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May 11, 2022

Pacific Southwest Regional Office, Ecosystem Planning
Post Disturbance Hazardous Tree Management Project
1323 Club Drive
Vallejo, California, 94592

BlueRibbon Coalition/ShareTrails (BRC) is writing to provide feedback for the Region 5 Post-disturbance Hazardous Tree Management 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 Forest Service. Many of our members and supporters live in California or travel across the country to visit California and use motorized vehicles to access Forest Service managed lands throughout California. BRC members visit California forests for motorized recreation, sightseeing, photography, hunting, wildlife and nature study, camping, water sports, and other similar pursuits. We would like to add our support to any comment submitted by any other individuals or organizations that advocate for motorized use and increased recreation access overall. BRC members and supporters have concrete, definite, and immediate plans to continue such activities in the future.

Organized Events

Many of our members hold organized events that include organized rides in this area. A significant portion of the education mission of organizations like ours and the fundraising that supports organizations like ours comes from these organized events, and we see the continuation of these events as an integral expression of protected rights including freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. We believe these events are protected by the First Amendment and believe they are crucial to clubs and organizations.

Wildfire

BRC supports the broad project objectives to keep forests healthy and reduce the risk of wildland fires. We recommend using commercial treatment in the maximum amount of land possible. Best available science should be used in making these decisions. Past forest fires that have burned rampant because of the lack of forest projects should be looked at when making decisions. The removal of hazardous trees will benefit the overall future of the forest. The greatest risk to wildlife and habitat is wildfire. Hazardous tree removal projects should move forward for sustainable forests.

Roads and Trails

BRC commends the USFS in their efforts to have a sustainable and healthy forest for all to use while improving access and roads in the system. We strongly encourage the USFS to fully analyze and consider adapting any temporary or unauthorized roads into the road system. These roads will offer long term benefits to the forest. Decommissioning or closing trails should not be a result of this project. Roads act as a natural fire barrier and provide needed access to implement projects and for emergency response teams. Tree removal is necessary for the safety of users. Roads should be a priority as the Department of Interior has released their Equity Access Plan addressing accessibility issues for those with limited physical abilities. In order for the Forest Service to comply with the Equity Access Plan, they need to ensure that roads are clear and safe for all users to access.

Economic Benefits

Local communities rely on motorized recreation for economic opportunities. There has been a surge of use throughout the nation on public lands as well as in this area. Local groups have worked hard to put the area on the map so that they could reap the economic benefits. Closing roads would greatly hinder economic opportunity. Many local

organizations and businesses recognize the influx of traffic and believe that any user conflict can be mitigated through better signage and education.

Conclusion

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 nonmotorized 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.

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

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P.O. Box 5449
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brmedia@sharetrails.org

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'BB' followed by a long horizontal line.

Ben Burr
Executive Director
BlueRibbon Coalition

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Simone Griffin'.

Simone Griffin
Policy Director
BlueRibbon Coalition