

## East Fork South Fork Restoration and Access Management Plan

To Whom It May Concern:

My family has been private landowners within the Payette National Forest (PNF) and Krassel Ranger District in the community of Big Creek/Edwardsburg for over 50 years. Throughout and even prior to the last 50 years the Forest Service has proposed and followed through with denials of public access by road restrictions and closures throughout the area including the current proposed area. These restrictions and closures have seemingly disregarded many comments from the public urging that you keep certain roads and trails open. The public suggestions are often very valid reasons for allowing continued access to lands accessed by roads that are already there and include safety and recreational activities.

In my opinion, the closure of any accessible road or trail in or around the PNF will result in increased usage of the remaining open and accessible roads and trails in the surrounding area. Closure of roads and trails along the corridor that provides access to smaller communities like Big Creek will “encourage” more traffic and higher use of the roads and trails that remain open. This in turn will result in more wear and tear, increased maintenance costs and inevitably possible suggestions that the roads and trails be closed due to the increased access and damaged caused by the “pressure” put on them by the closure of other existing roads and trails.

Additionally, the reduced access presented by closing now travelable roads and trails will undoubtedly have an impact on accessibility for fire suppression, recreation, and hunting. The most important of these, in my opinion being access for fire mitigation/suppression is tantamount because of the current state the PNF has been allowed to fall into with poor health and unmitigated undergrowth. The more access to areas of public lands afforded by existing roads the better the opportunity to suppress fire, distribute hunters and recreationalists without concentrating them in certain areas including Big Creek.

In the past 10 years with the consistent proposal and continued closure of roads and trail that provide of the main road access points to PNF areas, I have noticed a marked increase in vehicle and recreational vehicle travel on main roads in areas where less travel was being experienced prior. This results in many “close calls” and potential accidents when using the main routes to access private property towards the end of the main travel routes closer to Big Creek. I believe that a majority of this increase in use can be directly attributed to the previous closure of other alternative roads such as, but not limited to, Sugar Creek, Three Mile and Quartz Creek roads.

As a long time “resident” and property owner, I implore you to discontinue this and other efforts to close more roads and in fact reopen roads and trails previously closed.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.