

From: Central Wyoming Climbers Alliance

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To: District Ranger Steve Schacht
United States Forest Service
Shoshone National Forest
Washakie District

November 16, 2015

Dear Ranger Schacht

The CWCA would like to thank you for recognizing our opinion on the upcoming travel management plan. Access to the various climbing areas in the Washakie District is important to all climbers, and the maintenance of the USFS roads in the area is key to that access.

As you know, climbers are a significant part of the outdoor community in the region, and our numbers are increasing across the United States every year. Access to the cliffs we have been climbing on for the last 50 years is paramount to the sustainability of our sport.

Please find below our opinions on road improvements that would benefit both local and visiting climbers to the Shoshone National Forest.

Sincerely,

Brian Fabel
Chair, CWCA

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Sam Lightner Jr
Secretary, CWCA and Access Fund Regional Coordinator

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Director, CWCA Executive Director

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Central Wyoming Climbers Alliance Travel Management Proposals for the Washakie District of the Shoshone National Forest

Access to our public lands is the number one issue for climbers in the Washakie District. The following list of potential improved roads would greatly assist climbers who live or visit the area. The list is made from what most important to least important for the climbing community of Lander.

1. USFS Road 326 (Limestone Mountain Road to Little Popo Agie Canyon)

What is the proposal? Improvement to USFS Road 326 south and east of Young Mountain to address drainage and other road condition problems. The most critical part of this road especially the marsh area in central Young Basin

Where is the proposal located? This road is the northern half of Limestone Mountain Road (326) which has been existence for many decades. See Map 1

What is the reason for your proposal? Road 326 accesses one of the most unique sport climbing destinations in the United States, which has been featured in the American Alpine Journal and Rock and Ice Magazine. The locations accessed by this road include Wolf Point, Wolf Pup and Wolf Den (see map). This area includes the highest concentration of the hardest routes in all of North America. The season is incredibly short, running from only April till June, due temperature and the unimproved road is the limitation of access to this area. From a historic standpoint, this canyon holds some of the first sport climbs established in the region (circa 1989).

2. USFS Road 351 (Sinks Canyon to Shoshone Lake)

What is the proposal? Improvement of various roads to allow passenger size vehicles to access Shoshone Lake via Sinks Canyon and Lander.

Where is the proposal located? This improvement would be to any one of a series of roads that branches off of Sinks Canyon Road as USFS 351. The most obvious line would be a connection of R 351 to MT01, R 369, and MT02, but a connection from R369 directly to Shoshone is also possible via a new road. See Map 2

What is the reason for your proposal? This improvement would allow better access to the Fairfield Hill climbing area. This is a very popular winter climbing area that has suffered from access post Fairfield Fire. On a larger scale, this improvement would open up access to the Wind River Range, thus making Lander a viable gateway for the Cirque of the Towers and other destinations in the southern Wind River Range. Access via Dickenson Park has been challenged in the past. The outdoor community and businesses would greatly benefit from this access point. Additionally, this improvement would allow climber-access to Baldwin Creek, Suicide Point, Devils Kitchen.

3. USFS Road 352 (Little Popo Agie Canyon to west slope of Freak Mountain)

What is the proposal? This would improve R 252.

Where is your proposal located? From R 326 to Little/South Popo Agie to the west side of Freak Mountain.

What is the reason for your proposal? There are climbing areas on the upper south face of the Little Popo Agie Canyon and on the west slope of Freak Mountain. This road is very difficult to travel and repairs would improve access to the climb areas listed above. Access to West slope of freak mountain, upper south fork of Little Popo canyon. See Map 3

4. USFS Road from Shoshone Lake to Dickinson Park

What is the proposal? This would be a new road linking Shoshone Lake to Dickinson Park. From Dickinson Park this would allow access to Shoshone Lake and then the Southern Wind River Range.

Where is your proposal located? This would be running across North Popo Agie Canyon from Shoshone Lake to Dickinson Park.

What is the reason for your proposal? Improved access to Devils Kitchen, Suicide Point, Baldwin Creek, and the southern Wind River Range.

5. USFS 334 (Dickinson Park to North Fork Canyon)

What is the proposal? This would be to do simple improvements to R 334.

Where is your proposal located? This runs from the Wind River Indian Reservation's south border to the edge of the North Fork Canyon of the Popo Agie.

What is the reason for this proposal? This is the road currently used to access all of the climbing and bouldering in North Fork Canyon. There currently is no other access point to this portion of the canyon.

6. Road 352 (Fossil Hill to Little Popo Agie Canyon)

What is the proposal? Improvements to R 352 from Fossil Hill to Little Popo

Where is your proposal located? This would be the existing road 352, including the crossing point of Sawmill Creek below Fossil Hill.

What is the reason for your proposal? Access to the climbing area along both Indian Ridge and Freak Mountain. This would also allow access to Limestone Mountain Road from Sinks canyon. See Map 4

General Comments

1. Creating roads specifically designed for vehicles 50 inches wide or less restricts climbers as we often carpool in larger vehicles. Downsizing roads for those smaller vehicles would often simply be denying access by another user group.

2. We recognize that enforcement of the rules and laws in the back country is difficult and thus there is a temptation to eliminate access to those areas. The CWCA feels that climbers are generally a responsible user group and that

closing roads to eliminate problems created by other groups is unfair.

3. For improvements to Proposal 1 (R 326) and Proposal 2 (R 351), we believe we can get substantial financial help from outside donors to support the efforts of the USFS.