



David Halemeier
Willamette National Forest – Detroit Ranger District
HC 73 – Box 320
Mill City, OR 97360

August 27, 2019

RE: USFS Road 2225-450 Decommissioning Draft Environmental Assessment

Dear Mr. Helemeier,

WildEarth Guardians respectfully submits these comments to the U.S. Forest Service in response to the agency's Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed decommissioning of the end of FS Road 2225-450. The project includes only one action, which will hopefully be successfully implemented, namely:

- Decommission 0.4 mile of Road 2225-450

The project is located one mile north of Detroit, OR at the confluence of French Creek and the Breitenbush River, which is annually inundated when the Army Corps of Engineers fills the Detroit Reservoir. Please add our name and organization to the contact list to receive any future public notices regarding this project and please use standard mail (not certified) if sending items via the Postal Service.

WildEarth Guardians is a nonprofit conservation organization with offices in Washington, Oregon and five other states. WildEarth Guardians has more than 230,000 members and supporters across the United States and works to protect and restore wildlife, wild places, wild rivers, and the health of the American West. WildEarth Guardians and its members have specific interests in the health and resilience of public lands and waterways and enjoy accessing, recreating and visiting national forests.

We wanted to provide strong support for this project. As was noted in the EA, the Forest Service has "closed and re-closed the end of Road 2225-450" for the last 25 years (EA, p. 3). Yet off-highway vehicles (OHVs) continue to ignore signs, breach barriers and illegally access and damage natural resources (EA, p.3). Clearly stronger deterrents are needed. From our reading of the EA, visitors will still have access to the reservoir and the recreation activities they enjoy – just not illegal OHV access at this particular spot.

Although the project is small in scale, this area does provide habitat for cutthroat trout, spring Chinook salmon and rainbow trout. The Forest Service has a duty to protect these species and their habitat from harm. The actions proposed – including road bed decompaction, shoreline stabilization, slope recontouring, installation of boulders and imbedded logs, closure devices and revegetation should help restore this damaged area and prevent further impacts.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Marlies Wierenga
Pacific NW Conservation Manager