



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

# Homelessness in the Willamette National Forest: A Qualitative Research Project

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Long-term camping by homeless individuals in Western Oregon's Willamette National Forest results in persistent challenges regarding resource impacts, social impacts, and management issues for the U.S. Forest Service. The purpose of this research project is to describe the phenomenon of homelessness in the Willamette National Forest, and suggest management approaches for local Forest Service staff. The issues experienced in this forest are a reflection of homelessness in the state of Oregon. There is a larger population of homeless people in Oregon compared to the national average and, of that population, a larger percentage is unsheltered (EHAC, 2008).

We draw upon data from 27 qualitative interviews with stakeholders representing government agencies, social service agencies, law enforcement, homeless campers, and out-of-state comparators, including forest administrators in 3 states. Aside from out-of-state comparators, all interviews were conducted with stakeholders who interface with the homeless population in Lane County or have specific relevant expertise. Each category of interviews was chosen based on the perspectives the subjects can offer, such as demographics of homeless campers, potential management approaches, current practices, impacts, and potential collaborative partners.

Our interviews suggest that there are varied motivations for long-term camping by homeless people in the Willamette National Forest. The results support a previously developed typology of homeless campers that categorizes campers into three groups: voluntary nomads, economic refugees and separatists. It is unlikely that any strategy for mitigation will be effective for all three types of campers. While homeless campers can be found in the forest all year long, the majority of dwellers are likely seasonal. Many of the social service agency staff we interviewed emphasized a lack of services and places for homeless people to spend the night in Eugene and Lane County.

In addition to a lack of services, the inability for homeless campers to keep their families and pets with them at some facilities may lead them to choose to camp over other alternatives. Staff at various nonprofits who have extensive experience working with the population also say many homeless individuals have psychological challenges that prevent them from being in social settings. There are also limited options for those who seek shelter while battling with addiction to drugs and alcohol. Finally, sentiment that it is safer to illegally camp in the forest than to camp in the city appears to be widespread, among both agencies and homeless campers.

We found that the homeless camping populations and their motivations may vary geographically; the Cougar Recreation Area, a specific concern for the Willamette National Forest, is primarily attractive to homeless individuals who choose a nomadic lifestyle, which may be different than other rural areas. These voluntary nomads tend to be adult men, with some youths also present. They are attracted to the Cougar Recreation Area because of a unique combination of

amenities such as a local store and direct bus access from Eugene, and a long-standing reputation as a place to party and easily access drugs.

Our research identified several strategies that we suggest Forest Service staff consider in order to mitigate the impacts of homeless camping in the Willamette National Forest. We also draw on the experiences of local public land managers and out-of-state comparators to help identify approaches that already have shown success. Three main categories of approaches emerged: Education / Engagement, Camping Solutions, and Enforcement.

For education and engagement, we recommend more engagement with external stakeholders, for example an educational summit or workshop to share resources with social service agencies and engage in cross-training between agencies regarding strategies for interfacing with the homeless and reducing impacts on the land. We also recommend that Forest Service administrators consider ways to have a voice in state and local policy concerning this issue. Several key discussions are taking place at the state and local level and participation in the conversation is crucial to ensure that Forest Service needs and perspectives are represented. Furthermore, we recommend that Forest Service staff consider collaborative contacts with homeless campers, to minimize the perceived punitive nature of law enforcement contact. Social service agencies could facilitate this outreach.

Camping recommendations are intended to provide Forest Service staff with an option to work with economic refugees, to give them a chance to access services and eventually transition off forest land. We recommend that the Forest Service institute some version of an extended length of stay program. One model that could be used is the parking program currently managed by St. Vincent de Paul in the Eugene area, which allows specific pre-authorized campers, in their vehicles, to camp on public lands for a set period of time under very specific guidelines.

Enforcement recommendations are primarily targeted toward the Cougar Recreation Area. Due to the longstanding reputation and illegal activity in the area, we recommend continued vigilance by Forest Service staff, similar to the 2010 Clean Forest Project to prevent entrenchment of camps, and reduce the prevalence of illegal camping and its impacts in this popular gathering spot. We also recommend increased and more descriptive signage detailing regulations and advisories about low-impact camping. Increased efforts with signage could reduce prevalence and provide leverage for Forest Service staff when they need to address violations.

Local Forest Service administrators are at the forefront of an important public policy issue. As homelessness in the forest is seemingly on the rise and a national issue, any action Willamette National Forest administrators and staff take to build collaborative relationships and utilize creative solutions will set an example for other forest managers to follow.

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## INTRODUCTION

An increase in the perceived numbers of homeless campers outstaying the 14-day limit on camping in Oregon’s Willamette National Forest has led the U.S. Forest Service to consider its role in what is traditionally considered to be a social issue. Homelessness on publically owned rural land has not historically been an issue of extensive public attention; seemingly even less public policy has been directed to creating strategies that guide natural-resource managers and administrators in effectively navigating the intractable causes of homelessness and mitigating its effects on rural public lands.

The Willamette National Forest is one of 24 considered to be “urban national forests” in the U.S., connoting a direct interface with an urban area, in this case Eugene (Dwyer & Chavez, 2005). Long-term camping in the forest is linked to various social and resource impacts that threaten the environment, impede recreational use of the land, and potentially isolate vulnerable populations from the services they need. Mitigating these consequences of homelessness on rural public lands requires funding and staff time; this in part has prompted Forest Service administrators’ interest in seeking proactive solutions.

Research suggests that there is a large per capita population of homeless people in Lane County, the location of the Willamette National Forest headquarters. The 2011 One Night Homeless Count conducted by state agencies estimated 2,136 homeless individuals in the county (see figures 1-2). The same count estimated less than half that number in Marion County, the population of which is comparable to Lane County.

The proximity of the Willamette National Forest to the Eugene urban area and its accessibility via public transportation contribute to unintended uses of the forest, including long-term habitation on forest land. The effects of this use are especially pronounced, and may be concentrated, in the Cougar Recreation Area, approximately 60 miles east of Eugene. The situation warrants timely, creative management approaches to mitigate the impacts and challenges of homelessness in the Willamette National Forest.

This research project focuses on describing the phenomenon of homeless persons camping on Forest Service lands near Eugene by collecting qualitative data from varied stakeholders, including homeless campers themselves, social service and governmental agencies who interface with the homeless locally, as well as out-of-state comparators. This report describes the findings of this research and provides recommended strategies for minimizing the effects of homelessness in the forest.

## BACKGROUND

A larger percentage of Oregon's population is homeless than the national average. Approximately 0.45% of Oregon's population is homeless (roughly 17,000 people) compared to 0.3% nationwide. Of those who are homeless, a higher percentage in Oregon goes without shelter of any kind. In Oregon, 52% of the homeless population is not sheltered, compared to 44% nationwide (EHAC, 2008). Compiling data on homelessness is complex. "Some homeless people live on the margins of society, avoiding contact with social service organizations," (EHAC).

There is limited academic literature concerning homelessness on rural public lands; however, a few researchers have explored the topic during the past 20 years. Southard provides a general typology of homeless forest campers based on her ethnographic work. She camped for 18 months on rural public lands in Oregon, and interviewed over 300 homeless campers during a 6-year period. She identified three types of long-term homeless campers (Southard, 1998):

- Economic Refugees: Homeless campers who have lost employment and feel that camping provides the best option for shelter until they can transition back into stable housing.
- Separatists: Homeless campers who seek the isolation, autonomy, and privacy that a rural forest can provide; these campers typically reside in a moderately permanent location.
- Voluntary Nomads: Homeless campers who view the mobility and freedom of traveling and camping as a lifestyle choice.

These varied motivations for camping hold implications for public managers who seek to address homeless camping on rural public lands; our research suggests it is unlikely that any strategy for mitigation will be effective for all three types of homeless campers.

Southard found that homeless campers come from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Many are mentally ill, have no other options for housing, are unemployed for summer travel or by lifestyle choice, are runaways, were evicted from their homes, or are camping to save money (Southard, 1992). The diversity of the homeless population is also supported by a 1995 report addressing rural homelessness in San Bernardino County, Calif. Two studies are compared, one of which cites more male campers, and the other more female campers. The prevalence of female homeless campers in the second study is attributed to the presence of more families, commonly headed by females, in that survey population (Blumner, 1995). Findings show that single campers are more likely to be men, often middle-age.

Southard's research also points to specific reasons that people choose to camp on rural public lands rather than staying in shelters. Some rural homeless campers avoid public shelters because they consider them dangerous and dehumanizing. One study of homeless people who

avoid shelters found that 46% of shelter users had been victims of theft, and 25% had been physically attacked (Southard, 1992).

In sum, there is a scarcity of literature on this topic particularly that addresses effective management approaches. This study seeks to build the evidence base on this important issue.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The limited literature addressing homelessness on rural publically owned land and the unique aspects of homelessness in Lane County and the Willamette National Forest call for qualitative research methods for the purposes of this project. Qualitative methods are applicable to the exploratory nature of the project, which is aimed at describing the phenomenon of homelessness in the forest and identifying management approaches. The findings in this report are based on 27 semi-structured interviews conducted by a team of four graduate students in the Master of Public Administration program at the University of Oregon during February, March and April, 2012. This project focuses on the geographic region adjacent to the Eugene metropolitan area, primarily in the footprints of the McKenzie River Ranger District and Middle Fork Ranger District east of Eugene (see figure 3). Primary focus areas include the Cougar Recreation Area, which encompasses Cougar Hot Springs, and the Oakridge/Cottage Grove areas.

Interviews were divided into roughly 5 categories: social service agency staff; government agency staff; law enforcement personnel; out-of-state forest administrators; and individuals who have had the experience of camping in the Willamette National Forest when homeless. Of these interviews, 23 were conducted in person, and 4 via phone because of the geographic location of the subjects. Interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes each. Interviews were conducted in teams of two and were recorded.

Interviews with social service agency staff focused on the demographics of homeless campers, identifying potential approaches to address the impacts of camping, as well as identifying potential collaborative partners for the Forest Service. Government agency staff members were interviewed about their perceptions of the issue, comparative strategies, and potential partnerships. We looked to law enforcement personnel to provide insight regarding incidents and impacts in the Cougar Recreation Area and elsewhere in the forest. However, only one local law enforcement agency chose to provide information.

The goal of interviewing homeless campers was to explore the practices of transient individuals and their perceptions of the potential efficacy of management approaches. Social service agencies helped us identify pertinent interview subjects. Interviews were conducted with out-of-state Forest Service staff for the purpose of gathering information about standard procedures for addressing homelessness, and possible alternative solutions or best practices in

relation to the unique aspects of the issue as it pertains to the Willamette National Forest. See Appendix D for a full list of interview questions and protocol.

After each interview, a team member created extensive notes based on the categories of information sought from the interview subject. These notes were reviewed by each team member. Notes then were coded for use in identifying emergent themes and sub-themes. Supporting quotes were gathered during a second review of the audio recording.

## **RESULTS**

Below we describe characteristics of the homeless population that chooses to camp, their reasons for camping, and policy approaches for mitigating their impacts – both those suggested by stakeholders and those implemented in other areas of the United States.

Quantifying the number of homeless people seeking refuge in the forest is complex. One transient camper who frequently camps in the Cougar Recreation Area estimated that in that vicinity “there are 100 plus (campers) in the summer. In the winter I’d say that number goes down to maybe 10-20 people.” The apparent seasonality of long-term camping further complicates attempts to obtain an accurate count. The Eugene Mission, the primary shelter serving Lane County, sees its population decline in the warmer months, partly attributed to homeless camping. According to the state Ending Homelessness Advisory Council, “the very nature of homelessness hampers accurate counting. Just finding homeless people can be problematic.” This reality is further exacerbated by the Willamette National Forest’s vast lands, which encompass approximately 1.7 million acres.

However, regardless of the base number, interview subjects and stakeholder data suggest that homeless camping is a persistent and possibly growing challenge. The Eugene Mission has seen an increase in the number of people needing overnight shelter in all demographics (“Our guest-count is just exploding,” according to the nonprofit’s director), and one homeless camper stated that he observed a notable increase in homeless campers in 2012, many of whom he had never previously seen in the forest. One social service staff member said, “I think that the situation of people camping out is getting bigger and bigger and bigger.”

### **Demographics of Homeless Campers**

Interviews with social service agency staff typically provided a description of the homeless campers that reflected the population served by that agency – those working with youths commented on the presence of youths in the Willamette National Forest, while those working with families spoke about the motivations of families. Several interview subjects stated that they did not know about other populations that camped on public land, beyond the population they serve, and therefore felt uncomfortable providing best guesses.

Interviewees suggested that the demographics of the homeless camping population change with the season. One homeless camper stated that “you have a lot of people who go up there in the short term, for maybe a couple of months in the summer. You have a very small group of people who actually live out there (full-time) because it’s a harsh setting in winter.” The Eugene Mission director himself stated that his nonprofit sees a steep decline in overnight stays starting in the spring months, with the arrival of warmer weather. He said some homeless male campers refer specifically to “going camping” in the summer.

One demographic – men between the ages of 25 and 40 – was consistently cited as being present in relatively high numbers in the forest at all times of the year, although perhaps in smaller numbers during the winter months. One staff member stated, “I know that there are a lot of adults camping out.” Other staff members suggested that 85-90% of homeless campers are middle-aged men.

Youths between the ages of 16 and 25 also are known to seek refuge in the Willamette National Forest. One social worker stated that he commonly provides services for youths who choose to be homeless as an alternative to staying in an abusive or neglectful home, or who have been abandoned by parents facing drug or alcohol addiction. These youths commonly are dealing with mental disorders and lack social skills. The majority of youths who camp illegally are transient and are not permanently located in the forest. Youths who choose to camp in the Cougar Recreation Area appear to fall into one of two categories: youths who live in Eugene and those who are merely traveling through the area. The number of youths staying in the forest seems to fluctuate with the seasons, perhaps more than any other demographic. “They tend to be a little more transient, they tend to be a little more cliquey, they form groups and families for safety and for resources, whereas other folks are pretty much loners,” one social service staff member said.

Families with children also use the Willamette National Forest for refuge. Two social service staff members at separate agencies stated that they knew of a number of families who currently use their cars for shelter in the Oakridge area. A Lane County staff member also speaking about the Oakridge area said she personally comes across approximately six homeless camps in the forest every year, including families and couples. “We have some long-term relationships with families here (at the agency) that camp most of the year ... towards the Bohemia mining district, you get a lot of people who are holed up there, four or five families, that are there long-term either in a bus, a trailer or camping,” said another social agency staff member.

Motivations for homeless camping are as diverse as the population itself. In some cases, demographics may closely align with one of the following categories of motivation for homeless camping. For example, our interviews suggested that many, but not all, homeless families who camp fall into the ‘economic refugee’ category, while many youths fall into the ‘voluntary nomad’ category.

## **Economic Refugees**

Economic refugees are homeless campers who choose camping as an alternative to staying in a shelter during a transition period. These campers typically have been confronted with an economic hardship that resulted in the loss of shelter. One social agency staff member stated, “I think it’s mostly because they’ve lost housing or because there’s absolutely no housing, so camping becomes the only option. There’s truly a lack of options for getting into housing – rentals are scarce (in this area), and affordable rentals are even more scarce.” These campers see themselves as only temporarily homeless and usually are actively seeking to transition from camping into a home.

Social service agencies working with families commonly expressed that families who camp in the forest are seeking services that would assist them in transitioning. “There are very few people that truly want to be in that situation (camping), when it’s very very cold and there’s no resources and there’s no way to keep warm. They really don’t want for their kids to live so far out that they can’t access school. For the most part, I think that if there was a better plan to access resources, most families would be open to that,” one social services agency staff member said. Several social agency and government staff members emphasized that while school districts are required to provide outreach to homeless students, locating and maintaining communication with them can be challenging.

## **Separatists**

Separatists are homeless campers who choose to camp because of the privacy and isolation of the forest environment. They may experience mental illnesses that make crowded areas and social situations especially undesirable. They may also be distrustful of agencies and staff or the US government as a whole. These campers typically are established in remote semi-permanent campsites and may pay special attention to creating sites that incorporate materials that allow their camps to blend into the landscape. It is not uncommon for a separatist to live with one or two other separatists. One government employee said “I’ve had a lot (of campers) tell me that they just want to be left alone.” Another stated “The people that could really use some assistance have absolutely no interest whatsoever in having to jump through the hoops that any resource available to them would put up. I mean, just filling out paperwork for ... some folks is a wall they don’t care to climb.”

## **Voluntary Nomads**

Voluntary nomads are homeless campers who move between camping sites as a part of a transient lifestyle that involves traveling. They are not seeking to transition from long-term camping into a homed environment. One social service staff member who has over 25 years of experience working with the homeless population said, “50% of people who choose to camp will more than likely choose to stay homeless the duration of their lives.”

## **Reasons for Homeless Camping**

### **Mental illness**

One recurring theme from the interviews is the relationship between mental illness and homeless camping on rural public lands. The separation from crowds that camping facilitates may be especially attractive to those who do not possess the social skills necessary to navigate crowded shelters or who do not have the coping skills to feel comfortable in stressful situations. One social service staff member said, “The dirty little secret about homelessness is that 80% of the people we see here are mentally ill.” Another staff member commented that the chronically homeless she works with all suffer from serious mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and bi-polar disorder, and that these illnesses are rarely being treated.

Some staff members also stated that the social services available to homeless people in Lane County are limited. “There are no mental health services where people can go ... the resources are so small for mental illness here that there’s no place for someone who’s mentally ill and can’t hold a job and can’t function mentally to just get their life together because of the extreme psychosis they’re in, or schizophrenia, which we see a lot of here. So they become homeless.”

One demographic of homeless campers consistently identified was military veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: “Of those who are extremely mentally ill, most have post-traumatic stress syndrome if they’re out in the woods,” one social services staff member said.

### **To be independent**

Forest dwelling allows for independence and self-reliance. One social service agency director stated, “It’s a pride issue as well. They feel like if they walk through the door of the Mission that they’ve given up, that they’ve lost.” A government staff member said that on some level, the motivations that lead homeless campers to choose the forest are the same that prompt anyone to visit the forest: the peaceful tranquility of nature. A homeless camper said the allure of the forest is that “it’s natural, away from concrete, (and) calm.”

### **No camping in city limits**

The city of Eugene’s Municipal Code prohibits overnight camping within city limits (City Code 4.816). The Eugene Mission, which provides overnight shelter on a night-to-night basis, is filled to capacity most nights, according to its executive director; while the Eugene Mission regularly provides overnight shelter for 400 people, the Lane County one-night homeless count in 2011 identified 2,136 individuals. The Mission is the only shelter of its kind serving Eugene/Springfield and the surrounding communities.

Interviews suggested several reasons for illegal long-term camping that are specific to Lane County and the Willamette National Forest.

## Limited services

Interviews suggest gaps in services in Lane County for homeless people in need of overnight shelter – especially those requiring specific accommodations. One law enforcement officer stated that the people encountered camping illegally “complain that there are not enough local shelters for everyone and almost all say they are waiting for a ‘St. Vincent de Paul’ spot to open and they say they’ve been on the waiting list for so long.”

There also is a lack of places that allow intoxicated people to stay overnight, commonly referred to as “wet beds,” which may contribute to the incidences of people camping rather than seeking overnight indoor shelter. One exception to this policy, the Egan Warming Center, is only available on nights when the temperature drops below 30 degrees. With no agency that provides shelter for those under the influence of alcohol or drugs, homeless people fighting with addiction face limited options. More than one government agency staff member stated that drug paraphernalia has been found during clean-up efforts at long-term homeless campsites on rural public lands.

A lack of non-religion-affiliated services may also contribute to the decision to camp illegally. Our findings suggest that some people prefer to avoid the religious aspects of the routine at the Eugene Mission, which includes a church service and religious materials. This was commonly perceived to be a reason that some people choose to live on federal rural land, according to government and social service staff, as well as homeless campers. However, a staff member at the Eugene Mission addressed this by stating that, “If you go out in the streets and talk to the men and women who don’t stay at the Mission, it’s not because we don’t have beds and it’s not because we preach the gospel message, which is done in such a calm and peaceful and loving way ... if you hate it, most people sleep through it.”

Shelters do not allow for members of the opposite sex to sleep in the same area, creating barriers for opposite-sex couples who would choose not to be separated. The restriction also creates a barrier for families that include male children over the age of 11. Males between the ages of 11 and 18 are not allowed to stay at the Eugene Mission; a staff member there will help the family to find alternate housing in a separate location. According to an interview with a retired ranger who established a tent city in Cottage Grove / Umpqua National Forest in the 1990s, the population there included several families that lived in the camp and were multigenerational, and would not have been able to stay together in a shelter. Furthermore, shelters in Eugene do not typically provide accommodation for pets – when pets are provided accommodation, it is at a site separate from their owners. “These factors are important to people, and they would rather camp illegally than be separated from their loved ones or pets,” the retired ranger said.

## **Safety issues in Eugene**

Several homeless campers and social service agency staff members shared their perception that camping on rural public lands is perceived to be a safer alternative than staying in overnight shelters or being in town during the day. One social service agency employee told of a situation in which one client refused a free ride to the Mission due to safety concerns. The client stated that she would be vulnerable to assault at the Eugene Mission. The agency chose to allow her to stay overnight in a private hotel room. The Eugene Mission also reports that a shortage of jail beds has resulted in parolees' use of the Mission as alternative supervised housing, potentially increasing the perception of an unsafe environment. One agency staff member stated that "youth won't stay at the Mission because they feel preyed upon."

## **WHY THE COUGAR RECREATION AREA?**

The Cougar Recreation Area is a uniquely attractive location for camping, including illegal long-term stays. The presence in Lane County of Lane Transit District's (LTD) Route 91, a bus providing daily access to the McKenzie River Ranger Station 53 miles east of its origination in downtown Eugene, along Highway 126, allows for relatively inexpensive transportation from an urban area through the western section of the Willamette National Forest, including the Cougar Recreation Area. Interview participants have suggested that the use of Route 91 to access this area is common and that the bus stops used by riders accessing camp sites are readily identifiable. All three of the homeless youths interviewed for this project stated that they regularly used the bus to access the Cougar Recreation Area for camping purposes.

On weekdays, approximately 80 people use the route; while weekends see that number reduced to approximately 28 riders per day (see figures 4-5). A small general store in the area sells food and camping supplies. Ridership data for this route is somewhat limited, but suggests that a higher portion of male riders use Route 91 than use LTD's routes overall.

Those who choose to illegally camp in the Cougar Recreation Area may be benefitting from word-of-mouth recommendations from other homeless campers. We found no evidence that any social agency staff suggest the Cougar Recreation Area as a desirable place to camp, although we did find evidence of this occurring for other areas of the forest. Two social service agency staff members stated that while their agency does provide camping provisions, including sleeping bags and bus passes, clients are not provided with tents.

The Cougar Recreation Area has been a popular recreation area for all types of users since the 1960s – its reputation as an enjoyable place to be, offering a measure of isolation and privacy, results in a high familiarity with the area amongst traveling homeless people and those seeking services in the City of Eugene. Social service agency staff working with youths stated that the area

has a reputation as a ‘party spot’ where youths can obtain drugs and meet fellow travelers for a short-term stay. An LTD bus driver confirmed that he witnessed a pattern of youths looking to camp using Route 91 to access the area.

Motivation for homeless camping in the Cougar Recreation Area appears to be based on lifestyle choices and enjoyment – those who camp here may be more likely to be voluntary nomads than economic refugees or separatists, while interviews suggest that homeless campers in the Oakridge and Cottage Grove areas are more often economic refugees. The type of person choosing to illegally camp here holds implications for the choice of strategies to mitigate impacts in the Cougar Recreation Area versus other areas within the Willamette National Forest, especially near rural towns with very few services.

## **IMPACTS**

Our research identified diverse social and resource impacts of long-term camping in the forest. Many of these impacts are environmental, including: contamination of fresh water due to human waste and chemicals from cleaning products; degradation of the riparian area, especially near the McKenzie River; grey-water disposal affecting soil quality; fire danger; litter; and discarded hazardous materials, such as drug paraphernalia. Furthermore, contaminants pose a threat to endangered species, including the Chinook Salmon found in the McKenzie River. Put simply by one government official, “Garbage is a very big issue.” One transient youth who regularly camps in the Cougar Recreation Area stated, “I was told to bring my own water” by another homeless camper, referring to warnings about human waste in the water in that area.

Mitigating these concerns requires funding and staff time spent monitoring and removing camps and discarded materials. In the Cougar Recreation Area alone, this task requires an estimated average of 12-18 hours per week of Forest Service personnel staff time. The 2010 Clean Forest Project, an end-of-season clean-up project conducted by the Willamette National Forest in partnership with a private organization, employed approximately five workers to clear abandoned camps from the Cougar Recreation Area. The project located and removed 15 campsites, collecting several thousand pounds of detritus. This effort represents a significant investment of staff time and funding and illustrates the scope of the existing challenges.

Concerns about homeless camp sites becoming ‘entrenched’ demand that Forest Service staff maintain vigilance, even when camps are not readily apparent. While the 14-day limit on camping provides leverage for Forest Service staff members to evict long-term campers throughout the forest, in the Cougar Recreation Area camping is prohibited entirely, in part because of the impacts of homeless camping there.

Some recreational users, such as hikers and boaters, have expressed concern about the potential safety and resource impacts linked to the presence of long-term unauthorized campers.

“Folks aren’t real comfortable (in the Cougar Recreation) area,” said one public land manager. Elsewhere in Lane County, confrontations between recreational users and long-term homeless campers have been reported on lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

The resource impacts reported in Willamette National Forest are not unique. Similar issues arise in numerous case studies of homelessness on rural public lands elsewhere in the country. A 1995 academic study in the San Bernardino, Calif. area found that homeless campers on public forest land “present a source of violations such as ... unhealthy sanitary conditions, drug and alcohol problems, (and) littering the area by building temporary shelters” (Blumner, p. 157). A 1993 Seattle Times article quotes a sheriff’s deputy patrolling forest land in Tillamook County, Ore.: “When you talk about the problem of having the homeless in the forest, what you are mainly talking about is a sanitation problem” (Associated Press).

Another concern of long-term camping involves the vulnerable populations who may be engaging in this practice. Our research suggests that taking up residence in a rural and isolated area prevents some members of the population from accessing services, receiving outreach, or living in a safe and secure environment. Homelessness and exposure to the elements also can be linked to death. A Eugene Parks and Recreation manager shared his experience of coming across a deceased body on public land within the Eugene city limits. The Egan Warming Center, a temporary shelter activated when temperatures are 30 degrees or below, is named for a homeless man who died of exposure to the elements in 2008 ([eganwarmingcenter.com](http://eganwarmingcenter.com)).

### **Scope of issue in out-of-state forests**

State officials in three comparator states – Colorado, Washington, and Florida – all described experience with homelessness on the public lands they manage, although with varying levels of impact. Our findings suggest that the issue is most pervasive in forests with an urban interface. A law enforcement officer from the Roosevelt National Forest in Colorado said: “(if) you look on a map and see some type of major infrastructure, be it a highway such as an interstate highway which is surrounded by national forest and there are some communities around there, you could just put pins in a map and systematically contact those areas and I’m sure you would get tales.”

A manager in the Olympic and Mount Baker-Snoqualmie (MBS) Forests in Washington said there have been no reported incidents of illegal residences within the Olympic National Forest in the past several years, while there have been approximately 17 in MBS. She speculated that the difference is due to ease of access; while both forests are fairly close to the Seattle area, accessing the Olympic National Forest requires a ferry ride or a long drive.

The finding that long-term homeless camping occurs consistently in forests that are located near highly populated areas is not surprising. This finding suggests that the problem will continue to

grow with urban expansion and increased interfacing between urban areas and forest lands. In 1995, 14 U.S. forests were designated as urban national forests. Since then, at least 10 other forests are also considered amongst that group, including the Willamette National Forest (Dwyer & Chavez, 2005).

The seasonal difference in the number of homeless campers referenced earlier by a current camper and social service managers in Oregon also seems to be a pattern in other states. According to a Colorado official, the number of homeless campers can double or more in the warmer months in the Roosevelt National Forest. Seasonal temperatures may also have an effect on the type of homeless campers in some regions. The manager categorized the type of campers in his forest as “hard core” homeless campers, who stay in the colder months, and “seasonal” homeless campers who may stay in the summer months only. In colder states such as Colorado, the “hard core” homeless campers may be more likely to build structures on forest land in order to survive the elements. He relayed one instance where the homeless individual had terraced the earth to better support his camp and constructed a water catch system – both of which caused damage to the land.

## **MANAGEMENT APPROACHES AND SUGGESTIONS**

Our research identified several strategies that we suggest Forest Service staff consider in order to mitigate the impacts of homeless camping in the Willamette National Forest. We also draw on the experiences of local public land managers and out-of-state comparators to help identify approaches that already have shown success. We present three main categories of approaches: Education / Engagement, Camping Solutions, and Enforcement.

### **Education and Engagement**

**Engage external stakeholders:** We recommend that Forest Service staff foster opportunities to engage external stakeholders about their unique challenges and experiences with the issue of homelessness. Forest Service managers could provide an informational presentation or host a summit to involve social service staff and encourage resource-sharing. According to one Lane County staff member who has worked extensively with human services policy and homeless outreach, more “linkage” is needed between social service agencies and Forest Service staff.

The Ocala National Forest provides a template that local Forest Service staff could follow in creating a workshop to engage stakeholders. In 2006, Ocala staff organized a four-day workshop to address issues plaguing their forest, including a large number of homeless residents. According to a Florida National Forests spokesperson, “we had boy scout troops who wouldn’t go to the forest.” Over the four days, various Forest Service staff members gave presentations to facilitate better understanding of the issues from multiple viewpoints. Stakeholder interviews were conducted by

staff who participated in the workshop. The information was used to inform creative solutions and next steps.

Strategies from the workshops, including a change in the length of stay regulations and strong collaborative relationships with social service agencies, were implemented successfully and eventually contributed to the reduction in the forest's homeless resident population from approximately 600 to 100. One participant observed that after participating in the workshop, "Ocala National Forest personnel better understand that simply removing squatters from the forest only shifts the problem to other jurisdictions. Without opportunities to improve their lives, these individuals simply return to the Ocala National Forest" (Stein, Lint, & Warren, 2010).

The workshop model used in the Ocala National Forest provided several valuable lessons. It highlighted how well a mechanism like the four-day workshop can break down bureaucratic barriers and develop openings for creative solutions. Also, "reaching out to new and existing stakeholders helps managers think outside their comfort zone to identify new and innovative ways to solve difficult problems" (Stein, Lint, & Warren, 2010). In order to be able to successfully implement any of the new strategies, there needs to be buy-in. "Upper level administrators must be open to unique and sometimes uncomfortable solutions (e.g. working with media)" (Stein, Lint, & Warren).

While the coordinators concede that the process itself was not truly collaborative because stakeholders were interviewed but not actually included in the process fully, it did set the stage for collaborative efforts that were instrumental in making improvements in the forest. The Ocala Public Relations officer we interviewed was clear that Ocala forest staff members wanted to stay in their roles as land managers as opposed to social services roles. "We don't have the staff or the expertise to start taking on the social issues of the world, so we had to rely on the people who are experts to do it. That's what they're there for and our experience is that they're very interested and willing to help." According to the staff member, Forest Service staff no longer have daily contact with social service agencies, but "the relationship is there if we need it."

Increased coordination between Forest Service staff and social service agencies can facilitate resource-sharing, as well. For example, more social service agencies could help mitigate the impacts of homeless camping in the Willamette National Forest by providing information about safe camping and camping regulations to their clients.

**Have a voice in state and local policy:** Entities such as the Eugene Mayor's Taskforce on Homelessness, the state Ending Homeless Advisory Council, the Lane County Board of Commissioners Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness, the state One Night Homeless Count, and others can provide important opportunities for Forest Service staff to leverage collaborative resources with policymakers at the state and local level.

The Mayor’s Taskforce, created in response to the Occupy Eugene encampment in 2011, provides a particularly timely example of an opportunity for the Forest Service to have its voice heard amidst current public discourse on homelessness in Lane County. Issues pertinent to public land managers include potential changes to laws and ordinances that criminalize homelessness, as well as proposals for a public “space to be” within city limits. Improved services for the homeless in urban areas could potentially reduce the numbers of homeless seeking rural dwelling options.

Several of the agencies we interviewed mentioned the difficulty of understanding the full scope of homelessness in a particular county or community. However, several also pointed to the information gained from the One Night Homeless Count as some of the most useful to help Forest Service efforts to gauge the scope of the issue (see figures 1-2). The One Night Homeless Count is an annual collaborative effort between government agencies, social service providers, and others to obtain accurate data regarding the number of homeless individuals in Lane County. Similar counts are conducted in other jurisdictions throughout the state. Homeless residents in shelters, on the streets, and elsewhere are counted during a single night each January. According to a Lane County staff member, “The count helps to inform policy and funding decisions.”

A Lane County staff member said that the Forest Service has been invited to participate in the count, but has failed to return calls for the past couple of years. In several interviews for this project, the subjects expressed surprise at receiving a call because they were under the impression that the Forest Service was only interested in moving people on and not examining the causes and possible strategies for addressing homelessness. We discovered in our own research that the confusion could stem from differing messages emanating from the separate branches within the Forest Service agency. When people or agencies interact with the Forest Service, they see it as one organization and do not understand the intricacies of the organizational structure. Additionally, perceived efforts on the part of Forest Service staff to control their message or resources by refusing participation in efforts to quantify, explore, or mitigate the issue could be misconstrued without appropriate follow-up and explanation.

**Enhance training for Forest Service staff:** Multiple social service and government agencies suggested that Forest Service staff should be trained regarding how to interface with homeless individuals, including making referrals to social service resources, and making non-punitive contacts. Referrals could include handing out a list of social service resources – a model currently practiced by departments within the City of Eugene and Lane County government – when camps are removed and homeless campers are displaced (see figure 6, Blue Slip Sample).

**Collaborative contact with homeless campers:** Homeless campers and social service staff mentioned a lack of trust in authority figures by homeless individuals (especially homeless youths). Outreach by social service agency staff to campers in conjunction with contacts already made by Forest Service law enforcement officers could help mitigate the perceived punitive nature of law

enforcement contact. Suggesting collaborative contact was a common theme in our interviews. When asked if there would be any barrier to a Forest Service law enforcement officer referring potential clients to a service, one social agency staff member said the barrier could be the law-enforcement presence itself (especially with youths). “No one wants to be contacted by the police and then you’re so escalated; when you’re contacted by the police you don’t remember a thing they told you,” she said.

One of the homeless campers we interviewed confirmed the fear of interacting with law enforcement. He recalled a time he saw a law enforcement officer coming his way and he just ran and left his belongings behind and never retrieved them. While fear of law enforcement may be a problem, according to one social service agency staff member, “having outreach would be smarter” than relying only on enforcement. One social service provider we interviewed already is engaging in outreach with homeless campers by addressing fire safety, how to avoid detection, safety for unaccompanied people, and proper disposal of litter. Some interview subjects also suggested fostering a sense of shared ownership of the forest with homeless campers, such as by hosting a tree-planting. This type of engagement could be facilitated by social service contacts.

Another social service provider, who was excited about the idea of social service outreach to homeless campers in the forest, mentioned that she would feel more comfortable if a Forest Service staff member accompanied her. She suggested law enforcement officers could build rapport by having a “friendly bag with them that has maybe some snacks (and) information about programs and social services.” One approach could be that initial contacts are made by law enforcement officers, and then referred to a social service agency for follow up. The logistics of collaborative partnerships between law enforcement and social services depends on many factors, including the availability of staff resources to manage the partnerships. According to one Forest Service staff member, even with current approaches, “it’s hard to enforce (homeless camping regulations) with a light staff” and limited budget.

Interestingly, while several government and social service agency staff members we interviewed recommended some form of collaboration, there’s a perception on both sides that the other may not be open to working together. For example, one law enforcement officer said it’s something he’s “considered in the past ... getting some of the resources in the community ... to come out into the woods with me and contact some of these folk and just bring it to them so to speak. But again, there’s a fair amount of resistance ... to anything like that.” Increased engagement between Forest Service staff and external stakeholders can help mitigate this disconnect.

**Education and Engagement Recommendations:** In order to more effectively work with social service agencies in Lane County to address the issue of homeless camping, we recommend that administrators in the Willamette National Forest consider a workshop or summit to facilitate collaboration between public land managers, social service agencies, and others who interface with the homeless.

We also recommend that Forest Service staff consider participating in the One Night Homeless Count and attending meetings of some of the entities mentioned above, or sharing information with stakeholders representing those groups through engagement strategies previously described, such as collaborative workshops or an informational summit. Participation in such endeavors could build trust and pave the way for future partnerships.

Furthermore, we recommend that Forest Service staff members who have direct contact with homeless populations receive specific training regarding interactions with homeless campers. An example of an agency that could provide training is the Lane County Human Services Commission. Training for recreation staff, forest protection officers, law enforcement, and others could facilitate the engagement process with the homeless campers they encounter, as well as relations between land managers and social service agencies. Training of this sort could assist Forest Service staff in their efforts to build rapport with homeless campers in order to encourage honest conversations about an individual's personal circumstances and possible need for services, so appropriate referrals can be made. These efforts could be further enforced by something as simple as the "goody bag" mentioned earlier.

Overall, we believe strategies for education and engagement will be effective in building bridges between Forest Service staff and other stakeholders addressing this issue locally, which is a starting point for future collaborations. Furthermore, we believe these strategies will be effective in addressing two typologies of homeless campers: economic refugees, who are actively seeking integration with social services, and voluntary nomads, who our data suggest are those who most commonly have contact with law enforcement in the Cougar Recreation Area.

## **Camping Solutions**

**Parking program:** The homeless parking program managed by St. Vincent de Paul was touted by many of those interviewed as a highly successful program. This is a model that the Forest Service may want to consider. It has proven to be a strong partnership between St. Vincent de Paul, the City of Eugene and local businesses. Recently, the City of Eugene approved funding for an expansion of the program. Additionally, Springfield City Council gave approval to expand the program and one of the social service agencies interviewed mentioned the desire for such a program in the Cottage Grove area.

Participants are screened and sign an agreement (see figures 7-8) to abide by the rules of program before participating. Each participant is designated a parking spot and a maximum time period for using the space. St. Vincent de Paul provides trash service and a portable toilet. Maintaining a site costs approximately \$85 per month (Register Guard, 2012). Each site can have one to three spaces designated for homeless parking, and site participants are spread out in this way to avoid potential conflicts that can be a result of a high concentration of homeless campers in one location. In order to be eligible, the participant must have a vehicle. The program has provided

a safe and legal place to stay for many people who are homeless while they get back on their feet. The safety and stability of having a place to stay for at least 90 days has given many participants the opportunity to acquire jobs or access services to assist them in getting off the streets.

The success of the program most likely emanates from the careful screening of participants and zero tolerance approach to enforcing the rules. Participants are required to utilize the St. Vincent de Paul day center regularly prior to placement in the program in order to allow staff to get a feel for their character and tendencies. Drugs and alcohol are not allowed while using the parking program and strict rules are set regarding trash and grey water disposal. “We explain the rules very expressly to (campers). We monitor every day ... if (a camper) violates the rules that we have specified, we can take (the camper) out. You’d be surprised how they’ll follow the rules if they know they’re going to get kicked out,” said a St. Vincent de Paul director.

Additionally, the program works because it’s managed by a social service agency with expertise in homeless needs and issues. The director points out that “they need somebody that knows the homeless to manage it. We help law enforcement so they don’t have to get involved.” This highly structured, agency-managed setup contributes greatly to the program’s success. According to a manager of the parking program, St. Vincent de Paul currently administers 23 parking spaces and typically has a wait list of 80-100 people for the program.

**Tent cities:** The idea of tent cities, while controversial, is worthy of some focus from the Forest Service, even if only to understand current public discourse and pertinent history. Tent cities are the subject of debate in current events such as Occupy Eugene, and the topic was raised in several interviews in this project, as well.

One of the most pertinent examples of a tent city is Project Refuge (1992) which was located on an abandoned rock quarry in the Umpqua National Forest, 25 miles outside of Cottage Grove. The project was envisioned by Assistant Forest Ranger Kent Smith, after the Forest received bad press for evicting a few homeless families out of one of their campgrounds. “I knew what it was like to sleep under a bridge and have your head kicked in” said Smith, who was homeless himself before coming to work for the Forest Service. He applied and received a grant from the Forest Service for the endeavor.

According to Smith, the project was only approved by the then-forest-supervisor on the conditions that a social service agency worked alongside the Forest Service to handle the human service component of the project – the Forest Service would only be providing the land – and there were other forests or governmental agencies undertaking similar efforts. According to Smith, the Umpqua “didn’t want to be alone on this.” With the help of County Commissioner Jerry Rust, Smith was able to get the Willamette National Forest and Lane County to agree to host camps in their areas as well. Smith joined forces with a social service agency, Community Sharing of Cottage

Grove, to handle all the human service needs, screening based on family economic conditions, and placement.

According to Smith, the camp was a success. There were about five families (approximately 30 people) in the camp – many of them multi-generational members who would have been split up in a shelter. He concedes that it was very controversial, both with the residents of nearby Cottage Grove and his fellow Forest Service staff. Critics predicted there would be increased incidence of crime and drugs with such a concentration of homeless people staying near town. “We didn’t see a crime wave”, he said, “but we did see some very heart-warming stories.” They kept the camp clean and were good at self-policing. In all the time the camp was open, he only had to call a Forest Service LEO one time and that was to remove a Portland TV crew who barged into the camp and wouldn’t leave. Comparatively, Smith noted he routinely called law enforcement officers to recreational sites used by non-homeless visitors once or twice a week due to rowdy partying or some similar disturbance.

Some of the camp residents were able to carpool into town and get jobs. Once they had jobs, they were eventually able to stabilize enough to move out of the camp into regular housing and were replaced by other families. The intent was to find them other options, not to keep them there as a permanent solution. The school bus started coming to the camp so the kids could go to school and many of the nearby neighbors started to donate food (to supplement the food boxes provided by Community Sharing). “It was rough, but it was up a notch ... better than hiding” recalled Smith.

While the camp may have been successful, the controversy and the intense attention from national press was eventually the downfall of the project. Eventually, the executive director of Community Sharing, Daniel Lindstrom, was forced out and after he was gone, the social service agency pulled out of the project. Smith speculated that the unpopularity of the camp with Cottage Grove residents and politicians put Community Sharing into a bad position which led to Lindstrom’s exit. He looked for another social service agency to partner with, but couldn’t find one. With the conditions of the Forest Supervisor no longer being met, the project ended. Another social service agency staff member familiar with the project said she thinks the distance of the camp from urban amenities contributed to its lack of success in the end.

The intense pressure of the press and controversial nature of the project ended plans for the other two site options in the Willamette National Forest and Lane County. Lane County had gone as far as to approve funding for a pilot site, but it never materialized. Willamette National Forest had chosen two campgrounds as possible sites (Williams, 1992), but had no other progress. “A project like this really needs a strong advocate to work”, speculated Smith, and neither the Willamette National Forest nor Lane County had one.

Today, tent cities exist up and down the West Coast, including Dignity Village in Portland, which was founded in 2000 and is recognized by the City of Portland as a legal encampment. It is important to note that legal factors have played a role in the formation and continuation of several tent cities. The most common legal matter to play a role is the use of religious lands. The Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) is cited in many of these cases and judges ruled in favor of the churches requiring the city to work with the religious organizations to sanction these tent cities.

One judge noted that “tent encampments are used safely by the military and disaster-relief organizations when there is a need for shelter” (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2010). In a couple of cases, legal action was brought against the city for evicting homeless people from their encampments and “unlawfully” confiscating their possessions. In cases in California and Seattle, the court awarded large cash sums to the affected homeless people causing the city to be unwilling to risk further legal action – therefore, large, ungoverned tent cities formed, according to a report on Northwest tent cities (National Coalition for the Homeless).

**Camping Recommendations:** Economic refugees may be the category of homeless campers that the Forest Service has the greatest opportunity to help transition to a better living situation off of forest service lands. According to the director of a social service agency, when people are forced to move around and hide, it is very difficult for them to access services if they want to. It is for this reason we recommend some sort of temporary extended camping option for homeless individuals or families who are working to access services to find more permanent housing.

Partnering with St. Vincent de Paul on a modified version of their parking program could be the best option for the Willamette National Forest. It avoids the issues of a “tent city” because of the dispersed set up and offsets the management of the program to an agency with more expertise in homeless issues. By allowing selected individuals or families an extended stay in a known location, their behavior and impacts can be monitored and social service agencies can work with them to hopefully move them off of Forest Service lands onto more permanent housing. This could break the cycle of just moving people from one area of the forest to another – never solving the issue. As one social service staff member pointed out “we’re not really doing anything except moving them along, so then we’re going to have not only the trash cleanup from that area but then they’re going to go somewhere else, perhaps further back and someone is going to have clean that up too.”

The Forest Service may be able to negotiate with St. Vincent de Paul on such details as location, acceptable length of stay, who is eligible, conditions for participation and other details to make the program more amenable to the Forest Service’s needs. If an agreement can be reached, the two agencies may want to combine efforts to locate grant money to fund the program.

If an official, advertised parking program is not something the Forest Service can work with, we would recommend at least establishing internal guidelines for extending the length of stay for homeless campers as deemed necessary if a homeless forest resident is working on accessing services. This would be most helpful in rural areas where there are no shelters and very few services and a larger concentration of economic refugees may be found.

## **Enforcement**

**Increased enforcement:** There is no one-size-fits-all answer to addressing homelessness on forest land. Information gathered from some stakeholders indicates that in some high-traffic or high-crime areas, increased enforcement may be one of the most appropriate options.

Recent success in the Cougar Recreation Area may be one example of this. There is some evidence that existing enforcement by Forest Service law enforcement officers, recreation managers and forest protection officers is engendering some success. For example, in 2011, it was not necessary to launch a repeat of the 2010 Clean Forest Project end-of-season sweep, according to Forest Service staff. Some possible explanations for this include that the McKenzie River Ranger District acquired a full-time law enforcement officer in 2011 (in 2010 there was no full-time law-enforcement officer dedicated to the district); and that recreation staffers and Forest Service law enforcement “worked closely to locate, report, and respond to camps / campers,” according to a Forest Service recreation manager involved in the incidents. Staff also worked to educate and enforce compliance with the no-camping order within ¼ of a mile of the Road 19 junction of Highway 126, in the Cougar Recreation Area, by posting “No Camping” signs at primary locations.

Staff also cited improved internal communication with other departments to report abandoned camps. Furthermore, “removal of evidence of camping tends to reduce continued use,” according to Forest Service staff, and all abandoned materials, camps, and fire rings in the area were removed in the 2010 Clean Forest Project sweep.

In addressing unauthorized camping in Willamette National Forest, Forest Service staff members handle incidents on a “case by case basis,” according to one recreation manager. This can include verbal warnings for those who stay beyond the 14-day limit, resource tickets for littering, or camp removal when an individual or group does not respond to verbal warnings. Recreation managers and the forest protection officers they work with refer more serious incidents to the law enforcement officer on staff. Oregon State Police and the Lane County Sherriff’s Office also contract with the Forest Service to provide enforcement, particularly in the Cougar Recreation Area.

**Signage:** Accurate and informative signage can aid Forest Service staff in their enforcement duties by clarifying regulations or advising campers about safe, low-impact camping. Some homeless campers and social service providers suggested increased signage in the Cougar Recreation Area, and disseminating information via signage on LTD buses or at bus stops. This could

include information about rules and regulations, information about safe camping, contact information, and verbiage encouraging collaboration among all forest users in protecting the space.

Current signage as to prohibited camping areas near the Cougar Recreation Area may be insufficient; according to one transient youth who has camped in the area frequently, “We didn’t know we weren’t supposed to camp (there).” The youth cited a confrontation with law enforcement officers who searched his belongings. Another benefit of increased signage is that it reduces the litter factor that providing paper pamphlets imposes. Increased signage may also represent one way to establish contact with the “separatists” who avoid other contact. It also would be helpful in reaching voluntary nomads who follow a traveling lifestyle and may be new to the area.

**Length of Stay violations:** The standard strategy in most out-of-state forests to address homelessness, according to those we consulted, is to treat it as a length of stay violation and move people on with either a ticket or a warning, depending on the egregiousness of the violation and the homeless camper’s impacts. The forests had varying length of stay requirements. The Ocala National Forest in Florida found that their long length of stay requirements (to accommodate snow birds) encouraged squatters and homeless campers and in 2006 changed their requirement as part of an effort to reduce the number of forest residents. Strategies for identifying whether someone was homeless seemed similar in most areas. Initial contacts simply gathered information through conversations regarding how long they’ve been there and how long they plan to stay, and then educating them about proper camping procedures and length of stay. However, when they show up again a few miles away or they’ve built themselves a permanent structure for residence, that’s when we “start to ask more questions like ‘do you have a job’, ‘do you have someplace to go’ or ‘where do you get your mail’ ... general delivery is a clue that they don’t have a residence,” said one Forest Service law enforcement officer.

**Enforcement Recommendations:** Due to the type of people attracted to the area and the combination of factors that escalate the problem in the Cougar Recreation Area, strategies for mitigation may differ compared to other areas. Early evidence seems to show that the continued vigilance in Cougar has been successful in reducing the prevalence of illegal camping and its impacts. Due to the illicit behavior, party reputation, and unusually high levels of discarded trash in this area, our recommendation is to continue and, if possible, increase the enforcement.

The long-standing reputation of the Cougar Recreation Area and level of illegal activity necessitate the heightened enforcement stance recommended here. As the homeless population in this area is likely to be comprised of voluntary nomads, and they are unlikely to vacate the forest on their own, our thinking is that continued vigilance on the part of Forest Service staff will make the

area an unwelcoming place for illegal activities and allow the Forest Service to reclaim it for safe recreational use.

In addition to increased enforcement in the Cougar Recreation Area, we recommend increased and more descriptive signage regarding camping regulations and advisories such as recommended strategies for minimizing impact. This option benefits Forest Service staff by reducing the number of contacts needed to be made regarding violations, but also by providing more leverage for those contact when necessary. Utilizing the places that homeless campers are known to be, such as LTD buses and the local store, would make the signage more effective - especially in getting messages to “separatists” who are avoiding contact with other people, including Forest Service staff. This is along with the enforcement discussed above could help mitigate the effects of illegal camping, and other illegal behavior, in the Cougar Recreation Area.

## **LIMITATIONS**

There are a few study limitations that may have left gaps in our results and affected the recommendations outlined above. First, In spite of our efforts to interview homeless women and families who are camping on forest lands, we were unable to make contact. We had leads on both demographic groups, but they fell through because the campers were moving frequently and couldn't be located. We feel that hearing from a diverse group of homeless campers would enrich the findings of this study and we recommend a continued effort in this area to ensure a more complete picture of the reasons for homeless camping. As the Forest Service develops relationships with social service agencies, it may be possible to utilize those connections to make further contact with homeless families and women.

Second, there was limited participation from law enforcement in this study. This may have affected our ability to make informed recommendations due to a lack of information regarding current strategies for addressing homelessness in the Willamette National Forest.

Finally, as is the case for any researcher who looks at issues surrounding homelessness, we had difficulty using currently available information on the demographics of homelessness to provide perspectives on the issue within the Willamette National Forest. There were two reasons for this. First, quantifying homelessness is a challenge because it is a marginalized population, frequently hidden from view. Second, several agencies define homelessness differently, so comparing and contrasting different data is challenging. The Forest Service may be able to establish a more accurate picture of the scope of homelessness in their forest by participating in the annual One Night Homeless Count.

## **CONCLUSION**

Our findings reinforce a diverse typology of homeless campers from the literature, and diverse options for addressing their impacts. We believe our suggestions for engagement, education, camping policies, and enforcement will lead to positive results in the Forest Service's attempt to not only mitigate the issues caused by forest homelessness, but to do so while approaching the subject with humanity and an understanding of the complexity of the issue.

This is an issue that warrants further public policy attention and proactive action, and coordination between stakeholders is crucial. According to a government leader with extensive experience addressing rural homelessness locally, "In most areas it's really uncharted ground." Forest Service staff and their counterparts are at the forefront of an important subject. Forest homelessness is pervasive and seemingly on the rise, and the actions taken as a result of this process could set a standard for other forests as they work to address similar challenges. These findings and recommendations, and the concerted attention of Forest Service staff, represent a step in the right direction.

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**APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A: POTENTIAL PARTNERS

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**1) St. Vincent de Paul**

456 Highway 99, Eugene, OR 97402  
(541) 607-0439

A director in this agency expressed interest in partnering with the Willamette National Forest on a program similar to the existing parking program. This agency is probably the Forest Service's most likely candidate to partner in any endeavor.

**2) ShelterCare**

499 W 4th Ave., Eugene, OR 97401  
(541) 686-1262

A staff member in this agency expressed interest in partnering with the Willamette National Forest to provide outreach for youths. Contact Executive Director Susan Ban to discuss options for having a case manager make contact with homeless campers at the Cougar Recreation Area.

**3) Lane County Human Service Division**

125 E. 8th Ave., Eugene, OR 97401  
(541) 682-3798

A staff member in this agency expressed interest in partnering with the Willamette National Forest by potentially providing training for Forest Service staff about engaging homeless populations.

**4) Looking Glass New Roads**

945 W. 7th Ave., Eugene, OR 97401  
(541) 302-2551

A staff member in this agency expressed interest in partnering with the Willamette National Forest by engaging homeless youths who are camping in the forest. The agency currently makes this sort of contact with youths on the streets in Eugene and Springfield and indicated that staff may be able to expand their efforts to engage youths in the Cougar Recreation Area.

**5) Looking Glass Cottage Grove**

210 S 5th Street, Cottage Grove, OR 97424-2105  
(541) 942-2759

A staff member in this agency expressed interest in partnering with the Willamette National Forest by accompanying Forest Service law enforcement officers seeking to make contact with homeless campers. The staff member also suggested that perhaps a referral relationship could be established to connect homeless campers with services.

## APPENDIX B: POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS FOR FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

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- 1) Eugene Mayor's Council: Task Force on Homelessness
- 2) Neighborhood Watch, neighborhood associations, tourism advocates
- 3) Recreational users of the forest, including river guides, private campground managers, botanists, etc.
- 4) Other forests in the state: Umpqua, Deschutes, etc.
- 5) Catholic Community Services
- 6) Margaret Van Vliet of Oregon Housing and Community Services
- 7) Veterans Administration
- 8) State Parks

# APPENDIX C: SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCY LISTING



## SOCIAL SERVICES (updated 101811 tod.schneider@ci.eugene.or.us)

### General Daytime Services—Families

**First Place**, 1995 Amazon Parkway (19&Pearl) 342-7728, 8-5. Only for families w/ children. Washers, dryers, laundry, showers, wifi, messages & mail, therapeutic preschool, food, kitchen, (on-site eating only; no food boxes), referrals & advocacy. Open 7 days. Weekend shelter requires prior sign-up.

### Adults Without Children

**Eugene Service Station**, 450 Hwy 99N, 461-8688, M-Sa, 8-1 & 2-6. Shower, laundry, clothes, phone, mail. Bfst. 8 a.m. lunch 12:00. Movies 2:00. Snacks 3 p.m. Open every 2nd and 4th Sunday from 2:00 – 6:00.

### General Population

**White Bird Info & referral**: 342-4357. 24-hour crisis line: 687-4000. 341 E. 12. Case Management & Homeless benefit advocates: 509 E.13<sup>th</sup>. Tel. 342-1295.  
**Catholic Community Services**. Bus tokens (Mon. mornings), hygiene items, prescription assistance, clothing, free phone, mail service, help obtaining state issued ID (as funding permits). M-F 10am - 3:30 pm. 1464 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. Tel 345-3642. Also see “Food Boxes”.

### Latinos

**Centro Latino Americano**, 944 W.5th, 687-2667. Food, clothing, alcohol & drug counseling, advocacy, job & housing help. M-Th 8-12 & 1-5. F 8-12.

### Teens

**Looking Glass - New Roads program**, 941 W.7th, 686-4310. M-W-F 8:30-4:45. Tues-Thurs 8:30-6:45. Ages 16-21, Housing, job/education options & high school completion. Health clinic. Showers. Meals. Counseling. Medical referrals. Free, confidential STD & HIV testing. No OHP necessary. At Looking Glass / New Roads (Thursdays), Churchill High, Opportunity Center, & other partners.

### Veterans

**Veteran's Services** 151 W Seventh Avenue, Suite 550 Eugene 682-4191  
**VA Eugene Outpatient Clinic** 541/607-7402, 7403, 7404  
 Primary Care, Mental Health, No ER/Urgent Care.  
**Community Reintegration Service Center**, 211E 7 541/242-0445.  
 Homeless/Housing Services, Substance Abuse Treatment (don't need Vet status)  
**Vocational Rehabilitation VA Roseburg Healthcare System** 800/549-8387  
 Emergency/Urgent Care ext. 45355, 45356

### Shelter

**Egan Warming Centers** – various locations, only when weather drops below 30. For updates check with White Bird Clinic 24/7 at 541-687-4000.  
**Eugene Mission**, 1542 W. 1st, 344-3251. Free shelter, adults and children, but must attend chapel. Meals, beds, haircuts. Men's day room 5:30 am-6:55 pm. Women's day room 6am – 6:45pm. Curfew 6:55 pm. Beds \$2/night after 3 nights, or work in trade. Laundry. Clothes.  
**First Place**, 1995 Amazon Parkway 342-7728 8-10 families at a time referred to night shelter w/local churches & synagogues, including bkfst and dinner (9/2 through school year). Intake required M, T, Th, 10-3. W 10-2.  
**Shelter Care**, (686-1262) Many programs, including:  
**Royal Ave. Program**, 780 Hwy 99N, 461-2845. For single adults with chronic mental illness.  
**Shankle Safe Haven**, 1545 South Brooklyn Ave., (Glenwood) 741-7726, 16 beds, 12 day openings for homeless mentally ill.  
**Brethren Housing**, 1062 Main, Spfd., 726-8125. Shelter for single adults w/chronic mental illness & families w/ children.  
**Family Housing**, 969 Hwy 99N, Eugene, 689-7156 For homeless & low income families and adults with psychiatric disabilities.  
**The Inside Program & Riverbend Supportive Community**: transitional and permanent housing for chronically homeless adults with psychiatric disabilities. 868-3328 (TIP) or 302-9195 (RSC)  
**Womenspace**, 1577 Pearl St, 24 hr hotline 485-6513, office 485-8232. Serves domestic violence survivors. Undisclosed shelter location.  
**Station 7**, 689-3111, Runaway&homeless, ages 11-17. 2485 Roosevelt. Beds, counseling, advocacy, emergency transportation.  
**Car camping** permission for people with children, arranged by First Place Center. For others, work with Service Station, 450 Hwy 99N.

### Identification

**Department of Motor Vehicles**, 2870 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Pl. at Tyinn, or Valley River Center, upstairs. ID cards, drivers' licenses & vehicle registration. Requires 3 documents with your name, date of birth & address.  
**Catholic Community Services** provides assistance obtaining ID for people who cannot afford to pay to obtain it. (see “general population” above.)

### Banking

**OUR Credit Union**, 325 Blair Blvd, 485-1188. Savings accounts, and direct deposit for homeless and low income people. M 10-4; T/H10-5; F 9-6. Lobby closed Wednesdays.

### Senior Services

**Senior & Disabled Services**, 1015 Willamette, 541-682-4038.

### Pets

**Pro Bono Clinic**, 2nd & 4th Sunday, Service Station, 450 Hwy 99N, 607-8089 Message only, 0800 to sign up; appointments 9-1. Routine services (vaccinations, exams, worming and spay/neuter vouchers) (NO clinics on 4th Sunday of Nov/Dec). Emergency Clinic in Springfield will euthanize pets of homeless persons with serious injuries/fractures/other at no charge.  
**SPOT (Stop Pet Overpopulation Today)** helps cover costs for spaying or neutering dogs. 541-485-SPOT.

### Medical help (For emergencies, call 9-1-1.)

**RiverBend Emergency**, 3333 RiverBend Dr., Spfd 222-7300.  
**School Health Centers**, at high schools, for students and siblings birth to 19, sliding scale costs down to zero. Churchill 790-5227/ North 790-4445/ Sheldon 790-6644/ South 790-8020.  
**White Bird medical** 484-4800 dental 344-8302. 1400 Mill (phone ahead)  
**Volunteers In Medicine**, serves 100-200% of poverty level. 3321 W. 11. 685-1800. (make appts.) M, 9-8:30, Tu 1:30-8:30, W closed, Th 9-5, F 9-1.  
**New Roads Youth Health Clinic**. 941 W 7th 968-8487 Th 10:30-6:30. HIV test Th 5-6:45 pm.  
**Community Health Centers of Lane County** accepts OHP, Medicare, private insurance; sliding scale for uninsured (\$20 minimum) 5 locations. Call for appointment: 682-3550. M,F 8-5; T,W 8-7; Th 10-6; 2<sup>nd</sup> Sats 9-1.  
**Oregon Health Plan** applications help, by appt.: 682-3558.

### Mental health or drug problems

**Lane County Behavior Services 9-12; 1-5 M-F**, 2411 MLKing Jr Blvd. 682-4085. Clearinghouse, outpatient counseling, shelter referrals.  
**Chrysalis/White Bird drug & alcohol counseling**, 323 E. 12th, 683-1641. Also runs CAHOOTS mobile crisis service for mental or drug problems, dispatched by police at 682-5111. (1p.m. to 1 a.m., 7 days)  
**Buckley House** detoxification/sobering services for alcohol & drug users 24 hrs/day. 605 W.4th, 343-6512.  
**Looking Glass**, Scar Jasper Mountain & The Child Center have created a consortium for providing mental health crisis services for children & adolescents ages 4-17 county-wide. 689-3111.  
**Laurel Hill Center** – adult psychiatric rehabilitation. Takes OHP. M-F, 8-5; Pathways Center, 10-4. 2145 Centennial Plaza. 485-6340, www.laurel.org

### Food

**Dept. of Human Services**, Eug: 2101 W. 11<sup>th</sup>/ 2885 Chad Dr./ 1899 Willamette; Spr: 1040 Harlow Rd./ 101 30<sup>th</sup> St. Apply for food stamps, medical coverage, child care & cash assistance. 8-5pm+, M-F, 687-7373  
**Dining Room**. 270 W. 8th at Lincoln. Free hot restaurant style meals, M-Th 3:30-6:30 or until limit of 300 meals is reached.  
**Eugene Mission**, 1542 W.1st, 344-3251 **Men**: breakfast 6-6:30, Lunch 12:30-1, Din 8-8:30 (requires chapel at 7.) Sunday bkfst 9, dinners at 5, no chapel required. **Women** Bkfst 6; Lunch 11:15; dinner 4:45 M-Sa. Must attend chapel 7-8. Sundays dinner 3:45, bkfst 7. Be there *before* start time.  
**Service Station**, 450 Hwy 99N, 461-8688. Self serve bkfst 8-10; Sack lunches, 12. Snack 3, 6 days weekly, plus 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays.  
**Street Ministry**, 252 Lawrence. Fridays 4:00 Sidewalk Coffee, 4:30 Bible Study, 6:00 Dinner, 6:15 Clothing Room, Gospel Music, Prayer, Friendship & Respect. 689-0442.  
**Field of Dreams** 12:00 Saturdays, under the Jefferson-Washington Bridge, Lunch, Prayer, Music. 686-5433.  
**St Mary's Church**, 13th&Pearl (breakfast only) 2nd&4th Saturday, 9:30 am. Clothing Tues/Thurs 12-2. 343-9253.  
**St. John Maximovitch Church** breakfast the 1st Saturday of every month 9-11am at 304 Blair Blvd. 484-5810. (gloves, hats, bedding as available)  
**Springfield 1st Church of Nazarene Community Dinner**, 1761 E. Street Bkfst T, Th, F 1030-1130. Lunch Tu-F 1230-130; sack lunches after 130. Wednesdays 4-6 hot meals. 746-5624. Also free clothes, showers.

### Food resources For Youth Under 20

**New Roads**, 941 W. 7th Bkfst 8:30-9:30, Lunch 12-1, Snack 3-3:15 M-F; Din T/Th 5:30-6:30. 541-686-4310.  
**Hosea**, 834 Monroe St. M/W/F 5-7 pm.

### Food Boxes

**Food for Lane County**, 343-2822. 20 sites county-wide. Details change frequently. Call for updates. If you don't have an address, use **Catholic Service's Community Service Center** MWF 11am - 3pm. Sandwiches available at 9 am MWF in lieu of a monthly foodbox, for those unable to store and cook food. 1464 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. Tel. 345-3642.

Table 1: Listing of local social service agencies, as provided by Lane County

## APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND PROTOCOL

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### Interview Protocol

- 1) Start off with a description of the project
- 2) Request to record interview
- 3) Interview questions created beforehand on Google Docs for team approval
- 4) Interviews will not take place in private homes
- 5) Interviews with the homeless will take place in shelters or agencies
- 6) Interviews will be done by in teams of 2 or more unless there is an unforeseen complication. In that case we would keep the interview appointment even if only one person can make it.
- 7) Write date time of interviews in work plan
- 8) Transcription:
  - a. Done within a few days after the interview, via Google Doc
  - b. Transcription is not word-for-word, but rather comprehensive notes of the conversation
  - c. Will put in quotes around direct statements made by the interviewee where applicable
  - d. Use the taped version to fill in any “holes” the interviewer may have missed during the interview. When the group reviews the interviewer’s transcript, member may want to hear the tape if they notice any holes or have any questions
- 9) All copies of audio files of the interview are sent to one group member to archive.
- 10) Send thank you note after interview. Signed by whoever attended, and written by whoever set up the interview.

### Interview Questions

#### ***INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCIES:***

##### **1. Introductions**

- Introduce ourselves
- Scope of project

##### **2. Describe the homeless population**

- Demographics of the homeless in Lane County
- Have you noticed any difference in the rate of homelessness in Lane County compared to other areas? If so, do you have any thoughts on why there’s a difference?
- Demographics of the homeless that you serve
- Most common barriers or reasons that result in people becoming homeless

##### **3. Homeless on WNF Lands**

- What types of homeless residents do they see gravitating to the national forest?

## **APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND PROTOCOL**

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- Are there any programs that address homeless people living on public lands, such as the Willamette National Forest?
- What is (agency's) perception of what contributes homelessness in WNF -- any awareness of the issue? Past experiences? What do they think can be done to mitigate resource impacts and social impacts? (fire, litter, violence, etc.)
- What would draw a person to live in the WNF instead of a local shelter? Are there barriers to living in the shelter or is there something possibly more attractive about public lands?
- Do you know of any of your clients that do or have lived on the Forest Service lands who would be willing to talk with us?
- Agencies (that this agency) works with
- What do you know about referrals to public lands for camping?
- List the key agencies you work with or send referrals to
- Are there any organizations you feel would be beneficial for us to talk to in addressing the issue of homeless people living on public lands, or in general, to get a good understanding of the homeless population?

### **4. Suggestions**

- What suggestions do you have for the Forest Service on how to work with local service agencies to mitigate the problem? (Probes: Any other suggestions? Could you elaborate on that?) Possibly education campaigns or other similar options?

### **5. Questions and future communication**

- Any questions you have for us?
- Anything you feel we did not ask that you feel would be important in understanding the scope of work the Forest Service has asked us to do?
- Is there anyone in your agency that you feel we should speak with to assist us on this project?
- If we have further questions, may we contact you?
- How do you prefer we contact you for future communication?

## ***INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR OUT-OF-STATE FOREST SERVICE LAW ENFORCEMENT AND OTHER PERSONNEL***

### **1. Introductions**

- Introduce ourselves
- Outline the project and how they may be able to help

### **2. Description of the forest homelessness and its consequences**

- What is your direct experience dealing with homelessness in the (insert name) forest?
- Is there a specific population you tend to deal with (families, single men, etc.)?

## APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND PROTOCOL

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- Do you have a sense of the scale of the issue in your area?
- In your opinion, what are the issues associated with homeless residents in the forests? (long stay, waste, drugs, violence)?
- How would you know someone was homeless? Do you look for certain characteristics in making that determination?
- How is contact initiated? Can you describe a typical encounter?
- Do you ever provide any follow up to an encounter or make referrals to social services?
- Does your organization have specific policies regarding forest residents? Is there any degree of freedom in how an officer implements the policy? From your own perspective, what's the best strategy for approaching the situation?
- Have you tried alternate strategies? If so, how successful were they?
- Have you ever collaborated with local social service agencies? If so, in what way and how successful was it?
- Based on your experience, why do you think a person or family would choose to camp in the woods instead of live in a local shelter or some other option? Are there any specific site features the homeless may seek when coming to the forest?

### 3. Suggestions

- Based on your own personal experience, do you have any suggestions or ideas for mitigating the effects of homelessness in the forests that are different than the status quo?
- If you were to work with social service agencies on the problem, what role would be useful for the agency?

### 4. Questions and future communication

- Is there anything we did not ask that you feel would be important to understanding homelessness in the forest or how to mitigate its impacts?
- Is there anyone else in your agency or another forest district you feel we should speak to?
- Are you aware of any other forest district in the U.S. that is addressing this in a creative or unique way?
- Do you have any questions for us?
- If we have further questions, may we contact you again?

## *INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR HOMELESS CAMPERS*

### 1. Introduction

- Introduce ourselves
- Scope of project

### 2. Description of experience

- What attracted you to live on forest lands or other public lands?

## APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND PROTOCOL

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- How does that differ from staying in a shelter or other options?
- Were you ever encouraged to camp out there by social service agency?
- How often have you camped on public lands?
- What time of year do you camp?
- When you camp, do you usually take the bus up to the McKenzie Bridge area?
- How many people do you typically camp with?
- How safe does it feel camping there?
- What are the safety concerns?
- Do you typically see others camping there?
- How long do you typically camp in one place?
- Are there any social services when you are camping? Food pantries?
- Do you come back to Eugene during the day or stay out there?
- What draws you back to Eugene?
- (If it was longer than the 14 day maximum, on FS land)
- Have you heard of a 14 camping rule?
- Did you use certain strategies to get around the 14 day rule?
- Were you ever approached by forest service law enforcement about camping?
  - How did you feel about that interaction?
  - (Possible follow-up: Is there anything that could have been done differently to make it more effective?)

### 3. Negative impacts and possible solutions

- What are some problems that you have seen connected to people camping out on forest land or other public land? (We want to get a Sense of what issues they might see before we introduce issues from the FS perspective.)
- Have you seen problems with waste? or violence? Or fire danger?
- What recommendations would you have for the Forest Service agencies to reduce these types of problems?
- Other thoughts?
- Are there things social service agencies could do to keep people camping safely?
- In our discussions with some social service agencies, a few suggestions have been made for addressing the issues. Would you be willing to give us your opinion on some of these? (involve homeless forest dwellers more in upkeep/tree planting - making it their home, education efforts, etc.)

## **APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND PROTOCOL**

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### ***INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STAFF OF PUBLIC LAND AGENCIES AND OTHER GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS***

#### **1. Introductions**

- Introduce ourselves
- Outline the project

#### **2. Description of the problem and its consequences**

- Can you describe your direct experience with homelessness (in public lands area relevant to that person's position)?
- Can you describe the phenomenon from your perspective? Is there a specific population of homeless residents (families, single men, etc.)?
- What are the challenges associated with homeless camps in the forest (long stay, waste, drugs, violence)?
- What policies or strategies are you currently using to address challenges? When does your agency get involved?
- What is the protocol when agencies / law enforcement meet with homeless people?
- From your perspective, what's the best strategy for (your agency) to address the issue?
- Does your agency currently collaborate with any social service agencies, or others, to address challenges associated with homeless camping? (If so) What approaches have been successful?
- Based on your experience, why do you think a person or family would choose to camp in the woods or occupy public lands instead of live in a local shelter or some other option?

#### **3. Suggestions**

- Do you have any recommendations for how to mitigate the impacts of homelessness on public lands? Proactive steps to take or people to engage? Creative solutions?

#### **4. Questions and future communication**

- Is there anything we did not ask that you feel would be important to understanding homelessness in the forest or how to mitigate its impacts?
- Is there anyone else we should speak to?
- Do you have any questions for us?
- If we have further questions, may we contact you again?

### ***INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES***

#### **1. Introduction**

- Introduce ourselves. Describe the scope of the project we're undertaking for the Forest Service

## APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND PROTOCOL

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- We are here to help get an understanding of the homeless population in the forest and strategies for approaching management.
- 2. Encounters with the homeless on public lands**
    - How do you know someone is homeless? What characteristics show this?
    - How frequently do you encounter the homeless on public lands?
    - What is the nature of these encounters? What is a typical encounter?
    - How are encounters initiated / incidents reported?
    - Any recognizable pattern to the timing, seasonality, and location of encounters?
    - Have you noticed any difference between the homeless encountered on forest lands and those encountered elsewhere, on other public lands or etc.?
    - Based on your experience, why do you think a person or family would choose to camp in the woods instead of living in a local shelter?
    - What site features does a homeless person seek when they come to the forest?
  - 3. Treatment of the homeless on public lands**
    - Do you provide any follow-up after an encounter?
    - Do you refer the homeless to any agencies?
    - What policies do you follow concerning the homeless?
    - Have you seen or heard about any social agencies providing outreach on public lands?
    - What is the protocol when agencies / law enforcement meet up with a homeless person or group and it's not a problem situation? How often does this happen?  
Opportunity for preventive work to mitigate problems: Do you know of any permanent or semi-permanent camps, where social service agency staff could help facilitate preventive approaches/education?
  - 4. Suggestions**
    - What suggestions do you have for the Forest Service on how to work with local service agencies or other orgs to mitigate the problem? (Probes: Any other suggestions? Could you elaborate on that?) Possibly education campaigns or other similar options?
  - 5. Follow-Up Suggestions**
    - What do you know about referrals to public lands for camping?
    - List the key agencies you work with or send referrals to
    - Are there any organizations you feel would be beneficial for us to talk to in addressing the issue of homeless people living on public lands, or in general to gain understanding of the homeless population?
  - 6. Questions and future communication**
    - Any questions you have for us?
    - Anything you feel we did not ask that you feel would be important in understanding the scope of work the Forest Service has asked us to do?
    - Is there anyone in your agency you feel we should speak with to assist on this project?
    - If we have further questions, may we contact you?
    - How do you prefer we contact you for future communication?

## APPENDIX E: GRAPHICS, FIGURES AND SAMPLES

### 2011 Oregon Housing and Community Services “1 Night Homeless Count”

Compares county data: Lane and Marion counties

2011 data from Oregon Housing and Community Services, “1 night homeless count”:

[http://www.ohcs.oregon.gov/OHCS/RA\\_2011\\_Point\\_In\\_Time\\_Homeless\\_Counts.shtml](http://www.ohcs.oregon.gov/OHCS/RA_2011_Point_In_Time_Homeless_Counts.shtml)

LANE COUNTY:

1) General Information: Includes All Homeless (Emergency Shelter, Voucher, Transitional Housing, Unsheltered and Turn away)

	Total Households	Population											Age Unkn
		Total Population	Male	Female	0-5	6-11	12-17	18-23	24-44	45-54	55-69	70+	
1 Parent Family	128	353	135	213	81	83	49	37	78	19	1	0	5
2 Parent Family	88	278	138	140	54	58	28	25	88	22	3	0	0
Couple without children	33	64	31	28	0	0	1	5	36	17	5	0	0
Single Individual	1,414	1,415	1,072	316	0	0	0	132	557	431	289	6	0
Unaccompanied Pregnant Youth	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unaccompanied Youth	26	25	13	12	0	1	24	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>1,670</b>	<b>2,136</b>	<b>1,389</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>759</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>

COMPARISON TO MARION COUNTY, WHICH IS CLOSEST TO EUGENE IN TERMS OF SIZE OF METROPOLITAN AREA

1) General Information: Includes All Homeless (Emergency Shelter, Voucher, Transitional Housing, Unsheltered and Turn away)

	Total Households	Population											Age Unkn
		Total Population	Male	Female	0-5	6-11	12-17	18-23	24-44	45-54	55-69	70+	
1 Parent Family	75	198	71	127	48	33	44	15	49	5	1	0	3
2 Parent Family	26	102	52	50	21	17	11	7	33	9	3	0	1
Couple without children	25	38	20	18	0	0	0	4	21	8	1	1	3
Single Individual	591	591	441	148	0	0	0	39	216	153	96	7	80
Unaccompanied Youth	14	14	4	10	0	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>943</b>	<b>588</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>87</b>

Also, according to Lane County Human Services Commission: 10,708 unduplicated individuals were homeless and sought social services through agencies funded by the Commission in 2010 (which includes virtually all major social service providers in Eugene area)

- 896 unduplicated individuals were served by Egan Warming Center during 2010-11
- 1,850 homeless students attended public schools in Lane County during 2009-10 school year
  - This is data from Project Homeless Connect 2011 final report.

Figure 1: Comparison of Lane and Marion Counties’ 2011 “1 Night Homeless Count”

## 2011 One Night Homeless Count Highlights



Human Services Commission  
LANE COUNTY • EUGENE • SPRINGFIELD

*helping people • changing lives*

phone 541-682-3798  
fax 541-682-3760

125 East 8th Ave  
Eugene, OR 97401



### 2011 One Night Homeless Count HIGHLIGHTS

#### 2,140 people were counted in Lane County during the 2011 One Night Homeless Count:

This number includes homeless community members who were counted on the streets, under bridges, in parks, at food pantries, day access centers, churches, emergency shelters, transitional housing, Safe Havens and other locations on January 26, 2011. Approximately 92 staff and volunteers from 20 organizations including 58 programs counted homeless people this year. Of the 2,140 people counted:

- 1,406 people were unsheltered either because they were turned away due to a lack of shelter availability or they were otherwise unable to access shelter
- 338 individuals accessed Transitional Housing
- 367 individuals accessed Emergency Housing
- 29 individuals accessed Safe Haven Housing

Total: 2,140 individuals counted in 1,690 households

#### Highlights included:

- 190 family households with children consisting of 607 people
- 254 homeless veterans
- 633 chronically homeless people
- 159 people living in permanent supported housing (not included in the 2,140 count)
- 56 people living in Homeless Prevention Rapid Re-Housing (HPRP) (not included in the 2,140 count)

#### Homelessness - County-Funded Social Services:

- 8,177 households including 10,708 who were homeless sought social services through Lane County Human Services Commission funded programs during calendar year 2010
- 897 unduplicated individuals (4,544 shelter beds) were served at the Egan Warming Center during 19 nights of extreme weather at five faith-based sites during the 2010-2011 winter season
- 1,850 homeless students attended public school in Lane County during the 2009-10 school year (Oregon Dept. of Ed.)

#### Cost of Homelessness (updated Fall, 2010 Lane County HSC):

Homelessness affects all Lane County residents because people without shelter require costly support services:

- \$312 is the average cost of a visit to the Sacred Heart Hospital Emergency Room at RiverBend
- \$737 is the average daily cost of care at the Johnson Unit, Sacred Heart's acute psychiatric care facility, where the average stay is 6.5 days
- \$220 is the daily cost of in-patient detoxification services at Willamette Family, Inc's Buckley Center
- \$134 is the daily cost for "housing" per inmate day at the Lane County jail

#### 2011 Homelessness Highlights

- 2,140 people counted (Unsheltered & Sheltered)
- 1,406 unsheltered people
- 190 homeless families
- 633 chronically homeless people
- 254 homeless veterans

Figure 2: 2011 "1 Night Homeless Count" highlights

### Map of the Willamette National Forest



Figure 3: The Willamette National Forest

Lane Transit District fact sheet about ridership on Route 91

<b>ROUTE 91 DEMOGRAPHICS</b>			
Age group	1.00 11 to 23	2	9%
	2.00 24 to 30	1	5%
	3.00 31 to 43	4	18%
	4.00 44 to 50	4	18%
	5.00 51 or older	11	50%
	Total sample	22	100%
What is your total annual household income?	1 Less than 10,000	5	23%
	2 10,000 to 14,999	1	5%
	3 15,000 to 24,999	2	9%
	4 25,000 to 34,999	6	27%
	5 35,000 to 44,999	3	14%
	6 45,000 to 54,999	1	5%
	7 55,000 to 74,999	3	14%
	8 75,000 to 99,999	0	0%
	9 100,000 or more	1	5%
Are you - gender?	1 Male	12	67%
	2 Female	6	33%
Are you - ethnicity?	1 African American/Black	0	0%
	1 Caucasian/White	14	64%
	1 Hispanic/Latino	3	14%
	1 Asian/Pacific Islander	2	9%
	1 Native American Indian	1	5%
	1 Other	0	0%
Fare Media	Used daypass	2	9%
	Used monthpass	6	27%
	Received free fare	4	18%
	Honored Rider	3	14%
	Used UO / LCC Pass	7	32%
Do you have a valid drivers license?	1 Has valid license	18	90%
	2 Does not have valid license	2	10%

Figure 4: Route 91 Ridership Information

\* The information on ridership and demographic data for route 91 was produced from a small sample size and therefore, cannot be used to conclude that the results are typical for the route.

LTD Average Ridership

The following are average boardings per day type from Fall 2011:

	<u>Average Boardings</u>	<u>Ridership Extrapolation assuming roundtrips</u>
Weekday	160	Approximately 80 riders used the #91 route on the average weekday.
Saturday	59	Approximately 30 riders used the #91 route on the average Saturday.
Sunday	52	Approximately 26 riders used the #91 route on the average

Figure 5: Average number of boardings for LTD Route 91

## APPENDIX E: GRAPHICS, SAMPLES, AND FIGURES

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### Blue Slip, Eugene Parks and Recreation resource

This document is provided by Eugene Parks and Recreation staff to homeless campers at the time that the campers are requested to remove their camp from public lands managed by the City.



### PUBLIC NOTICE OF ILLEGAL CAMPING

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm

This notice is to inform you that it is illegal to camp in City parks and open space, according to Eugene City Park Rules 1.003 and 1.010(2), which make it illegal to be in a park between 11:00 PM and 6:00 AM or to erect any structure, including, but not limited to, tents, tarps, canopies, or sleeping bags, without written permission of the City. It is also a violation of City Park Rule 1.070 to leave trash or litter in a park, except in receptacles designated for that purpose, or to damage park fixtures or plant materials.

Violations of these or other Park Rules are punishable by a fine not to exceed \$500 or confinement in jail not to exceed 30 days, or both fine and imprisonment (Subsection 2.1990(2), Eugene Code, 1971).

**If you need assistance finding shelter, please contact:**

***St. Vincent de Paul's First Place Family Center at 342-7728***  
***White Bird Homeless Case Management at 342-8255***

If you do not remove your campsite immediately, you are likely to be faced with a citation and your camping equipment and other items in the vicinity will be considered abandoned and will be disposed of.

(First Responder Notice of Illegal Camping, Revised 09-01-2011)

### NOTICIA PÚBLICA DEL CAMPAMENTO ILEGAL

Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

Hora: \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm

Esta noticia es para informarle que es ilegal acampar en los parques y espacios libres de la Ciudad, según las Reglas de los Parques de la Ciudad de Eugene 1.003 y 1.010(2), que se hace ilegal estar en un parque entre 11:00 PM y 6:00 AM o tampoco construir alguna estructura, incluyendo, pero no limitado a, tiendas de campaña, toldos, o doseles, sin permiso escrito de la Ciudad. También, es una violación de las Reglas de los Parques de la Ciudad (1.070) para dejar basura en el parque, sino en los basureros, o a hacer daño a las estructuras y las plantas del parque.

Violaciones de estas o otras Reglas de los Parques pueden resultar en una multa que no superara \$500 o encierro en la cárcel que no superara 30 días, o ambos (Subdivisión 2.1990(2), El Código de Eugene, 1971).

**Si Ud. Necesita asistencia para encontrar un refugio** o un lugar donde se permite el campamento, por favor, contacte a:

**St. Vincent dePaul's First Place Center (El Centro De Primer Lugar de San Vicente de Pablo) por teléfono a 541-342-7728.**

**White Bird Homeless Case Management**  
**(La Administración de los Casos por los Sin Techo del Pájaro Blanco)**  
**Por teléfono a 541-342-8255.**

Si Ud. Fracase en sacar su campamento inmediatamente, es probable que recibirá una multa de violación y su equipo de campamento y otros artículos encontrados en las cercanías serán considerados como objetos abandonados y serán botados. (First Responder Notice to Illegal Camper, Revised 09-01-2011)

Figure 6: Public notice of illegal camping, "Blue Slip"

## APPENDIX E: GRAPHICS, SAMPLES, AND FIGURES

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### Parking Program, St. Vincent de Paul

The City of Eugene and St. Vincent de Paul's regulations for permitting homeless campers to use overnight parking spots.

#### CITY OF EUGENE OVERNIGHT SLEEPING LICENSE /PERMIT

Exhibit-E

The City of Eugene issues a license/permit ("license") for overnight sleeping on City-owned property located at, \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
(Licensee) based on his/her agreement of the following terms and conditions:

- A. I have received a copy of the "Ground Rules and Procedures". I have read them or have had them read to me understand these ground rules and agree to abide by them while sleeping overnight at the City-owned site.
- B. I understand that I may continue to steep overnight at this location for hours/days/weeks/months) provided that I am issued a daily license and all rules and regulations are followed. All Ground Rules and Procedures must be followed. Alcoholic beverages and open fires are prohibited.
- C. I understand that I my permission to sleep in this designated area may be revoked at any time for any reason. When I leave this site, I will take my vehicle and possessions.
- D. I will not interfere with the operations or patrons of this City-owned parking lot. I understand that if problems are caused for these patrons, permission for overnight sleeping will be revoked.
- E. I understand that the City cannot provide security for my valuables or possessions. I will take responsibility for securing my possessions from loss, damage, or theft.
- F. I agree to respect city property and the possessions of other overnight sleepers. I will do no harm to any of the plants or structures in the area.
- G. I agree to follow the directions of the Facilitator while at this overnight sleeping site.
- H. I understand that the site has limited space and resources and that the overnight sleepers are living in close quarters under difficult conditions. I will be considerate of my fellow overnight sleepers and will do my best to keep the area clean and peaceful.
- I. I understand that dogs and other pets are strictly forbidden and will be confiscated by the City or Lane County Animal Regulation. An assistance dog, such as a seeing eye dog, will only be allowed if permission is specifically granted in writing by the City manager or his designee.
- J. I understand that I must leave the parking site and remove my vehicle and all my belongings when asked to leave by the Facilitator or when my actions time has expired. I also understand that my failure to leave will then be considered trespassing, that my actions may be reported to the Eugene Police Department and that my vehicle may be towed and belongings removed at my expense.

**APPENDIX E: GRAPHICS, SAMPLES, AND FIGURES**

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- K. All wastewater, including all gray water (such as dish, bath/shower, utensil or equipment cleaning water) must be collected and disposed of into a sanitary wastewater fixture or unit. No tenant may discharge any wastewater, including gray water, onto the pavement or ground by a hose, from containers, or by any other means. Tenants who are found to be improperly disposing wastewater, including gray water, are subject to having their permit-revoked.

I understand the City of Eugene may not renew this license should it be determined that I failed at any time to meet any of the terms or conditions of this license. Neither the City of Eugene nor St. Vincent de Paul guarantees the condition of the City-owned site nor the safety of its licensees.

Licensee agrees to hold the City of Eugene and St. Vincent de Paul, their officers, agents and employees harmless from any injury to person or damage to property arising out of or in any way related to the use of the City-owned parking lot tor overnight sleeping.

I \_\_\_\_\_ (licensee), have read and understand the foregoing terms of this license and agree to abide by them and by all Ground Rules and Procedures, and applicable laws and ordinances.

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Licensee Signature and ID (Driver’s license# etc)

Date

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Print

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St. Vincent de Paul Staff Signature

Date

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Print

## APPENDIX E: GRAPHICS, SAMPLES, AND FIGURES

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### Review of Ground Rules and Procedures for Overnight Sleeping on City-Owned Sites

The following list is a review of the official rules and is not complete or exhaustive. The applicant agrees to abide by all the rules and agreements. The purpose of this sheet is to emphasize certain areas where we have encountered problems in the past.

1. By initialing the following items, I signify that I understand and agree to each item:
2. I agree that my permission to stay on a city site may be revoked at any time and for any reason.
3. I agree that I will have no pets, and especially NO DOGS, at the site at any time.
4. This includes dogs owned by guests.
5. I agree that I will keep the site and the surrounding area clean at all times.
6. I agree that I will consume no alcoholic beverages (and no open containers) or use illegal drugs while on the site.
7. I will display no violent or aggressive behavior at our near the site. (Having the police called because of your behavior will be considered evidence of improper conduct.)
8. I will not panhandle, gamble, or display offensive behavior on or near the site.
9. I will have no weapons or firearms of any kind on the site.
10. I will have no loud noises or loud music at the site. Also, no large parties or gatherings.
11. I will keep my site neat and presentable to the public.
12. I will have no accumulation of belongings under or around my vehicle.
13. I will not allow guests allowed to park overnight in or around my site.
14. I realize that I will be held responsible for the actions of my guests.
15. I will not have fires or cooking outside my vehicle. (Only cook stoves installed in my vehicle will be allowed.)
16. I know that conflicts, with other campers, city personnel, and local patrons may be cause to revoke my license to park overnight.

I will display my current permit in the front windshield within open view, in my vehicle, at all times when on a site.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Figure 7: Permit regulations and agreement

## **Guidelines for Overnight Sleeping on City-Owned Sites Facilitated by St. Vincent de Paul**

### **GROUND RULES AND PROCEDURES**

Ordinance No. 20130 authorizes overnight sleeping, for no charge, in parking lots of public entities. Public entities may grant permission for up to three vehicles for any one night at each individual site. Several City-owned parking areas, located citywide, have been designated as areas where homeless people may legally sleep in their vehicles.

### **ELIGIBILITY AND REGISTRATION**

1. Anyone, individuals or families, living in a motor vehicle (car/truck/trailer able to be move to and from the site under its own power) is eligible.
2. Each City-owned site may designate permission to a maximum of three vehicle spaces on an)one night at each individual site. The number of permitted spaces *may* differ from site to site. This site, located at \_\_\_\_\_ permits \_\_\_\_\_ vehicle(s) on site for overnight sleeping.
3. Spaces at sites are assigned through St. Vincent de Paul. Persons wishing to sleep overnight in their vehicles on City-owned sites must be issued a license/ permit ("license") before taking the space. Each overnight sleeper, age sixteen or older, must register, review the ground rules and agree to abide by them to receive a license to stay at a City-owned site.
4. Anyone under age sixteen must be accompanied and supervised by an adult.
5. License must be displayed on the front windshield within open view, in the vehicle, at all times when on a site.
6. Dogs and other pets are strictly forbidden and will be confiscated by the City or Lane County Animal Regulation. An assistance dog, such as a seeing eye dog, will only be allowed if permission is specifically granted in writing by the City manager or his designee.

### **HOURS AND LENGTH OF STAY**

1. Vehicles are allowed on the site for overnight sleeping all day each day.
2. Individuals and their vehicles are allowed to stay at this site, for no more than 90 days, provided they continue to receive an issued license and abide by all the rules.

### **SUPPORT SYSTEMS/CLEAN UP**

1. Portable toilets and garbage bags will be available. Overnight sleepers must use the sanitation system provided or their own sanitation system, if installed in their vehicle.
2. Garbage will be disposed of on the site in the manner arranged for such disposal.
3. Overnight sleepers are responsible for keeping their space clean and helping to keep the entire site clean.
4. If there is any problems with the systems provided at the site, notify St. Vincent de Paul by calling 461-8688.

## APPENDIX E: GRAPHICS, SAMPLES, AND FIGURES

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### BEHAVIOR

1. No violent or aggressive behavior, physical or verbal abuse, vandalism, panhandling, gambling or offensive behavior.
2. No use or brandishing of weapons. No carrying firearms on the site.
3. No consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs. No open containers of alcoholic beverages.
4. No loud noises or music
5. Disputes between overnight sleepers will be brought to St. Vincent de Paul for facilitation.
6. No children will be left unattended in a vehicle, or at the site. SITES
7. Overnight sleeping in vehicles is allowed only in assigned spaces on a site.
8. Vehicles and possessions will be kept within the boundary lines of individual spaces.
9. No structures can be erected on a site. FACILITATOR
10. A St. Vincent de Paul Facilitator can be reached Monday through Friday from 9:00a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at 461-8688.
11. The Facilitator will be available to assist overnight sleepers who have questions, problems or complaints.
12. Overnight sleeping resources are very limited. The Facilitator can give overnight sleepers information about and referral to what is available in the community.

### MISCELLANEOUS

1. Cook stoves installed in vehicles are permitted. No open fires. No wood fires.
2. No pets are permitted on site.
3. Any vehicle left unattended for 48 hours will be considered abandoned and the process will be started for having it towed away.
4. Overnight sleepers will abide by the laws of the City of Eugene and any applicable regulation.
5. Licensed overnight sleepers are responsible for their guests abiding by the rules. Anyone staying after 9:00P.M. must register and obtain a license for the site, if space is available, or leave the site. Only licensed individuals may sleep overnight at the site.
6. Violation of these ground rules will lead to action, ranging from a warning to having to leave the site, and/ or being in violation of the ordinance, punishable by fine or confinement in jail, or both.
7. Individuals must leave the property immediately, if their overnight sleeping license is revoked.

Anyone camping as part of the program understands that they may be asked to take a saliva drug test at any time. If the test is positive or if the camper refuses the test, they must leave the camping site within 24 hours or be subject to the loss of their property and current penalties for trespassing.

**Figure 8: Regulations for the use of overnight parking spaces.**