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ROBIN A. BENSON
CLERK OF THE BOARD AND COUNTY RECORDER

May 4, 2021

Objection Reviewing Officer
USDA Forest Service, Northern Region
26 Fort Missoula Road
Missoula, MT 59804

Dear Objection Reviewing Officer,

We object to the following decision, listed on page 4 of the Draft Decision Notice for Pinkham Meadow: "The conversion of 0.3 miles road 7277 will contribute to the Kootenai River Rails to Trails system by prevention of motorized access. This portion of the road is currently open but considered part of the Kootenai River Rails to Trails.

This section of road is utilized to access areas of the Tobacco River Bay and Lake Koocanusa. The motorized use of road 7277 to access this area is year-round and utilized by many local residents and their families. It constitutes a significant benefit and enables outstanding dispersed camping and lake access for fishing and mooring of boats.

It is our understanding that the decision to convert this road is to help alleviate user conflict. While doing so may accomplish that goal for a few, it will come at a significant expense of enjoyment for many. Rather than diminishing motorized access, we would propose the creation of more dispersed camp sites as well as an upgrade to the road and access points to Lake Koocanusa.

As you can see in the attached screenshots and Google Earth picture, most of road 7277 is a road/trail. Motorized access to Lake Koocanusa is already less then desirable, and the overall quality of the Rails to Trails pathway would not be diminished if this section is left as a road.

We are in opposition to the conversion of road 7277 to non-motorized use only. Please reconsider your options as discussed above. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jerry Bennett, Commissioner   Josh Letcher, Commissioner   Mark Peck, Commissioner