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Forest Service land in Government Camp will likely become Meadows property

In a proposed exchange facing little opposition, the agency would get 769 acres of Mt. Hood Meadows land

BY JONATHAN FROCHTZWAG
The Sandy Post, Nov 2, 2010 [\(1 Reader comment\)](#)

One-hundred-eight acres of U.S. Forest Service-owned land in Government Camp will become property of ski resort Mt. Hood Meadows, if a proposed land exchange between the agency and the resort is approved. ADVERTISEMENTS

The Forest Service held an open house on the exchange in Portland on Oct. 26, one of the first steps in the required public-involvement process for considering the proposal.

Under that proposal, the Forest Service would trade its Government Camp property for 769 acres of Mt. Hood Meadows-owned land in the Cooper Spur area on Mount Hood's north side. In addition, Mt. Hood Meadows would relinquish its permit to operate the Cooper Spur ski area on about 1,400 acres of Forest Service land in the area.

The 769-acre Mt. Hood Meadows property would become a special watershed management unit, says Christine Arredondo, a Forest Service recreation and planning staff officer. The property includes the Crystal Springs watershed, which supplies Hood River County much of its drinking water.

As for the 1,400-acre Cooper Spur ski area, Arredondo says the Forest Service would shrink it to the 50 acres that are already developed and likely seek another operator for it. The ski area's remaining 1,350 acres, along with 350 acres of adjoining Forest Service land, would become designated wilderness.

Back on the south side of the mountain, on the Government Camp property, Mt. Hood Meadows would build low-density "recreational housing," says Greg Leo, a resort spokesman. Leo says the resort hasn't decided in any more detail what it would do with the land, but stressed that

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whatever Mt. Hood Meadows builds, it will be “very much like what’s in Government Camp today,” and consistent with the property’s low-density, residential zoning.

Arredondo says last week’s open house went “really well.” She estimates that about 45 people attended, most merely wanting more information. Little opposition to the land exchange is expected – the trade has been in the works since 2001; its terms are the product of collaboration among the Forest Service, Mt. Hood Meadows, the Cooper Spur Wild and Free Coalition and the Hood River Valley Residents Committee; and it was one of three exchanges that Congress directed to be carried out as part of the Mount Hood wilderness bill it passed in 2009.

Besides, says Russ Pasco, president of the Cooper Spur Wild and Free Coalition, the swap is “a very good deal for the public,” preventing development on a large swath of land on the wilder north face of the mountain.

“We’re getting all that in exchange for 108 acres in Government Camp, which was already designated for residential development,” Pasco says. “At some time, it’s inevitable that’s going to be developed residentially. I think it’s a very good trade-off.”



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