April 24, 2023

Karen Hardwick, Project Team Leader
NezPerce-Clearwater National Forest
1008 Highway 64
Kamiah, ID 83536

RE: Twentymile Proposed Action

Dear Karen:

I have reviewed the project documents. It is nice to see this project for the area. Last year the 2022 Williams Creek Fire that overran Orogrande was progressing towards Golden (fire reached the Ten Mile Creek Drainage, only a few miles from the 492 rd.). There is a washout on the 492 road that would prevent the fire crews from gaining access to area. These primary roads all serve access to reach the Wilderness portals, and allow motorized and Outfitters to travel with horse trailers. The Red River District yearly Road Grader road maintenance was not done in 2022. Money that should have been spent on road maintenance was redirected to purchase other equipment. The decisions made in the Supervisor Office are questionable. This is an occurring theme across the NP-CW forest landscape.

This office has a past history of doing isolated travel management planning (tmp) without completing a forest-wide travel management plan. This begs the question as to “why” this office continues to “slip” this kind of TMP decisions via these types of projects. The Greater Elk City Communities do not support isolated TMP without completing the forest-wide travel plan first.

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Section Effects on Public Health and Safety #3. Please include the community of Golden, where you have listed out Elk City, Orogrande and Newsome.

File 3\_Twentymile\_NezPerceForestPlanConsistency\_20210830 (5).pdf

Transportation section – discusses road maintenance is proposed on approx.. 14 miles of the 492 road. The 492 road has a serious washout erosion just above the 10 mile creek bridge. This needs to be repaired before the road is completely impassable. This washout area is just outside of the project area. I believe the Forest service doesn’t want to do the repairs on 492 and then shift motorized traffic downriver to the Rainy Bridge and across 9824 as the long-term solution.

Right now trucks cannot travel the 492 road and are diverted to the Rainy Day Bridge road 1875. Since last spring erosion on the 492. From Elk City, users have to travel down the pavement to Rainy Bridge 1875, and from the 1875, they travel across 9824 back to the 492 and then up the 492 road to Sourdough Lookout.

Also, if the forest service continues to let the 492 road deteriorate like they did with the Falls Pt 443 Rd to Selway Falls – where it is non-repairable. Then OHV users who normally traveled from Orogrande to Sourdough on the 5 mile Summit 807 Trail to 492 rd cannot continue on the 492 Santiam to Sourdough Lookout route– they will have to add extra miles out to SH-14 and then down pavement to the Rainy Bridge and around the 9824 back to the 492. The forest service needs to use some of the Orogrande fire money to reconstruct the washout area on 492 and clean out water ditch alongside road; build up road back with retaining wall so full size trucks can travel road and allow >50” buggies to travel 492 Santiam to Sourdough route.

Sadly to say, the NezPerce forest service does not recognize motorized recreation trails. In the Recreation section, recreation is only recognized for the Wilderness portal. There are other recreation trails for both foot traffic, Trail bikes and OHV. Two trails 411, 844 and a number of non-motorized trails are in the project area. These trails should be remain as they are and until such time Travel Planning occurs. Under Transportation section, only Johns Creek Trail is listed.  Red River District use to have a trail crew to work on front country multi-use trails but no longer since 2018.  The foot trails are no longer maintained by the forest service for fire access.  In this project area there are both motorized and foot traffic trails, they should remain and be cut open.

The Greater Elk City Communities do not support isolated travel management planning decisions prior to an approved Forest Revision Plan and Travel Management Plan. Travel Management Planning needs to be removed from this project. Road maintenance on the 492 washout about 10 mile creek campground bridge, needs to occur in this project which will allow recreation users continued access to the Wilderness portal and campgrounds.

Engaging with the community and Idaho County Commissioners will help with successful projects implemented in the Red River Ranger District. I look forward to working with you on this project.

Sincerely,

Karen Crosby
Elk City Dust Devils