

From: [Kuhnel, Dennis - FS, FORT COLLINS, CO](#)
To: [Markovich, Jonathan - FS](#); [Cloudman, Reghan -FS](#)
Subject: FW: Red Feather Lakes - Magic Feather Collaborative Project
Date: Monday, September 19, 2022 8:11:16 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)

Hello,

Sounds like a comment.

D



Dennis Kuhnel
District Ranger

Forest Service
Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests
and Pawnee National Grassland
Canyon Lakes Ranger District

c: (970) 305-0041
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Caring for the land and serving people

From: Dan [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, September 18, 2022 11:37 AM
To: Champa, Matthew -FS <matthew.champa@usda.gov>
Cc: Kuhnel, Dennis - FS, FORT COLLINS, CO <Dennis.Kuhnel@usda.gov>; Thatcher, Jeremiah - FS, FORT COLLINS, CO <Jeremiah.Thatcher@usda.gov>; Dahl, Christopher - FS, Fort Collins, CO <christopher.a.dahl@usda.gov>
Subject: Re: Red Feather Lakes - Magic Feather Collaborative Project

Mr. Champa,

Thank you for clarifying the details of your planned mechanical pre-treatments. Also, thank you for spending time with me at last night's open house. It delights me to see that we may be able to start communication.

I remember the visit I received from 5 members of your office in 2017. I was shown the map of the Magic Feather Collaborative Project Treatment Units and told that each of the units would be burned in the order numbered on the map. I pointed out the burning units 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10 would leave no green forest for any of the trails that I am permitted to use. Your staff agreed that putting my business into bankruptcy "might be an issue" and informed me that they would "be in touch." They refused to give me any idea of their timeline except that they planned to begin burning immediately. This left me feeling very anxious and frankly, very insulted. This meeting was far more insulting, arrogant and adversarial than what we had learned to expect from the USFS in the previous 18 years.

In December of 2017, your staff burned slash piles in the forest adjacent to our property. I was told that these

20 or so people burned over 1,000 piles that day. At 5pm, they all left. Soon after they left, we began finding and putting out wind blown ember fires on our property between the buildings and barns. One wooden fence post was fully burned. Other members of our family spent hours attempting to find anyone in your office to answer the phone. Once we found him, Mr. Chet Denninger brought a team to extinguish those slash piles that had re-ignited and to monitor embers.

Two days later, people driving down CR 74e noticed smoke and called 911. I understand that the county dispatchers were unable to contact anyone in your office, and they dispatched Glacier View Fire Department. GLFD then sent 3 type three trucks, who arrived on our property. Two entered the forest through our west pasture, one got stuck, having driven into our arena, with lights and siren, and sending a number of horses with beginner lesson riders into panic. I knew nothing of this until my staff told me there was a fire truck in the arena and customers in hysterics. I then called Mr. Denninger, and found that he was out of town. He then contacted the appropriate members of your staff.

Please understand that we are “land rich – cash poor.” Every penny of our accumulated savings and every penny of our retirement funds were invested in this business. We were closed from early February until mid-November of 2020, first by Covid and then by the Cameron Peak fire road closures. We had no income the entire year, although our expenses continued. 2020 left us deeply in debt. Mistakes on your part, such as those above or those last year in New Mexico, could leave us homeless, with devastating debt, and without an income.

Since 2017, every effort I have made to communicate with your office has been ignored. The Ranger has never been available, and calls have never been returned. Emails I sent were referred to your Public Affairs person, who sent me boilerplate responses informing me that my inquiry had been directed to the appropriate office. I received no email responses.

Actually, we did have communication with your staff. When your Operating Permit Manager retired, his replacement found that he had not sent billing to permit holders for some 4 (or 5?) years. We were issued an immediate payment demand notice, and our files were audited. The staff who executed this task were remarkably polite. It was unfortunate that they are no longer with you. Efforts to discuss this with the Ranger were forwarded to your Public Information office.

Again, I am delighted by the opportunity of possibly establishing a working relationship with the USFS. I would very much like to try to address the following challenges:

1. Establish regular open channels of communication. Your open house is an excellent example.
2. Assign someone on staff to liaison with local citizens who are affected by your plans. Your public relations office is not a good fit for reasons we can discuss.
3. Establish an incoming channel of communication for reporting emergency scenarios. These channels should be communicated to the citizens above as well as Larimer County Sheriff's Dispatch.
4. The protocol or SOP that allows fire fighters to leave burning fires without monitoring must be updated, communicated to your staff and enforced.
5. Meet with me (and other affected neighbors?) to develop alternatives to the current Magic Feather Collaborative Project which will not close my business.

Mr. Champa, I believe that you first brought up the idea of a meeting with the new Ranger, Mr. Kuhnel. Surprised, I immediately invited you to visit our ranch to discuss these and related issues, and asked you what your favorite cookies were. I believe that you agreed to visit, that you enjoyed a variety of cookies, and would call to schedule a visit. I repeated the invitation and cookie inquiry with Mr. Kuhnel and received a similar response. I am delighted and look forward to your call.

Dan Morin

On 6/28/2022 2:30 PM, Champa, Matthew -FS wrote:

Hi Dan-

Speaking to the mechanical pre-treatment of fuels; the activities will include preparation of pre-identified control lines (hiking/horse trails, 2-track roads etc.) by personnel with chainsaws and in some cases weed-eaters. Generally, the personnel will remove limbs of larger residual trees and cut smaller "ladder" saplings away from the same residual trees. These activities will often occur to a depth of 66' from trail/road edge (thinner in some areas, depending on the type of fuels to be treated). Coincidentally, some of this very work has already been accomplished, from operations stemming from the Cameron Peak Fire (ex. Horse trail from Lady Moon T.H).

Please reach out with any other questions that may pertain to the operational side of the project, at anytime.



Matthew Champa
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Caring for the land and serving people

From: Dan [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, June 25, 2022 7:00 PM
To: Dahl, Christopher - FS <christopher.a.dahl@usda.gov>
Cc: Champa, Matthew -FS <matthew.champa@usda.gov>; Kuhnel, Dennis - FS, FORT COLLINS, CO <Dennis.Kuhnel@usda.gov>; Cloudman, Reghan -FS <reghan.cloudman@usda.gov>
Subject: Re: Red Feather Lakes

Thank you.

My email address is [REDACTED] We stopped using "office" some years ago.

I appreciate that you anticipate mechanical (pre-treatment and preparation of fuels) on the south portion of the project. Can you define what pre-treatment and preparation of fuels means? I need to determine impacts of such actions might have on our business as we work with the SBA to structure the loans required by Covid and the Cameron Peak road closures which forced our business to close from February until Thanksgiving of 2020.

I appreciate you time and effort to communicate and assist me to minimize any damage that your

project may have on our business, our home and our mission.

On 6/24/2022 1:05 PM, Dahl, Christopher - FS wrote:

Hello Dan – Great to hear from you. After meeting you at the May RFL Community Meeting, Reghan and I followed up and Matt Champa from our Fire and Fuels group sent you an email on May 27th. I have attached that here in case you missed it or it didn't make it to you. In that message he provided an update on the status of prescribed burn planning and likely areas for consideration later this year.

With regards to staffing and contacts, Matt Champa (matthew.champa@usda.gov) is still leading the prescribed fire and fuels program for the District. Dennis Kuhnel (dennis.kuhnel@usda.gov) is the new District Ranger who has permanently replaced Katie Donahue. Either Matt or Dennis would be your best points of contact for communication and issues moving forward. I believe you are also on Reghan's notification list for prescribed fire and fuels projects. Any new press releases or updates that go out should make it to you through that list as well.

I hope this helps and thank you for following up. Have a great summer - Chris



Chris Dahl (he/him/his)

RELM Staff Officer

Forest Service

**Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests
and Pawnee National Grassland**

c: 970-657-5988

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Caring for the land and serving people

From: [Dan](#) [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, June 24, 2022 11:28 AM

To: Dahl, Christopher - FS <christopher.a.dahl@usda.gov>

Subject: [External Email]Red Feather Lakes

[External Email]

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Mr. Dahl,

At the conclusion of Commissioner Kefalas' monthly meeting in May, you appeared to be anxious to have my email and phone.

I looked forward to hearing from you, in hopes of establishing communication and receiving information about the plans for the Magic Feather burn.

I'm sorry we missed you yesterday at the June meeting. I hope all is well.
Is there any way that we can communicate?
Can you tell me who is responsible for planning? I understand that you have had
staff changes in the last three years.
Thank you,
Dan Morin

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