



Payette Forest Coalition
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May 5, 2022

Linda Jackson
Forest Supervisor
Payette National Forest
500 North Mission Street
McCall, Idaho 83638

Dear Supervisor Jackson:

The Payette Forest Coalition (PFC) wishes to express our appreciation to you and the Railroad Saddle Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) for the opportunity to comment on the proposed action for the Railroad Saddle Project.

Coalition members discussed the proposed action at their April 21, 2022 meeting and believe it can be improved by addressing the topics below.

- The majority of the road/route treatments occur in subwatersheds that do not have anadromous and sensitive fish species present. We believe the project area could be expanded to cover a larger portion of the Boulder Creek watershed. The PFC understands this may not be feasible in this project, so we recommend that the Forest Service pursues a project in the near future that includes this area to benefit salmon, steelhead, and bull trout.
- The PFC believes the Payette National Forest should provide an in-depth discussion of the road and route treatments as to how these management actions will contribute to meeting the desired conditions outlined in the Forest Plan. The rationale should include topics such as watershed condition, fisheries, and big game security.
- Road and route considerations and treatments should be consistent with the April 22, 2021 PFC Roads and Recreation Subcommittee recommendations for projects within the former Lost Creek-Boulder Creek area. The PFC would appreciate an opportunity to



review the specific road proposals and work with the Forest Service on an acceptable path forward for road actions (treatments, conversions, closures, decommissioning) in this project area.

- While the PFC understands the rationale for focusing primarily on vegetation management and watershed improvements/restoration, we encourage the Payette National Forest to consider additional actions, such as recreation enhancement, while still in the project development stage. Due to the high recreational use around Lost Valley Reservoir, as well as past PFC support for recreational opportunities nearby, it makes sense to analyze motorized and non-motorized opportunities through actions such as road to trail conversion.
- The PFC provided vegetation management recommendations on April 22, 2021 that were applicable to all of the former Lost Creek-Boulder Creek area projects. Vegetation treatments in the proposed action appear similar to those in the Cold July project. We believe our April 2021 recommendations can be applied to this project as well with the adjustments we supported for the Cold July Project.
- The proposed action identifies the need for additional non-commercial thinning in patch cut areas 10-20 years after initial treatment. The project should retain sufficient access to these areas for the future management actions needed.
- The PFC understands the desire to retain legacy trees to the greatest extent practicable. We believe there are limited cases where removal may be necessary. The proposed action currently states that no legacy trees will be removed which are associated with aspen treatments. The action alternative(s) should be modified to provide flexibility and state that legacy trees will only be removed in instances where it is necessary to achieve other management objectives such as aspen regeneration or road/trail and public safety.
- On page 12, there is discussion of coordinating prescribed fire with resource specialists. Range specialists should be included in this section. Range specialists and permittees should be part of the coordination of prescribed fire planning.

We look forward to continuing our engagement with the Payette National Forest throughout the NEPA process.

Thank you once again,

PFC Steering Team