



**BUCKHORN RANGE CHAPTER
BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF WASHINGTON
P.O. Box 845, Chimacum, WA 98325**

October 22, 2018

RE: Wynoochee Restoration and Road Management Project #53124

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the road and trail planning for the Wynoochee drainage.

At one time I worked for the Olympic National Forest out of the Shelton Ranger District. I owned a home both in Hoquiam and later Shelton, and my job entailed fire prevention and control throughout the south forest area. In the winter we did various thinning, recreation, and construction tasks such as rebuilding the Satsop Guard Station. The Wynoochee River watershed was a highly prized area to visit and to work in. It once was a hub of activity with logging operations from out of Grisdale in the early days. With the curtailment of most logging operations throughout the Peninsula, the ONF dropped to the current two ranger districts when once there were five. In many ways the ONF hasn't found a new niche for itself though recreation holds great promise due to its proximity to the now crowded I-5 corridor. I would like to see then expanded recreation in this watershed, far more than what is proposed in this project. In fact, this project seems to primarily further move the area toward inaccessibility. A better plan would be to be proactive and provide an expanded destination for local residents and for out of the area visitors. I have been a longtime member of both the Skokomish Watershed Action Team and the Dungeness Watershed Planning Committee, and I still believe recreation can be a very positive use for the watersheds without sacrificing stewardship of the resources and rivers.

I support the requests of the Olympic Public Access Coalition (OPAC). Existing driving loops should be preserved. FS 2270 should retain its ML3 rating and not be downgraded. Areas should still be provided for dispersed camping and for additional destination trails for a variety of users including horseback riders. Where roads are to be decommissioned, road to trail conversions should be considered. I'd like to see more trail options connect to the east to the Skokomish drainage.

The Olympic National Forest still provides opportunities for recreationists to get away for a weekend or a week. While there is not doubt that funding is in short supply, it is still important to keep as many roads open and passable as can reasonably be accomplished. Users care about the forest because they can visit it. Once the opportunities are lost, they may never return.

Thank you very much,

JEFF CHAPMAN

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