Public invited to propose forest projects

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BEND, Ore. - Applications for natural resource projects to benefit the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests will be available starting June 22, 2007. This is an opportunity for citizens, community organizations and local governments to propose projects that improve the health of forests and watersheds. Projects may include obliterating or maintaining roads, trails, or existing infrastructure, restoring fish and wildlife habitat, removing noxious weeds, improving soil productivity, reducing hazardous fuels and reestablishing native species.

Under Title II of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, also known as the â€œPayments to Countiesâ€• program, the Deschutes-Ochoco Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) will recommend the investment of approximately $1 million this year to enhance local forests. The committee of Central Oregon residents will make recommendations from a pool of project applications submitted in response to this call for proposals.

Applications are available at http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/centraloregon/partnership/rac/rac-index.shtml and at Ochoco National Forest Headquarters, 3160 NE 3rd Street, Prineville; Deschutes National Forest Headquarters, 1001 SW Emkay Dr., Bend; Bend-Fort Rock Ranger District, 1230 NE 3rd Street, Bend; Crescent Ranger District, 136471 Highway 97 N, Crescent; Sisters Ranger District, Pine Street & Highway 20, Sisters; Crooked River National Grassland, 813 SW Highway 97, Madras; COIC, 2363 Glacier Place, Redmond and other COIC offices in Central Oregon. An electronic and hard copy application must be submitted.

Applications are due August 1, 2007 by 4:30 p.m. Late applications will not be accepted. Mail electronically to: kelzner@coic.org, and mail or deliver hard copy to: ATTN: Kelly Elzner, RAC Application, COIC, 2363 SW Glacier Place, Redmond, OR 97756. For additional information, contact Laurel Skelton, Deschutes & Ochoco National Forests, at (541) 416-6530 or Kelly Elzner, COIC, (541) 548-9544.