

October 5, 2001

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STEENS MOUNTAIN ADVISORY COUNCIL TO MEET IN BURNS, OREGON

The Steens Mountain Advisory Council (SMAC) established by the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act of 2000 (Act) will hold its first public organizational meeting in Burns, Oregon, on October 22 and 23, 2001. The SMAC will meet at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Burns District Office, HC 74-12533 Highway 20 West, Burns, OR, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., local time, on October 22 and 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on October 23.

This first meeting will focus on the SMAC's operating procedures including: establishing meeting guides, discussion of the Charter, roles and responsibilities, Federal Advisory Committee Act/Management, selection of a chairperson, federal travel regulations, forming of subcommittees, and facilitation needs. Other items to be discussed at the meeting are: an overview of the Act, actions initiated by BLM to implement the Act, capturing issues the SMAC wants to be involved with and planning how to address those issues, future meeting dates, and other matters as may reasonably come before the SMAC.

The entire meeting is open to the public. Information to be distributed to the SMAC is requested 10 days prior to the start of the SMAC meeting and should be sent to Rhonda Karges at the BLM Burns District Office at HC 74-12533 Highway 20 West, Hines, OR 97738. A public comment opportunity is scheduled for 11:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., local time, on October 22, 2001.

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The 12-member SMAC was appointed by the Secretary of Interior on August 14, 2001 pursuant to the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act of 2000 (Act). The SMAC's purpose is to provide representative counsel and advice to the BLM regarding (1) new and unique approaches to management of the land within the bounds of the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area (CMPA), (2) cooperative programs and incentives for landscape management that meet human needs, maintain and improve the ecological and economic integrity of the area and (3) preparation and implementation of a management plan for the CMPA. Recommendations will also be made concerning public lands managed by BLM within the Andrews Resource Area. These lands are located in Harney and Malheur Counties.

Members currently serving on the SMAC are:

Thomas Wendel (Dispersed Recreation),
Thomas Harris (Mechanized or Consumptive Recreation),
E. Ron Harding (Wild Horse Management),
Cindy Witzel (Recreational Permit Holder),
Harland Yriarte (Private Landowner),
Stacy Davies (Grazing Permittee),
Hoyt Wilson (Grazing Permittee),
Jason Miner (Fish and Recreational Fishing),
Jerry Sutherland (Environmental Representative- State),
Alice Elshoff (Environmental Representative- Local),
Wanda Johnson (Burns Paiute Tribe),
Roger Alfred (No CMPA-financial interest), and
Steve Purchase (State Government Liaison (nonvoting member)).

The Designated Federal Official is Miles Brown, BLM's Andrews Field Manager.

For more information on the SMAC or the upcoming meeting, contact Rhonda Karges, BLM, at the above address or call (541) 573-4400, weekdays between 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., PST. Internet users can also check the following website: < www.or.blm.gov/steens >.

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