

Conditional Use Permit Application



Information for Forest Visitors and Neighbors

Introduction:

The OSU Research Forests is in the process of applying for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) with the Benton County Planning Commission. This document is intended to provide some context regarding our application.

What is a Conditional Use Permit and why is it needed?

The OSU Research Forests are classified in the "Forest Conservation Zone," by Benton County. Within the Forest Conservation Zone, managing for recreation use is considered a conditional use.

Most of McDonald Forest and the portion of Dunn Forest that is within Benton County are zoned for Forest Conservation. While some activities are automatically allowed in the Forest Conservation Zone (timber harvest, forest road construction, herbicide use, etc.), recreation uses and facilities require Conditional Use Permit review and approval by the Benton County Planning Commission.

Why is this permit process occurring now?

OSU Research Forests were successful at obtaining a grant from Oregon Recreation and Parks Department. This grant will allow us to finish connecting Peavy Arboretum to Lewisburg Saddle, and improve parking at Lewisburg Saddle. The grant application process required us to show that we were in compliance with local land use regulations, which we were surprised to discover that we were not.

What about other forest lands?

Other public agencies and private landowners have also gone through this process in Benton

County. You may not have been aware of these applications, as Benton County requires notification of all neighbors within 750 feet of the property boundary. OSU Research Forests have approximately 500 properties within 750 feet of the forest.

What happens if the CUP is not approved?

New recreation trails and other facilities proposed in the phased plan will not be allowed to go forward. Existing trails and recreation activities will be allowed to continue.

Why Manage Recreation Use on the OSU Research Forests?

The OSU College of Forestry is committed to providing access to the forest as a community resource, which is consistent with the 2006 Forest Management Plan.

The goals of the Recreation and Engagement Program have been identified by the College of Forestry:

- ⇒ The Research Forests are, and will continue to be, an integral part of the local community
- ⇒ Offer a diversity of high quality, safe, and sustainable recreation opportunities
- ⇒ Recreation use is to be consistent with College of Forestry and Research Forests goals

Additionally, actively managing recreation reduces and prevents impacts, assuring that recreation use can continue alongside other forest uses such as research and forest management, identified as the primary uses of the Forest Conservation Zone by Benton County.

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What happens if the CUP is approved?

OSU College of Forestry will continue to actively manage the recreation program on the McDonald, Dunn and Elizabeth Starker Cameron Demonstration Forests.

Recreation management includes actively maintaining existing trails and facilities, as well as implementing developments and improvements. See the phased plan in the CUP application for details.

What is included in the Conditional Use Permit application?

- ⇒ An evaluation of potential impacts from recreation management to the primary purposes of the Forest Conservation Zone
- ⇒ A description of the location and scope of the proposed recreation improvements within the McDonald and Dunn Forests.
- ⇒ Purposes and current uses of the OSU Research Forests

- ⇒ A **phased plan** for recreation development, describing improvements that could (but are not guaranteed to) happen within the next 10 years.

Where did the phased plan come from?

In 2013-2014, extensive community engagement resulted in recommendations (Gustavson, Brown & Olsen, 2014) from the visiting public regarding the desired future direction of the OSU Research Forests Recreation and Engagement Program. In 2015, working groups identified many potential trail developments on the McDonald Forest, which has guided trail development and set the stage for future trail planning.

Concurrently in 2015, faculty and staff from the College of Forestry and the Research Forests developed a set of goals and objectives for the future of the Recreation and Engagement Program (OSU College of Forestry, 2015).

The phased plan in the application is derived from these efforts and represents years of work by community members and College of Forestry staff.

How to Get Involved

Read Up & Let Us Know What You Think!

Read the Conditional Use Permit application, including the phased plan for recreation development.

Connect with us directly to ask questions or provide constructive feedback regarding potential projects in the plan. This will help us establish relevant priorities and shape the future of the recreation program.

<http://cf.forestry.oregonstate.edu/recreation-planning>



Comment on the Application

Provide your official comments to Benton County Planning Commission regarding the Conditional Use Criteria at the public hearing on **August 1st** (7:00pm in Benton County Sunset Building).

Written testimony may be submitted to County Staff in advance of the hearing, or directly to the Planning Commission at the hearing. Send written testimony (prior to hearing) to:

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