



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
SOUTHWEST REGION  
MCCALL OFFICE  
555 Deinhard Lane  
McCall, Idaho 83638

C.L. "Butch" Otter / Governor  
Virgil Moore / Director

July 19, 2017

Krassel Ranger District  
c/o Caleb Zurstadt  
500 N. Mission St.  
McCall, ID 83638

Dear Caleb,

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game (Department) has reviewed the South Fork Salmon River Recreation and Access Management Plan (Plan). The Department is part of the Big Creek-Yellow Pine-South Fork Collaborative (Collaborative) and has worked with other members of the Collaborative to develop recommendations for the South Fork Salmon River (SFSR) that balance watershed restoration with access and recreation opportunities. The proposed actions described in the scoping document appear to closely reflect the recommendations of the collaborative. The Department provides the following comments.

Some of the new motorized opportunities described in the Plan's scoping document involved extensive discussion, negotiation and compromise among different user groups. Any additional motorized opportunities not described in the scoping document, or significant changes to the opportunities described, would potentially affect the cumulative motorized landscape in this area, thereby affecting wildlife habitat, habitat use, and security. Therefore, the Department would like to highlight a few of these opportunities, as well as some of the discussions, reasoning, and data behind them, for your consideration during analysis of this project.

*"Designate up to 11 miles of new All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) trail (< 50" trail width) in Little Buckhorn Creek drainage (Figure 3). Most of the new trail would use abandoned logging roads, but new trail construction off of old roadbeds would be considered where needed to connect old roadbed alignments. Resource impacts would be minimized at stream crossings by installing stream crossing structures or armoring approaches as necessary, and improved maintenance of existing trails."*

- This route was chosen as the preferred alternative to several other potential ATV routes identified within the SFSR watershed that include the Phoebe and Zena creek drainages. From a wildlife management perspective this alternative was favored because it simply extends a previously existing ATV route limiting the impact of the new motorized use to one area rather than opening up additional areas to motorized use. The new route will be offset by road decommissioning in other drainages. In addition, the new proposed route will be built primarily on an existing road prism limiting the need for new road/trail construction.

*Keeping Idaho's Wildlife Heritage*

*"Convert the Martin Ridge Trail (Forest Trail #301 also known as Cougar Ridge Trail) from non-motorized to a 2-wheel motorized trail (approximately 8 miles) (Figure 3). The trail is located in the Needles Recommended Wilderness Area, and was designated as a 2-wheel motorized trail prior to the 2008 Travel Management Plan, Record of Decision. To minimize resource impacts stream crossings would be improved through armoring or the installation of bridges, and where necessary, sections of trail may be rerouted."*

- This route was a preferred alternative to converting non-motorized trails to 2-wheel motorized routes in other areas of the SFSR watershed including Phobe, Camp, and Cougar Creeks. Under this alternative, impacts are limited to an area that already has extensive motorized use (Jakie/Buckhorn ATV trail). This alternative kept the trail out of Cougar creek which is an important fishery resource, may help to serve as security habitat for big game between motorized routes, and maintains opportunity for non-motorized access by hunters into that area.

*"Reconstruct trail #076 on the old Davis Ranch Road from Elk Creek to the private property in T 20 N, R 7 E, Section 20 (known as the Willey or Davis Ranch) to pack and saddle standards and allow ATV access to private land under a special use permit. Pursue Forest Service trail easements or reroutes where trails cross state and private property. Stream crossings would be improved with armoring, or crossing structures as needed to reduce resource impacts."*

- This proposed action came about as a compromise granting landowner's reasonable access to private land without fully opening up important wildlife habitat to motorized impacts while still providing non-motorized public access to the area. The old road is also a major source of sediment to the SFSR and reconstructing/improving the roadbed to pack and saddle standards would significantly reduce sediment delivery and improve fishery habitat. An offset to this was the decommissioning of the Hamilton Bar road to single-track 2-wheel motorized use trail which was important for fisheries resources due to the sediment delivery from this road.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please contact Regan Berkley or Nathan Borg at the McCall IDFG office at (208) 634-8137 if you have any questions concerning these comments.

Sincerely,



Bradley B. Compton  
Southwest Regional Supervisor

CC: Tom Bassista (IDFG-Southwest Region)  
Jeff Cook (IDPR-Boise)