**Panther Creek Trail Bridge Proposed Action**

The North Umpqua Ranger District, Umpqua National Forest is proposing to replace the Panther Creek Trail Bridge (#1414-14.5) which was damaged during the winter 2011 with a new prefabricated weathering steel truss bridge. Logs which came downstream during a flood event sheared off the bottom of the glulam wood girders and broke or damaged the metal cross bracing of the existing bridge. Although the glulam wood girders can be repaired, it is costly and would not allow for future debris flow or even stream flows at the 25-year flood event. It was determined a new steel bridge would have a lower life-cycle cost and could be raised to allow for anticipated flood events and debris flows. The new bridge would address safety concerns that exist with the damaged bridge. Currently people on horseback cannot cross the bridge, and instead must ford the stream. Hikers and bikers can only cross the bridge one-at-a-time. It is anticipated that this project would occur in 2013.

The Panther Creek Trail Bridge is located near the western terminus of the Calf Segment of the North Umpqua Trail #1414. It is located approximately 500 feet to the southeast of Road 4714 in T.26S., R.1E., SW ¼ of S14, W.M. It is located south of the North Umpqua River across the river from Apple Creek Campground.

The new weathering steel bridge would be 90 foot long and 6 foot wide, the same as the existing wood bridge. Non-pressure treated cedar would be used for decking and running planks. The bridge would come in two pieces and would be connected together on-site. A temporary pier would be constructed to facilitate the construction. The pier would be made of timber cribbing approximately 10 feet wide and 15 feet long.

The old bridge, pier and abutments would be removed and the new bridge would be installed with a crane. A 30 foot by 45 foot (approximate) rock pad would be constructed adjacent to the bridge location so the crane can place and remove the bridges. After bridge placement is complete, the rock for the pad would be used for the new approaches to the bridge. There would be no excavation. The ground would be protected by placing geotextile fabric cloth down prior to the pit run placement. The pit run and geotextile fabric cloth would be removed following use. Seven trees (30”, 26”, 21”, 10”, and three 8”) and 2 snags (14” and 12”) would need to be cut and stumps flush cut to allow for the access road. Two of the root wads (30” and 21”) would need to be removed to allow construction of the approaches to the new bridge. The trail tread would be re-established following construction and the trees would be placed adjacent to the trail to keep vehicles from traveling down the trail. Staging areas for the project would be located at the two turnouts on the east side of Road 4714, either side of the trail.

Two new cast-in-place concrete abutments would be constructed to raise the new bridge 7 feet vertically to allow 50-year and 100-year flood events with 3 to 4 foot debris to pass underneath. Sediment fencing and weed-free straw bales would be places to prevent sediment from entering the stream. A spill kit and pollution control would be required to be on-site throughout the project work period. Refueling any equipment would be required to take place 150 feet away from the stream.
To protect wildlife and fisheries resources and to not impact recreationists on July 4th weekend, the work period for this project would be from the Monday after July 4th weekend (July 8 in 2013) to September 15. The North Umpqua Trail #1414 would need to be closed at this location during the construction period. Road 4714 would need to be closed for approximately 1 day while the new bridge is unloaded and moved. Additional short-term delays (approximately 30 minutes or less) would occur during the construction period to facilitate movement of equipment and materials. The public would be notified of these closures through media, Umpqua NF web site, and signage.