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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FOR THE DISTRICT OF OREGON

**OREGON NATURAL DESERT ASS'N
and WESTERN WATERSHEDS PROJECT,**

Plaintiffs,

v.

**CAROLYN FREEBORN, Field Manager, Jordan
Resource Area, BLM; DAVE HENDERSON,
Vale District Manager, BLM; BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT; and UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,**

Defendants.

Civil No. 06-1311-MO

**DEFENDANTS' THIRD
STATUS REPORT**

Pursuant to the Court's order (Dkt. #42) directing Defendants to file another status report by this date, Defendants hereby respectfully submit this report to apprise the Court and parties of the work Defendants have performed since filing their last status report in January and to provide an estimated schedule for completion of the next steps in the work they have yet to complete.

As reported to the Court previously, the Bureau of Land Management (“BLM”), operating through its Jordan Resource Area on the Vale District in southeastern Oregon, has been updating and maintaining its information on wilderness characteristics within the project area for the Louse Canyon Geographic Management Area (“LCGMA”) since January 2007. In its first status report that they filed in October of last year, Defendants informed the Court that BLM planned on completing this work by October 26, 2007. In their last status report, Defendants indicated that BLM had completed its wilderness inventory updates by this projected date and then followed up by providing this information to Plaintiff Oregon Natural Desert Association in January 2008. Through conducting this wilderness inventory update, BLM concluded that there are areas within the LCGMA project area outside of existing Wilderness Study Areas that likely possess one or more wilderness characteristics.

In order to take into account the information it compiled in completing the wilderness evaluation forms, BLM reported that it was supplementing its National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”) analysis for the LCGMA project area. Defendants reported that BLM’s goal was to circulate this supplemental NEPA analysis for public review and comment sometime in February 2008. Defendants now report that BLM did in fact circulate its supplemental NEPA analysis for public comment on February 25, 2008. The public comment period closes March 31, 2008.

At this time, BLM is unable to provide an estimated date for taking any action on the basis of the supplemental NEPA analysis it has performed since it does not yet know how much public comment it will receive or what issues will be raised by the comments. Once BLM has reviewed the comments received by the March 31, 2008, deadline, it should have a better idea of how long it will take to address the comments prior to making any final decision. In this light, if

the Court so directs, Defendants will plan to file another status report on or around April 30, 2008, at which time they should be able to provide an estimated date for any such decision.

DATED this 3rd day of March 2008.

Respectfully submitted,

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/s/ Stephen J. Odell
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