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INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Bill Westbrook  
District Ranger, Zigzag Ranger District

FROM: Chuti Fiedler  
Wildlife Program Support

SUBJECT: Western Bumble Bee Update, Timberline Ski Area Mountain Bike Trails and Skills Park Project

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FILE CODE: 1950

DATE: October 12, 2016

Per your request, this memo describes my review of the information contained in the 2013 report, "Western Bumble Bee (*Bombus occidentalis*) at Timberline Ski Area" by Dyck and Willhite, in light of subsequent surveys completed for the Western bumble bee on the Mt. Hood National Forest (MHNH). This memo also provides my review of the effects determination made for the Western bumble bee in the 2013 report, based on the subsequent survey results.

Following 2013, the MHNH requested, and received, funding from the Interagency Special Status and Sensitive Species Program in 2015 and 2016 to prioritize survey for Western bumble bee locations across the Forest.

In 2015 and 2016, the MHNH completed additional Western bumble bee surveys, which are documented in two reports: 1) "Summary Report for Western Bumble Bee Surveys, Mt. Hood National Forest" by Alan Dyck in December 2015; and, 2) "Interim Summary Report Findings for the Western Bumble Bee (*Bombus occidentalis*)" by me in October 2016. Thirty-four sites were surveyed in 2015 and 23 sites were surveyed in 2016 across the MHNH. The Western bumble bee was found in 14 out of the 57 sites, including 11 new (previously unreported) locations. The 2016 summary report is attached to this memo, which briefly summarizes the survey information from 2013, 2015 and 2016.

As you know, in 2013, Alan Dyck (Forest Wildlife Biologist) and Beth Willhite (Entomologist) determined that the Timberline Ski Area Mountain Bike and Skills Park project ***May Impact Individuals, but is not likely to Cause a Trend to Federal Listing***, in particular if the project design criteria were followed. Dyck and Willhite made this determination based on several factors. For example, the width of the bike trails would be relatively small; the trail construction season would be altered to protect overwintering queens; surveys would be completed prior to construction; trails would be re-routed if necessary to avoid nest sites; the loss of foraging habitat would be small; rehabilitation areas would incorporate native plants that are good forage plants for pollinators; and although Western bumble bee populations have declined across its range,



there is still habitat and additional populations within and immediately adjacent to the Timberline Permit Area.

The further surveys in 2015 and 2016 have shown that there are additional populations across the MHNF, including populations remote from the Timberline Permit Area and at a broad range of elevations. Identification of these new locations provides additional evidence that Western bumble bee populations exist across the MHNF, and with a broader “footprint” than previously documented. Existent populations are not limited on the MHNF to high-elevation sites. I find that the 2015 and 2016 survey results do not change the conclusion documented in the 2013 report by Dyck and Willhite.

Please let me know if you have any further questions.