

Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission

June 24, 2015

Agenda Item: 6a

Action

Topic: Unity Forest State Scenic Corridor – Transfer to Department of Transportation

Presented by: Kammie Bunes

In 1928, the State Highway Commission acquired approximately 60 acres of land along Camp Creek in Baker County to provide for State Highway purposes. Historically, lands in excess of what was necessary for road right of way were transferred to the State Parks division, especially if the land provided the highway traveler with waysides, viewpoints or scenic corridors. The Unity Forest State Scenic Corridor, along Highway 26, is now being proposed for transfer at no cost back to the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT).

In 2013 ODOT requested a right of entry from OPRD to study conditions in anticipation of roadwork to address repeated incidents of rockfall. ODOT concluded the preferred alternative is “full-height excavation” of both slopes to remove the boulder caps and reduce the angle of the slopes, thereby minimizing future rockfall. ODOT requested a temporary construction easement of three years from OPRD. For several reasons OPRD staff are recommending instead that ownership of the corridor be transferred back to ODOT.

The Unity Forest corridor is isolated from other OPRD lands and does not contain designated viewpoints or waysides. This is a pinch-point for Highway 26, between Camp Creek and OPRD land. The only direction ODOT can go to accomplish road improvements is onto OPRD land. While the boulder outcrops and mixed forest provide for a scenic drive, they do not represent the only example of this environment and ODOT’s slope modification will measurably reduce the scenic value. The majority of rock currently being deposited on the highway originates from talus slope, however, as the large boulders continue to be undermined, the risk of a large boulder on the highway increases. This site was rated a high hazard on ODOT’s statewide inventory and is the number one rockfall mitigation priority for the local district.

OPRD region and property staff believes transfer of the corridor back to ODOT is consistent with the current Park System Plan. While ODOT cannot justify purchase of the entire corridor, they are willing to accept the property at no cost, as allowed by OPRD policy, Transfer of Land to Other Public Agencies.

Prior Action by Commission: None

Action Requested: Staff recommends the Commission approve transfer of property to ODOT.

Attachment 1: Map

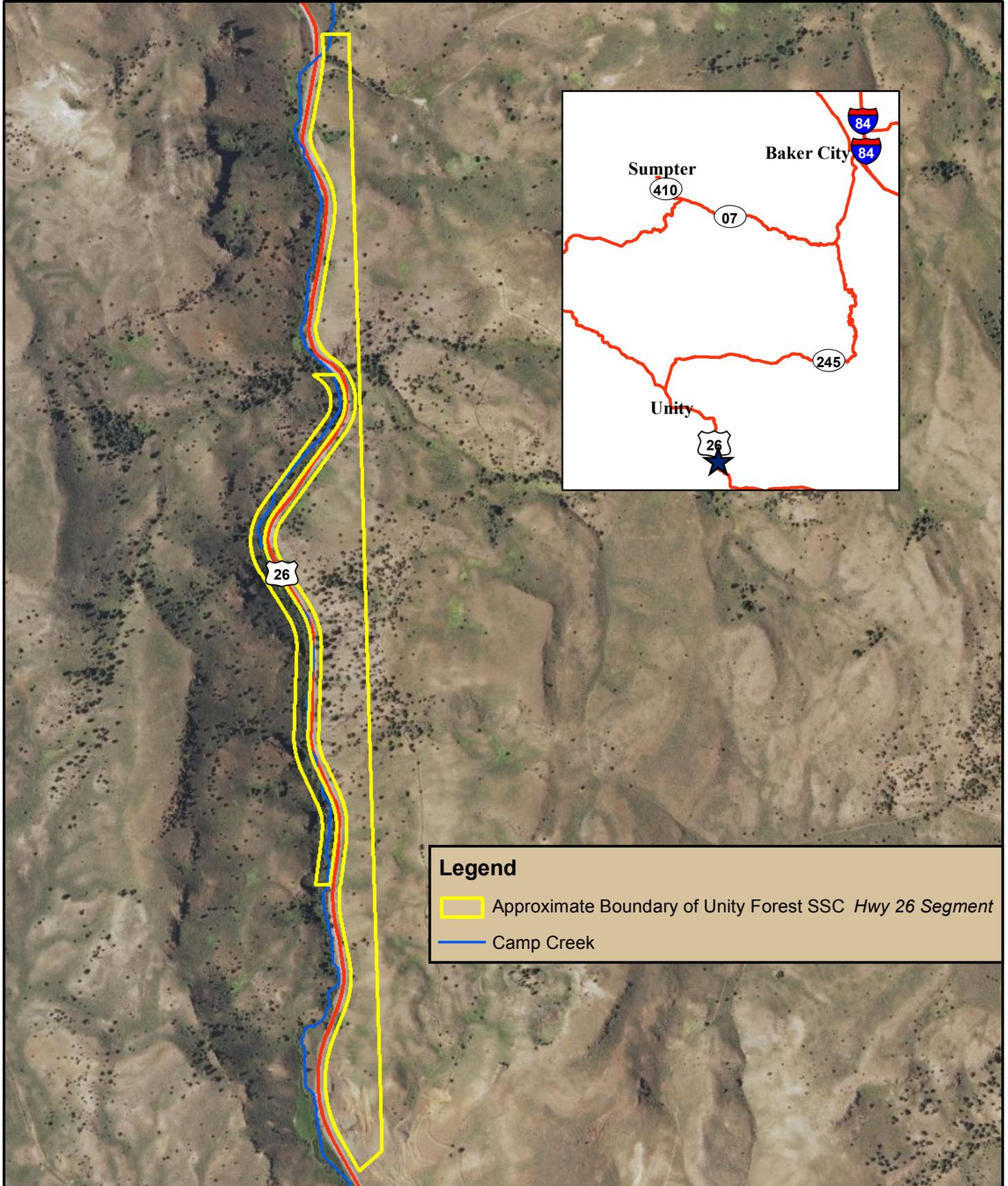
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Unity Forest SSC

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June 24, 2015: Agenda Item 6a, Attachment 1



Legend

- Approximate Boundary of Unity Forest SSC Hwy 26 Segment
- Camp Creek

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