

FAFA Comment Topics for Public Use

(Use these to personalize your comment and make it count)

Example Opening Statement for a Public Comment Letter

My name is _William Bryant_____, and I live in __Lowell_____. I have lived in Oregon for over __50_ years, and my family and I regularly use the Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests for activities like _____.

These forests are not just public lands — they are part of my everyday life. The proposed plan deeply concerns me because it threatens long-standing access that myself and people in my community depend on. I am submitting this comment because I want to ensure effective change happens to the preliminary draft plan as it does not meet me or my neighbors needs and to make sure our voices are heard and that our traditional use of the land is respected and protected.

1. Motorized Access Not Protected

Issue:

The plan fails to guarantee continued motorized access to roads and areas people have used for generations.

Personal Connection:

Correction:

Add a desired condition that clearly states motorized access will be maintained forestwide for all residents throughout the life of the plan.

2. Cross-Country Travel Not Allowed

Issue:

Cross-country travel by ATV or pickup is no longer permitted, even where it's currently practiced.

Personal Connection:

Correction:

Add a standard affirming that cross-country travel is permitted across the forest, unless restricted through a separate public Travel Management process.

3. Legacy Roads May Be Closed

Issue:

The plan allows roads built before 1976 (often protected under RS 2477) to be closed or decommissioned.

Personal Connection:

_____ Prevents _access_ by _older_ people _____

Correction:

Add a standard that roads built prior to October 1976 cannot be closed, decommissioned, or obliterated under this plan without a separate legal process.

4. Non-Tribal Subsistence Use Is Not Protected

Issue:

The plan only mentions Tribal rights and fails to acknowledge rural non-tribal communities that rely on the forest for subsistence.

Personal Connection:

Correction:

Include a standard explicitly recognizing subsistence motorized access for rural residents as a valid cultural and economic use of the forest.

5. No Binding Language to Protect Access in Future Projects

Issue:

Future Forest projects (like fuels reduction or restoration) are not required to follow any plan commitments to access.

Personal Connection:

Correction:

Add a guideline requiring that all future project-level decisions must uphold forestwide plan commitments to motorized access.

6. ROS Zones Limit Motorized Use Without Justification

Issue:

The plan assigns “Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized” zones to many areas without analyzing the effect on current motorized use.

Personal Connection:

Correction:

Require NEPA-level analysis of all ROS zone changes and add an alternative that protects existing motorized use.

7. Public Assurances Aren’t Reflected in the Plan

Issue:

The Forest Service said, “the forests will remain open,” in public meetings, but the written plan doesn’t guarantee this.

Personal Connection:

Correction:

Translate verbal public commitments into enforceable plan language that protects roads and forest use.

8. ROS Zoning Outside Wilderness Is Misused

Issue:

The plan uses SPNM or Primitive zones in areas that are not wilderness, preemptively cutting off access.

Personal Connection:

Correction:

Rezone these areas as Semi-Primitive Motorized or Roaded Natural..

9. Rural Cultural Traditions Ignored

Issue:

Only Tribal cultural practices are protected — traditional uses by non-Tribal communities (e.g., hunting camps, woodcutting) are excluded.

Personal Connection:

Correction:

Recognize rural traditions as valid cultural practices under the National Historic Preservation Act (as Traditional Cultural Properties).

10. Participation of Wallowa Resources May Violate FACA

Issue:

The Forest Service allowed Wallowa Resources to participate in the Blue Mountains Intergovernmental Council (BIC) without complying with public transparency rules under FACA.

Personal Connection:

Correction:

Remove any content influenced by improper advisory groups, disclose their role, and restart a public planning process that complies with the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

11. Plan Repeats the Withdrawn 2018 Version

Issue:

Over 85% of this plan is identical to the 2018 version that was formally withdrawn by the agency itself in 2019.

Personal Connection:

Correction:

Start a new planning process using new analysis, public input, and direction from the 2019 withdrawal decision.



Example Closing Statement for a Public Comment Letter

I respectfully request that the Forest Service revise the draft plan to protect motorized access, recognize rural traditions, and ensure that long-time users of these public lands are not excluded by vague zoning or process shortcuts.

This plan should reflect the needs of the people who live here and rely on these forests — not just outside groups, or prior rejected plans. I appreciate the opportunity to comment and ask that you carefully consider the real-world impacts this plan will have on families like mine.

Thank you for your time and for taking public input seriously.

William Bryant _____

Lowell, Oregon _____
