



USDA Forest Service
Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests

Recreation Residences in Forest Plan Revision

Revised May 8, 2006

Background

Recreation residences are privately owned, limited-use cabins authorized by 20-year special use permits. Recreation residence tracts were first authorized in 1915 to encourage recreation within the national forests. Many of the cabins have been used by the same family for generations. Recreation residence tracts are located throughout the country, but the majority of them are in the west, particularly in California, Oregon, and Washington.

On the national forests in the Blue Mountain, there are 101 recreation residence lots on 8 tracts in the Umatilla National Forest, and 43 lots on 3 tracts on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. There are no recreation residences on the Malheur National Forest. Individual lots occupy anywhere from two-tenths of an acre up to a half acre and include cabins and outbuildings approved through the special-use permit process.

Process

While Forest Plan revision will not propose any changes to recreation residences, existing tracts are being reviewed and evaluated to determine if they are consistent and in compliance with the current forest plans.

Product

The Revised Forest Plan will include a generalized map of the existing recreation residence tracts (not individual lots) as they occur on the Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests.

How this relates to the Revised Forest Plans

Existing tracts (groups of individual lots) will be identified as determined suitable for recreation residences in the Revised Forest Plan.

A few Question and Answers about Recreation Residences

Aren't these also referred to as 99-year leases?

Yes, that is a common myth; however, recreation residences are not actually legal leases. The special use permits for these recreation residences are generally issued for a term of 1 to 20 years.

Who controls the sale of these individual lots?

The lots are national forest land and the permit to occupy the lot often passes from one generation to the next within the same family. The actual sale of the developments on the lots, such as a cabin itself, is usually a private transaction often done through a real estate agent. The Forest Service works with the new owner to develop and transfer the appropriate permits.