

Wilderness Recreation on Mt. Hood
Supply for Developed Recreation is Twice the Demand
Dispersed Recreation Demand Greatly Exceeds Supply

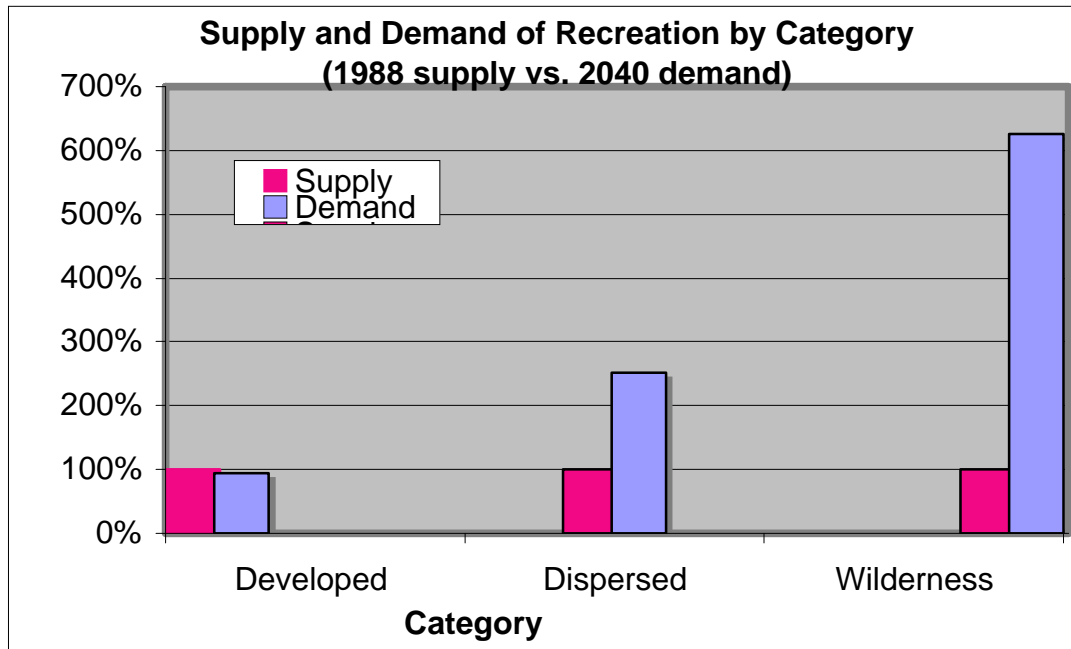
The Mt. Hood National Forest is the eighth most visited national forest in the U.S. and only one of eleven “urban National Forests” nationally.¹ As the most visited forest in the state of Oregon, Mt. Hood provides a diverse range of recreational opportunities to a wide variety of visitors from near and far. Mt. Hood Meadows’ plans to expand the developed ski area in the permit area at Cooper Spur directly contradict the recreation needs and desires of the visitors to Mt. Hood. The Forest Services’ current forest plan plainly evidences that the public’s desire for high quality dispersed recreation greatly exceeds the available supply. The current forest plan shows that this situation is predicted to continue well into the year 2040. The supply of developed recreation (ski areas) is well in excess of the demand, and the demand is not predicted to exceed the current supply until the year 2040.²

In 1990, the Forest Service compared capacity versus use of three categories of recreation: developed, dispersed, and wilderness. The comparison predicts that demand in 2040 will occupy 94% of the developed recreation supply that existed in 1988 (a slight shortfall), whereas demand will occupy 251% of the 1988 dispersed recreation supply **and 626% of the 1988 wilderness recreation supply**. The Forest Service noted that “the existing quantity of Wilderness RVDs (recreation visitor days) demanded by the public on the Mt. Hood National Forest cannot be met by any of the alternatives considered. This demand/supply deficit increases in the future.”³

¹ An “urban National Forest” is one that is located within 50 miles of a population center of more than 1 million.

² Information provided by the Mt. Hood National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement (October 1990), available at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/mthood/publications/> (“Management Plan”).

³ Management Plan at page II-74. A recreation visitor day (RVD) is 12 hours of visitor recreational use in any combination of people or hours. *See* Management Plan at page III-125.



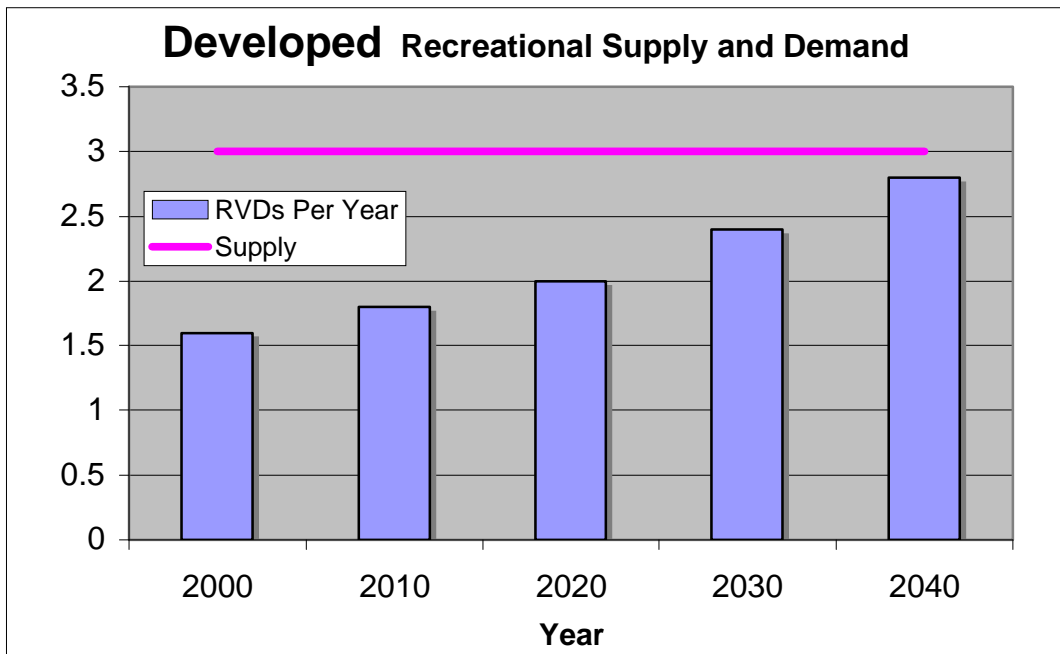
The disparity between supply and demand of dispersed recreation opportunities is identified as a management concern: "The present capability to supply recreational opportunities such as hiking on trails in Primitive and Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized areas", the Forest Service states, "is predicted to fall short of satisfying demand."⁴ Similarly, the available supply of acres for primitive and semi-primitive recreation is dwarfed in comparison with the available acres for roaded modified, roaded natural, rural, and urban recreation.⁵ Similarly, in 1990, Mt. Hood was home to a total of 152 developed sites with a capacity for more than three million RVD's per year. The mountain has five developed downhill ski areas, with a capacity to serve over sixteen thousand people at one time.⁶ Well over 13% of the Mountain above 4,600 feet

⁴ Management Plan at page III-36.

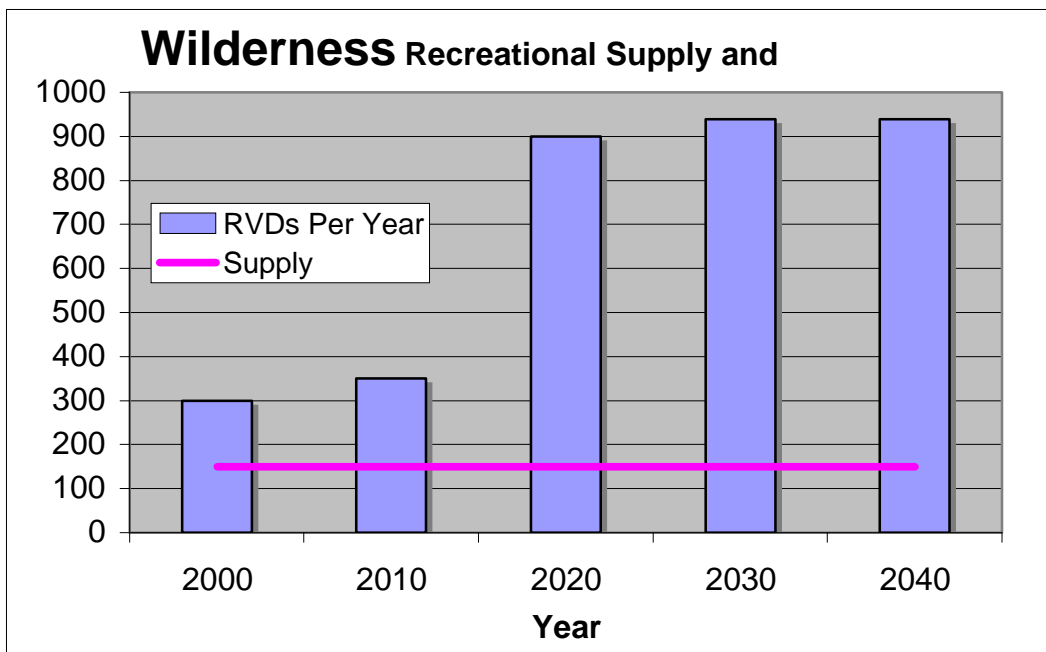
⁵ Management Plan at page III-126-127. Primitive and semi-primitive non-motorized recreation occur in natural or predominately natural appearing environments in which there is no motorized usage and the chance of experiencing solitude is high. Roaded modified recreation is that which occurs where there is substantial modification of the environment, and roads, timber sale landings, logging slash, and debris are evident. Users are moderately to highly likely to interact with others and experience developed facilities. Other definitions are available in the Management Plan at page III-126.

⁶ Management Plan at page III-130. The recreation manager for the MHNH confirmed the accuracy of the data. The Forest Service intends to revise the data during the next plan review in 2008.

elevation is already in developed recreation as part of the two developed ski areas, Mt. Hood Meadows and Timberline.



On the Mt. Hood NF, currently there is no permit system for wilderness recreation or limits on the number of users at one time. Therefore, the wilderness experience of every enthusiast on the MHNF's experience is degraded when demand is greater than supply.



In sum, the economic figures show that currently and in coming years, everyone's experience of dispersed and wilderness recreation is degraded (e.g. the plan predicted that in the year 2000 there would be supply to meet 63% of the demand). Another way of looking at that figure is that, according to the Forest Plan, there was demand for 37% more wilderness and dispersed recreational opportunities that was available on the Mt. Hood National forest in the year 2000. This figure is supposed to increase greatly over the coming decades.