

# **Appendix B**

## **Bureau of Land Management Correspondence**

A. J. Dwyer Area  
Red Tree Vole  
Visual Contrast Rating



## **A.J. Dwyer Input for Wildwood-Wemme Highway Widening Project**

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**Affected Environment:** The A. J. Dwyer Scenic Area is a five-acre parcel of land located in Township 2 South, Range 7 East, Section 31 and managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The parcel is to the north of and adjacent to U.S. Highway 26 and immediately across from the entrance of the Wildwood Recreation site. The area north of Hwy 26 is surrounded on all sides by private ownership. The A.J. Dwyer parcel was designated a Special Area in the BLM's 1995 Salem District Resource Management Plan with scenic and botanical values as the identified unique features. This parcel is managed under a Class I Visual Resource Management (VRM) category which calls for the preservation of the character of the landscape. The A.J. Dwyer parcel is also within the Mt. Hood Corridor, a Congressionally designated scenic area which requires that scenic values be protected on BLM lands that can be seen from U.S. Highway 26. Though designated as a scenic area, the A.J. Dwyer parcel is relatively small in size with approximately 0.27 mile of the parcel adjacent to U.S. Highway 26.

There are several large older trees on the parcel, most of which are located along or near the highway. Apart from the older forest adjacent to the highway, the truly unique botanical values at the A. J. Dwyer Scenic Area include a diverse group of lichens and vascular plants north of the proposed project area. Although the area is host to vascular plant and moss species that are typically found in dryer upland environments, it is also host to a variety of lichens that are typically found in high humidity environments associated with riparian areas. With its dry, well drained volcanic soils that were not seen elsewhere in this parcel, and its diverse botanical community, this area stands out as unique.

The general habitat around the A.J. Dwyer parcel is characterized by a forested setting intermixed with houses and roads, with utilities along Hwy 26. No houses are directly adjacent to the part of the A.J. Dwyer parcel that would be disturbed and Wildwood Park is opposite the area and directly across Hwy 26. The proposed project area is most visible from the Hwy 26 with little visibility from houses in the general area due to the screening provided by the trees and brush in the northern end of the A. J. Dwyer parcel. Whether traveling east or west on Hwy 26, the proposed project area is only visible in the peripheral view for a few seconds. Except while exiting their driveways, the proposed project area would not be visible to residents living along the south side of Hwy 26.

**Environmental Effects:** A strip approximately 0.27-mile in length adjacent to U.S. Highway 26 would be cleared of trees and vegetation, which includes most of the larger trees in the A.J. Dwyer parcel. The width of the strip would vary from 25 to 50 feet. Approximately 65 trees over 24 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh) would be removed, including an estimated 22 older and larger trees that are greater than 40 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh).

The diverse group of lichens and vascular plants in the northern portion of the A.J. Dwyer parcel would not be disturbed as a result of the proposed project.

There would be some visual disturbance over several months during the construction period. Following the completion of the project, the general character of the parcel would continue to be dominated by a forested setting, however, the area would appear more open with younger and smaller trees. Given that a forested setting would be maintained and the short amount of time the parcel is in view while traveling U.S. Highway 26, the proposed project is expected to be in compliance with management objectives associated with the AJ Dwyer Scenic Area and the Mt. Hood Corridor.

**Cumulative Effects:** There are no other projects expected that would affect the A.J. Dwyer Scenic Area. Cumulative effects associated with the proposed action as a whole will be addressed by the Oregon Department of Transportation in their Environmental Assessment for the project.