



BlueRibbon Coalition / Sharetrails

P.O. Box 5449

Pocatello, ID 83202-0003

1-208-237-1008 • [brc@sharetrails.org](mailto:brc@sharetrails.org)

**Ben Burr, Executive Director**

BlueRibbon Coalition  
P.O. Box 5449  
Pocatello, ID 83202

**March 14, 2022**

Barlow Ranger District  
780 NE Court St  
Dufur, OR 97021

Dear Mr. Sam,

BlueRibbon Coalition/ShareTrails (BRC) is writing to provide feedback for the Grasshopper Restoration Project. BRC is a national non-profit organization that champions responsible recreation and encourages a strong conservation ethic and individual stewardship. We champion responsible use of public lands and waters for the benefit of all recreationists by educating and empowering our members to secure, protect, and expand shared outdoor recreation access and use by working collaboratively with natural resource managers and other recreationists. Our members use motorized and non-motorized means of recreation, including OHVs, horses, mountain bikes, and hiking to enjoy federally managed lands throughout the United States, including those of the National Forest Service. Many of our members and supporters live in Oregon or travel across the country to visit Oregon and use motorized vehicles to access Forest Service managed lands throughout Oregon. BRC members visit this land for motorized recreation, sightseeing, photography, rockhounding, hunting, wildlife and nature study, camping, observing cultural resources, and other similar pursuits. BRC members and supporters have concrete, definite, and immediate plans to continue such activities in the future.

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### **Project Specific Comments**

We support the broad project objectives to keep forests and public lands healthy and viable. We support the proposed restoration project as it will not only improve the overall health of the forest but also provide economic value and prevent catastrophic impact to both human and animal life by managing fire risks. Treating Inventoried Roadless Areas will help protect habitat and wildlife within them and fulfill the purpose and need of the project. We know that forest fires are one of the greatest threats to a forest habitat and these areas need to be treated with the highest priority for the future of the forest.

BlueRibbon applauds the Forest Service in their efforts to have a sustainable and healthy forest for all to use but would urge the Forest Service to refrain from any permanent road closures or decommissions. We strongly encourage the Forest Service to fully analyze and consider keeping all current roads and any new roads that are needed for the completion of the project rather than using them solely as a temporary road or closing down existing roads. Recreation should be considered a high priority as this area does contribute to local economies.

Roads are crucial for various reasons: not only do they act as a natural wildfire barrier to help protect the forests and protect wildlife and habitat, but they are also needed for fire treatments and emergency response teams. Additionally, roads are an inherent part of outdoor recreation. The Bureau of Economic Analysis showed that in 2019 outdoor recreation brought in \$459.8 billion. Outdoor recreation has only grown in popularity since then. BRC encourages analyzing the creation of new permanent roads if later identified as needed for the implementation of this project.

The proposed project has potential to provide local jobs and bring in local revenue. BRC supports these efforts and supports any comments made by locals and members who approve these projects for local economic benefit.

We would like to close by saying we support “shared use”. As long as overall visitation numbers are appropriate for the affected resources, motorized and non-motorized users can be compatible with one another so long as individual users understand designations and plan their activities accordingly. Indeed, motorized and non-motorized recreation use often overlap as OHV’s often increase accessibility to non-motorized recreational activities such as hiking, camping, equestrian use, etc. We also hold that responsible recreational use of public lands can exist in harmony with ecosystem needs.

BRCA would like to be considered an interested public for this project. Information can be sent to the following address and email address:

Ben Burr  
BlueRibbon Coalition  
P.O. Box 5449  
Pocatello, ID 83202  
brmedia@sharetrails.org

Sincerely,



Ben Burr  
Executive Director  
BlueRibbon Coalition



Simone Griffin  
Policy Director  
BlueRibbon Coalition