (Upper Sandy River Management Plan 1994). Analysis for the purpose of this report focusses solely on recreation. Refer to relevant specialist reports for information regarding other ORVs.

Impediments to recreation values as a result of proposed actions within the Salmon Wild and Scenic River and Upper Sandy Wild and Scenic River corridors are expected to be minimal.

Proposed silvicultural prescriptions in Salmon River units would involve forest thinning to promote late-successional forest characteristics. This would result in a more open appearance in treated stands and eventually larger tree diameters and increased species diversity. Proposed units are not in proximity to developed facilities, trails or other recreation amenities. Impacts to hiking, fishing, and winter sports activities are not expected. Dispersed recreation will be temporality restricted in units to ensure public safety and those recreating in the area during project implementation may notice harvest related activities. Two temporary roads would be utilized to access units, one would be new and the other would utilize a previously decommissioned road. Project design criteria require decommissioning and restoration of temporary roads once project implementation is complete.

Proposed landing sites within Upper Sandy Wild and Scenic River corridor will be utilized for staging of logs and for refueling and servicing of helicopters during harvest activities. Project design criteria require landing sites to be decommissioned and restored once project implementation is complete. Harvest related activity will likely be perceptible to recreationists visiting the area during project implementation. Temporary closures of roads, trails, and dispersed campsites beneath flight paths or in proximity landing areas are anticipated to ensure public safety.

Proposed activities are located within recreational segments of the Salmon and Sandy Rivers where road access and shoreline development are expected to occur and adhere to relevant standards and guidelines. While impacts in the form of closures are expected to occur for some recreation resources, these will be short-lived. Lasting impacts to the recreation as a result of proposed actions are expected to be negligible.

3.2.3 - Cumulative Effects

Consideration must be given to incremental effects of proposed actions when added to past, present, and reasonably foreseeable related future actions. For the purpose of this report, the area of analysis for cumulative effects includes harvest units, roads utilized as haul and access routes to proposed units, and trails included in section 3.1.4. Table 1 highlights other projects that have the potential to result in incremental effects to recreation in relation to actions proposed as part of the Zigzag Integrated Resource Project.

Table 1 Cumulative Effects

Project	Measure	Overlap in Time & Space	Notes
Tamarack Loop Fish Log Project	Recreation Access	Yes	Project will require temporary road closures up to 20 minutes.

Project	Measure	Overlap in Time & Space	Notes
Upper Sandy River Watershed Restoration Action Plan (WRAP)	Recreation Access	Yes	Upper Sandy WRAP includes culvert replacement projects and dispersed campsite rehabilitation in riparian zones.
Forest-Wide Reduction and Relocation of Recreational Impacts in Riparian Reserves	Recreation Access	Yes	Project will require a temporary closure for site improvements at Ramona Falls Trailhead.

Projects in Table 1 would have an effect on recreation resources within the planning area. However, in conjunction with either no action or with proposed actions, results would not deviate from Forest Plan standards. Appropriate project design criteria would ensure projects highlighted in Table 1 do not occur in conjunction with actions proposed as part of the Zigzag Integrated Resource Project in such a way that would exacerbate access to recreation opportunities. This would minimize overall project activity occurring within the planning area simultaneously and ensure access to recreation opportunities are maintained to the greatest extent possible.

Displacement of visitors to the Mt. Hood National Forest and corresponding impacts to tourism-based economies in the vicinity of the planning area as a result of proposed actions and projects listed in Table 1 are expected to be negligible. Activities related to Zigzag Integrated Resource Project and other projects in the vicinity will occur over a period of multiple years and not all at once. Activities will also be dispersed geographically throughout the planning area. Closures will be temporary and scheduled to avoid weekends and holidays to minimize disruptions to recreation access. Given the abundance of recreational opportunities within the planning area and in the vicinity of Mt. Hood, visitors have many options to choose from in the event their chosen activity is impacted by project activities. In the long-term, proposed actions will not impede recreation access or experiences.

3.3 - Consistency with Management Direction

Forest Plan

Proposed actions are consistent with Forest Plan direction and relevant recreation standards and guidelines. Management objectives as they pertain to applicable ROS classes would remain unchanged.

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)

Proposed actions are consistent with the goals and objectives for Roaded Natural and Roaded Modified ROS classifications. Neither would have more than a nominal effect to the types, settings, quantities or quality of recreation experiences available within the planning area.

Wilderness Act

There are no proposed actions within designated wilderness areas in the planning area. No mechanized entry or other impairments to wilderness character would occur and proposed actions adhere to laws set forth in the Wilderness Act of 1964.

Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Salmon National Wild and Scenic River Management Plan, and Upper Sandy National Wild and Scenic River Management Plan

Proposed actions occur within recreational segments of the Salmon and Sandy Rivers where road access and shoreline development are expected to occur. Recreation ORVs and the free-flowing nature of the Salmon and Sandy Rivers would not be altered or otherwise significantly impacted as a result of proposed actions. While temporary closures will occur to ensure public safety, these impacts are temporary in nature and lasting detrimental impacts to recreation ORVs are not expected. Actions included in the Zigzag Integrated Resource Project adhere to standards, guidelines, and applicable law set forth in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the Salmon National Wild and Scenic River Management Plan, and the Upper Sandy National Wild and Scenic River Management Plan.

4.0 - References Cited

USDA Forest Service. 1990. Land and Resource Management Plan. Mt. Hood National Forest.

Wilderness Act of 1964, 16 U.S.C. §§1131-1136.

Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, 16 U.S.C. §§1271-1287.

USDA Forest Service. 1993. Salmon National Wild and Scenic River Management Plan. Mt. Hood National Forest

USDA Forest Service. 1993. Upper Sandy National Wild and Scenic River Management Plan. Mt. Hood National Forest