

Concern about road decommissioning and closure.

This is a fantastic project and signals a new era in forest management practices. The evidence of this project is already visible in the landscapes of this project area.

This is a long time favorite recreation area for me. My interests are in dispersed camping, fishing, hunting as well as dual sport and off road motorcycle riding. My all time lifelong favorite fishing spot lies within the boundaries of this project.

This area is particularly attractive to me for many of its dead end roads with varying degrees of vehicle accessibility. I don't mind parting the brush with my truck. Many people do not use this area because it is not developed and they don't like to part the brush with their vehicle. I enjoy recreating without crowds yet still accessing areas by vehicle. This is not possible in the icicle river drainage.

When I hear of road decommissioning and closures, I hear loss of access. After reviewing the maps, I was somewhat relieved to see that most of these are roads that are already not traversable by vehicle. However I do have some concerns.

One. When roads are decommissioned, often they are completely destroyed by the use of heavy machinery. They are so disrupted that they are not even traversable on foot. This is a great loss because even though closed or blocked off, an old road bed makes a very comfortable and quiet walk through the landscape for hunting, bird watching or just ease of travel by foot. Old roads become fantastic trails. Their entrances also provide turn around or pull out locations for camping or parking.

Two. When roads are closed they are almost never reopened. I used to backpack long distances but the older I get the more my recreation is limited to vehicle access. There are millions of acres without roads, but everytime a road is closed a little bit more vehicle access is denied and therefore concentrated. We should preserve the roads we have whenever possible.

Three. In particular, I would like to see the 6104 road access preserved all the way to the alder ridge trail and the 111 and 400 connecting roads maintained to the lower elevation roads 6202 and 6208 even if conditions are poor. I would also like to see many of the decommissionings and closures in the meadow creek road system remain open. I am less familiar with other locations but hesitate to agree with closures.

I am encouraged at this new perspective in forestry management. However, I have difficulty seeing how restricting access is key to enabling these forestry objectives. I understand a need to prevent erosion but as noted on the maps, the most problematic areas are on roads that are not scheduled for closure.

As much effort and resources as will be expended to accomplish this new plan, going to extra effort to preserve as much road as possible is a drop in the buck. These roads are extremely valuable resources. Please preserve our roads.