



## Pacific Northwest Four Wheel Drive Association

### Washington - Oregon - Idaho

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Supervisor's Office  
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Subject: 2020 Fire Affected Road System Risk Reduction Project

Attn: David Warnack

We strongly support opening **all roads** within the burned areas. Which includes Beachie Creek Fire, Lionshead Fire, Holiday Farm Fire, etc. and all roads listed in the released document 2020 Fire Affected Road System Risk Reduction #61749. Every road that is within all of these fires needs to be reopened to the public. Not a single road that was open to public throughfare before the fire should ever remain closed.

We strongly support these roads being opened using the best practice of salvaging all dead, dying, downed, and felled trees for economics and commercial purposes. It is important to clear these roads back to their original state. A single mile of road closure means millions of Americans will lose access to all of these forested areas forever.

Every mile of road that is opened forever is one mile of new road to explore or use. Every mile of road that is left open is one more mile for fire crews, emergency crew, search and rescue and first responder to give quick response to a vast majority of these fire effect areas. Please don't short us and them a single mile of existing roads that existed prior to the fire. That opened road may be the road that saves a life or put out a small fire well before it becomes uncontrollable fire as these fires became. It is simple, these fires would not have spread so quickly if **more roads existed** for accessing these fires.

All existing roads will benefit the US Forest Service in growing and managing the forest. The whole forest not just selected sites that may be important to the current land managers. Roads that can be used for logging, thinning, maintain the forest health, health of the forest animals particularly game animals. Roads for making sure others follow good forest stewardship throughout the forest. Roads for LEOs and their subordinates to have quick access to stop violators of the laws of the US Forest Service and forest visitors who destroy the landscape and other resources. Roads are needed in all areas big or small to stop violators harming wildlife and gaming animals.

We also believe there needs to be just more than the roads cleared. Dead and dying trees need to be remove from the road edges. We support an aggressive clearing to at least 300 feet on both side of the road or more. New trees need to be planted soon afterwards to rehabilitate the forest. Planting the new trees would also keep the soil form eroding down the hill and perhaps washing out the roadbed another day.

We would like to see at least a 650-foot corridor to help prevent future fires. A buffer of green trees which will be replanted to allow a greenery that resist future fires. The larger this buffer is the lessening of soil damage will accrue uphill or downhill from the roadbed. We are in consensus that all trees that can be salvaged for commercial use will be beneficial to the American Public which own these trees. Monies from the salvaging crews to the carpenters building house will add monies to all those involved especially the local communities surrounding these fires. It is very sad that all the burnt and dying trees resulting from these fires are not being salvaged. There are millions of dollars within these areas that should be salvaged back into our nation's economy. The local communities have suffered greatly and to allow a local means of making a living would be an asset to rebuilding themselves.

We believe these trees should be removed quickly to keep their highest value and to stop the spread of bug infestation and diseases born in dead and dying trees. It seems to us an important fact is being left out and that is these trees have a value to all Americans. They need to be harvested and that value returned to us instead of rotting away providing nothing except additional fire hazards.

It is only common sense that trees and debris must be removed on the uphill side of a roadway. If it is not removed it will fall, slide, blow onto the roadway and the protective ditch on the uphill side and will dam up causing water to overflow and wash out the roadway. These same debris will float along to the covert placed to remove the waters and once again will dam up and overflow washing out the roadway. This latter we have witnessed many times.

It is common sense to remove all trees on the very steep uphill side of the road. As they are dead it is only a matter of time before they fall and slide into the general public or onto the roadway. They need to be removed (harvested, used other than a slash pile) and new trees planted in their place. Roads that are unsafe for travel need to be made safe for travel. Closing a road because it is unsafe is not acceptable.

It also must be noted that closed roads only move the public to other areas. The areas we are currently using we know; and as continually using them take more care in our use. Forcing the public to use unfamiliar areas causes more damage to public lands. Visitors not familiar with a forest tend to be only passing through and care very little for how the forest will look after they are gone. Most forest users plan their visit ahead of time and a road closed will not be well accepted by many. In many cases forest lands

are damage out of resentment of the newly posted road closure. Please reopen these roads soon, don't leave them closed very long or resource damage is most likely to accrue. Maybe not here but in areas the wanting public is now forced to use due to the roads being closed.

We do not support opening these roads using volunteers whereas the salvageable timber is wasted and left to rot alongside the roadways. Where the natural drainage is already being blocked by downed trees; now the trees left alongside of roadways will always be a threat to blocking them even further. This will cause even more damage to roadways and most likely will created new unwanted drainages. This unwanted new drainage may completely erode the roads completely out or cause eroded landscape unnecessarily. Volunteers do sloppy work normally and will leave trees haphazardly which will threaten all forest users in the future. Generally causing greater damage than good.

It is our opinion on that some of those volunteering are doing so to only open up roads they deem important. By doing this only a few roads will be reopened to the public. The now existing road network (as it is currently on forest maps) will be considerable smaller on purpose. Making access even more difficult for most forest users. All roads are important to us for gaing access to all of the forest. Please take a **hard look** at reopening all roads that were open prior to the fire.

All roads need to be cleared with no exception. Those short roads that go just a little way off the main road into the forest and dead end are very important. These are important to us for dispersed camping and gaining access to the forest for numerous reasons. Roads that are used very little and may parallel larger roads are the ones that enable access to forest users that are unhealthy, older and disabled Americans. As a disabled veteran, I and many have access off the main roadways to little as it is. These little or hardly used roads enable us to hunt (etc....) or just slowly view the scenery at a slower pace in our motorized vehicles without being run over. To enjoy the forest without being run over by those dusting us out as we are in their way. We need access other than main roads to all areas of the forest. Please take a **hard look** at keeping all roads opened; mains, hardly used, small roads that parallel main roads, and those that just go a short ways and dead end. Us that are disable need them! Please take a hard look at all the roads left open for disabled Americans, enable them to access the forest off main roads.

We strongly support private and commercial wood cutting being allowed as a means of opening these roads. It is our opinion that areas alongside roadways being considerably huge by many hundreds of feet either side. Wood gathering is needed by many and dead and dying trees are perfect for this. Once the trees are removed new seedling should be planted asap. Areas of piled downed trees in drainages should be posted

open even now. Any use of these trees that is good for the local communities will be a huge boon for the **US Forest Service Department of Agriculture** in the eyes of many citizens of this nation.

Keep in mind that slash burning benefits no human, forest animals, and the surrounding vegetation therefore salvage should be the recommended way of removing these trees and damaged vegetation. Chipping (once large trees are removed) up all forest materials for variety of uses should be given a very hard look at. Even if the vegetation is chipped up and spread throughout the forest floor it would benefit tenfold over being burnt in a slash pile.

In areas where there are just little trees (non-commercial trees) blocking roads that are not considered essential perhaps organized clubs such as the snow mobile club, four-wheel drive clubs, and others could be used for clearing those roads. Our association of four-wheel drive clubs would help in opening these roads up.

Roads open to the public are a great asset, but the little, hardly used roads are generally the most important to plant, animal gathering, and generally just operating at a slower pace within this forest. They are also the most scenic in many cases to those who like viewing whatever the forest has to offer. Many offering solitude at the end of the road for dispersed camping. A camp site away from the many yet allowing days of exploring the nearby forest. Please, let's work together in keeping all these lesser roads open for now and future forest users. All existing roads: well-traveled, lesser-traveled, smaller unmaintained roads by recent machinery and just a little way into the forest is important to many Americans. Please reconsider and leave all existing roads open.

Thank you for allowing us to comment and we do hope you take our comments and use them in your future drafts and Final Record of Decision. We do encourage you to make haste in your decision as the value of the dead and dying are quickly losing their value.

Respectively submitted by Randell Drake,

Oregon State Director of the Pacific Northwest 4-Wheel Drive Association,  
member of Blue-Ribbon Coalition,  
member of Deschutes County 4-Wheelers  
and a citizen of the United States of America Veteran of the Viet Nam war