

February 28, 2021

To Aaron Stockton, Naches District Ranger:

This letter is in response to the request for comments on the Pacific Power Nile Spacer Cable System Project scoping letter posted on the Okanogan Wenatchee National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions on January 29, 2021.

Highway 410; and the American, Naches, and Little Naches River corridors have long been considered special by the public (including local residents) for the recreation opportunities and outstanding scenery they provide. The multiple designations of Highway 410 as an All American Highway, the Chinook Pass Scenic Byway, and the Mather Memorial Parkway all recognize the corridor's value. Highway 410 is a primary gateway to Mount Rainier National Park for people from across the nation, and sets the stage for what lies ahead. The geology visible along this segment of the corridor is incredible, and the vegetation change from a dry, arid setting to the forest view is amazing. All visible from an automobile. The 1990 Wenatchee Forest Plan recognizes the highway's importance with a special allocation and management direction. Several projects along the highway have been previously funded by the Federal Highway Administration, with the intent to provide services and to showcase the scenery, especially for the folks driving for pleasure. I have been fortunate to listen to the excitement expressed from many travelers along this highway over the years, and have never tired of it myself.

I hope this environmental assessment will acknowledge the uniqueness of the Highway 410 corridor's scenic resource, and ask that a professional visual analysis be considered during project design with solid monitoring during project implementation so that impacts from clearing, unnatural lines, and unnatural textures and colors, etc. can be minimized for the highway traveler. I would also like to see consideration given to minimizing impacts to the view from recreation sites, the river banks, and from local businesses.

After reviewing the detailed maps, it seems likely there will be areas where the existing ROW is no longer needed as the new clearing will provide access to the new lines. These areas should be restored to native vegetation to minimize the net amount of clearing, especially near the river corridor.

The highway and river corridors have long been used as travel routes, and contain historic and prehistoric sites; some of which may not have been recorded yet. It's important for all the cultural work to be completed for not only the new lines, but for the areas that will be impacted as lines are rebuilt, as well as for those areas where lines will be removed and, hopefully, restored.

Last, but not least, I am surprised by the minimal number of comments in the SOPA Reading Room at this time. I would hope local residents and businesses would be very interested in this project. Maybe comments have been submitted through different channels or to Pacific Power. Please double check to make sure the public has been adequately informed so they can offer ideas and support.

Power is important to the well being of the local businesses and residents. So is protection from wildfire. So is the scenic experience of driving along Highway 410 and the area's rich history.

I look forward to seeing the progress on this project. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Sue Ranger

