

Malheur Community Empowerment for the Owyhee Act (Malheur C.E.O.s Act)

Section by Section

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE. The Malheur Community Empowerment for the Owyhee Act (Malheur County C.E.O.s Act)

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

Defining **adaptive management** that will allow ranchers and the BLM to iteratively manage rangeland in Malheur County, this bill sets up a modern and robust **Monitoring Network** for the federal lands in Malheur County to ensure the adaptive management leads towards greater health of the land.

Federal lands are those lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management in Malheur County. The **Monitoring Network** involves the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service, local ranchers, tribal representatives, Malheur County soil and water conservation district, Oregon State Fish and Wildlife, Oregon State Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon State Parks, Malheur County Watershed Council, Oregon State University and Treasure Valley Community College, as well as citizen scientists and high school students as organized by members of the Network.

It also creates the **Malheur Community Empowerment for Owyhee Group (Malheur C.E.O.s)** consisting of local ranchers, environmental organizations and tribal representation to advise on the Monitoring Network as well as the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement that will analyze present conditions of the land as well as the effects of future adaptive management of the land.

It is anticipated that this effort will take additional resources therefore this bill provides money for additional people and resources to concentrate these efforts, including enforcement dollars.

SEC. 3. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES.

The purpose of this Act is to promote the long-term ecological health of the federal land to support communities and natural resources.

The objectives are to support and grow local communities and economies; protect the cultural resources and western traditions for which the federal land is known; to maintain grazing on the federal land; to protect and enhance the cultural, ecological, and economic needs of the Burns Paiute Tribe; to maintain and enhance the latest available science-based adaptive management of the federal land; to prevent invasive species encroachment and large fires through management practices that focus on restoration of the ecosystem; to ensure the conservation and improved management of the ecological, social, and economic environment, including geological, biological, wildlife, fish, riparian, and scenic resources; to address the management uncertainties on the federal land to provide greater stability of natural resource management of the federal land; and to promote and foster cooperation, communication, and understanding, and reduce conflict, among all users of the federal land.

SEC. 4. ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT OF FEDERAL LAND IN THE COUNTY.

The establishment of the Monitoring Network supports the real-time adaptive management of the federal lands to allow responses to real-time threats to the environmental integrity of these lands. The effects of potential actions to be taken on the land will have been analyzed by the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement covering these federal lands that is to be completed within a year of passage of this act.

Adaptive management will cover weeds, water, infrastructure, fire, important species, the protection of people and the preservation of cultural artifacts and areas. Adaptive management will also allow for concentrated restoration efforts in appropriate areas, as encapsulated by the BLM's creation of a Restoration Area Plan, also developed within one year of passage of this Act. The bill will not affect subsurface mineral rights or current water rights.

SEC. 5. LAND DESIGNATIONS.

Malheur County hosts 4.5 million acres of federal land. Under this bill there are 1,133,481 million acres of proposed wilderness, including over 95,000 acres named for Mary Gautreaux, a long time servant of Oregon's interests.

In addition, 1,104,555 acres of current WSAs and Lands with Wilderness Characteristics will become managed for multiple uses under the current and developing BLM Vale District Resource Management Plan (RMP).

Portions of the Owyhee River currently not Wild and Scenic designations will be designated as Wild and Scenic, totally 14.7 miles.

The administrative mineral withdrawal at Leslie Gulch will be made permanent.

SEC. 6. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

Malheur County is the poorest county in Oregon. Significant efforts were taken in the development of this bill to provide economic development opportunities for Malheur County including

- Loop Roads: the establishment of Loop Roads to encourage tourism and spur local development of tourist related amenities
 - OWYHEE DAM ROAD.— MAP
 - SUCCOR CREEK.— MAP
 - BIRCH CREEK.— MAP
 - THREE FORKS.—MAP
- Improvements to State Parks and Other Amenities – studies and efforts.
 - of not more than 2 marinas on the Owyhee Reservoir;
 - a paddle bar on the Owyhee Reservoir
 - improvements to existing Oregon State Parks bordering the Owyhee Reservoir;
 - improvements to private camps on the shore of the Owyhee Reservoir;
 - to establish a network of rural hostleries consisting of former hotels;
 - to establish a dude ranch at Birch Creek; and

- rails-to-trails project known as “Rails to Trails: The Oregon Eastern Branch/The Oregon and Northwestern Railroad”.
- Gateway to the Oregon Owyhee feasibility study
- Jordan Valley Airstrip Improvements to support firefighting efforts.
- Native Seed Center established in cooperation with local farmers, agencies and Universities as the primary native seed repository of the federal government in the Western States.

SEC. 7. TRIBAL PROTECTIONS.

While this bill attempts to provide new economic development and land management certainty the Malheur County, it also strives to protect the ancient important cultural base of the native peoples who have occupied this land for millennia. As such, the bill clearly states that nothing in this Act, including any designation or nondesignation relating to increased protection of Tribal resources under this Act, shall harm or undermine any sacred Tribal or important cultural location or resource. Specific areas were chosen to become Wilderness in order to satisfy some Tribal requests.