

MacKenzie, Tamara L -FS

From: Mack, Sandrah P -FS
Sent: Monday, November 26, 2018 10:34 AM
To: Long, Don -FS; Mack, Sandrah P -FS; MacKenzie, Tamara L -FS; Mellmann-Brown, Sabine -FS; Sims, Wade E -FS; Stock, Darcy A -FS; Thompson, Craig -FS
Subject: FW: mid Swan Project preliminary comments
Attachments: mid-Swan comments 3rd.docx



Sandy Mack

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From: Diann Ericson [mailto:mdm@blackfoot.net]
Sent: Friday, November 23, 2018 8:38 PM
To: Mack, Sandrah P -FS <spmack@fs.fed.us>
Subject: mid Swan Project preliminary comments

Sandy, may we submit these comments to you? They are based on the meeting at the Swan Valley Community Hall and the field trip held a few days later in Lion Creek. Diann Ericson and Mike Childs

November 23, 2018

First of all thank you for the extension of the comment period. This extra time will provide the Forest Service , more in depth /useful comments from the Swan Valley community at large as well as those of us who are more knowledgeable about the various components of the Swan Valley's population, history and natural resources. And thank you for the well-organized meeting with the excellent panel of scientists and other specialists. Please continue, when holding presentations in Swan Valley, to bring a moderator, a person to run the meeting by the rules. With the no questions/comments rule until after all presentations were given, the most informative, productive meeting ever held in that community hall was created. The young rebels left at the end of the presentations; there were at least four uninformed (anti forest service) loud mouths there , plus others, who show up just to complain. Not that night. I would recommend a little more structure for getting people to move around the hall after the presentations as well...too much milling around in the middle of the room. But the main goal was accomplished. And a number of us welcomed a chance to talk to members of the team who had come tonight.

Secondly, we are encouraged that this management plan emphasis is fuels reduction in the Valley bottom, the WUI. Often residents of the valley express frustration with other management treatments in the Swan because the fire danger in the Swan has not been adequately addressed. (Wouldn't It be interesting if the DNRC would assess the fuels conditions of all private property in the Swan Valley. It would be a huge public service, a summary for each property owner, the fire department in the Valley and insurance companies that offer fire insurance in the Valley.

Our concern is the loss of wildlife habitat. But, perhaps we are better off to displace part of our wildlife with forest management to mitigate fire danger in the valley than to lose more land to fire and to subdivisions. It seems logical that natural resource specialists' planning would be the best basket in which to place our eggs. It would also seem logical that until the condition of the WUI in the Swan Valley is considered fire safe, it would be fool-hearty to increase the number of structures in the valley. This of course will not set well with our numerous developers waiting in the wings for the economy to shed its grace on us.

Regarding roads: Due to roads in the FNF, Swan Valley, we believe that there is a major issue regarding wildlife management/habitat and law enforcement regarding abuse of wildlife harvest and natural resource protection. (For the Flathead National Forest to demonstrate, verify and demand recognition of the uniqueness/value and need for protection, a Swan Valley law enforcement branch of the forest's law enforcement agency must be created...housed in Condon.) We have only our observations of hiking

the Swan since the early 70s as recreationists and as trail crew. We have heard locals complain about being locked out of the Swan because they cannot drive roads existing behind locked gates.

We recommend that you obtain prominent resource specialists including long time commercial loggers to travel on foot/vehicle to sites where these concerns exist...you know as well or better than we who has been out in this valley the most over the years since the 80s or maybe as far back as the 60s. A history of the logging in the Swan needs to be factually presented. In our experience and limited reading, I believe there may even be reports and data demonstrating that more roads bring more use/abuse of resources in the area. In addition our scientists on the ground with timber managers and loggers might offer the diversity needed to best manage the Swan.

We have heard informed natural resource people and informed residents the valley say that more roads is not a good idea because of water quality, vegetation and wildlife damage. We would like to know where Beth Gardner, fisheries biologist for the FNF, is on the roads proposal of the Mid-Swan Plan, also Wild and Scenic Rivers and Trout Unlimited and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

More specifically, we believe that roads in Goat Creek are on mountainsides too steep for roads. There was helicopter logging in that country not too many years ago. Was that on similar topography or for similar reasons?

Miscellaneous points:

The field trip for people of all backgrounds to see the sites and discuss the treatments was excellent. We will do what we can to see that a diverse group of residents attend future field trips.

Are stewardship contracts a good idea? Why or why not? We are excited that a good cross section of our residents will be interested in the process.

The size and location of treatment whether mechanical burning or other options is so important too not upset the valley's amazing wildlife diversity and populations.

A review of beaver trapping history in the Swan would be important...the primary reason for beaver trapping these days is because beaver are girdling trophy trees on the land of trophy homes as well as other issues. Again development in the Swan is of no benefit to the survival of the wildness of this valley, but strangely enough, it seems fires do.

Thank you reviewing our initial comments. They are based on the meeting and field trip information. We will continue to do our homework.

Sincerely, Mike Childs and Diann Ericson, P. O. Box 1105, Condon, MT 59826, email: mdm@blackfoot.net, phone: 754-2345 or 210-1125.