

John B. O'Brien III

June 7, 2021

Honey Badger Project  
% Dan Scaife, District Ranger  
Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District  
2502 E. Sherman Ave.  
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814  
Dear Ranger Scaife:

These are my comments on the proposed Honey Badger Project.

Please thank Jason Jerman for taking the time to discuss the proposed timber harvest and associated work with me. I really appreciated it. During our discussion, he estimated that proposed road NC-22 will probably only be a temporary road. I hope that is how you decide to use it and then close it down when you're through using it. He also mentioned that there probably won't be any logging in the small, wedge-shaped area in unit 125 northeast of Trail 14's southern trailhead. That would really help limit any disturbance to the trail and its environment near its southern end which I do appreciate. We had quite a talk about dealing with the effects of climate change and our concern about the viability of western larch in the future. It seems like it might be a good idea to reduce the portion of western larch which is planted/favored in favor of more ponderosa pine and western white pine. Since our talk, I've even been wondering if planting some lodgepole pine might be feasible, too. In Table 8 on page 28 of the EA, it's estimated that there could be up to 61 openings larger than 40 acres and that some of them could be hundreds of acres in size as a result of timber harvests. Creating forest openings of that scale would cause significant adverse impacts to the nonmotorized environment and experience and scenic quality in the short to medium term, 0-30 years or longer. However, if your regeneration work is successful, these impacts should moderate after that and become less significant. So it doesn't seem that preparing an EIS is necessary. It's just too bad that our generation and the one following us will be the ones to have to deal with those significant adverse impacts. You'll be setting the Honey Badger area on a decades-long journey toward becoming a more resilient ecosystem. Let's hope your regeneration activities under the project are successful and 100 years from now the journey will be considered to have been worthwhile. Working under COVID 19 conditions has undoubtedly been difficult for you and all your staff. I want to thank you for considering my comments and thanks also to Kerry Arneson, Jason Smith, and, again, to Jason Jerman for helping me review your proposal.

Sincerely,

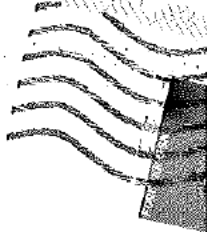
*John B. O'Brien III*

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