



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Department of Fish and Wildlife
South Willamette Watershed District Office



April 26, 2024

Molly Juillerat
Middle Fork District Ranger
Willamette National Forest
46375 Highway 58
Westfir, OR 97492

RE: Middle Fork Fire Affected Roads Environmental Assessment rescoping comments

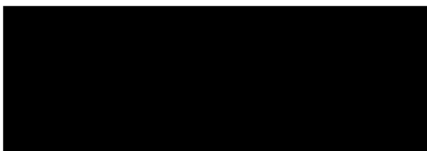
Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the rescope of the Middle Fork Fire Affected Roads Environmental Assessment. The project objectives aim to reduce the risks posed by fire-killed and injured trees that have fallen across or remain standing along important access routes of the Cedar Creek, Gales, and Bedrock fire-affected road systems so that access to and through the burned area can be restored.

It is policy of the state of Oregon to manage fish and wildlife to prevent serious depletion of indigenous species and to provide the optimum recreational and aesthetic benefits for present and future generations of the citizens of this state (ORS 496.012). In accordance with this mission, the department provides the following comments and recommendations for the record:

Roads provide access for the public and administrative purposes, but too many roads can have detrimental impacts to wildlife. Moreover, the value of wildlife habitat enhancement projects can be negated by disturbance and harassment associated with roads. We support road closures to lessen disturbance and harassment of wildlife from on-road vehicles and OHVs. Single entry roads should be ripped and restored to native habitat or big game forage. Dead end spurs should be bermed or gated at a minimum until administrative access is needed.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input on the Middle Fork Fire Affected Roads Environmental Assessment. If you have any questions, comments, or would like to discuss other project aspects, please do not hesitate to contact me at [REDACTED].

Respectfully,



Joseph Stack
Regional Habitat Biologist
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife