



BlueRibbon Coalition
P.O. Box 5449
Pocatello, ID 83202
208.237.1008
brc@sharetrails.org

Ben Burr, Executive Director
BlueRibbon Coalition

September 19, 2025



Willamette National Forest Supervisor's Office
Attn: Steeple Rock Rigdon project
3106 Pierce Parkway Suite D
Springfield, OR 97477

RE: Objection to Steeple Rock Rigdon

Dear Objection Reviewing Officer:

Please accept these objections to the Final Environmental Assessment (EA), Draft Decision Notice (DN), and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Steeple Rock Rigdon Project. The Responsible Official is Gabriel Wishart, Middle Fork District Ranger. These objections are submitted on behalf of BlueRibbon Coalition (BRC), including BRC's individual and organizational members who have enjoyed, and plan in the future to enjoy, access to the Steeple Rock Rigdon area.

These objections are submitted in accordance with 36 C.F.R. part 218. BRC would like to present new information that affects the project and decision providing a basis for these objections. The point of contact for this objection is Simone Griffin. We formally request a resolution meeting in accordance with 36 C.F.R. § 218.11.

I. Interest of the Objector

BRC has a unique perspective and longstanding interest in motorized vehicle use and multiple-use recreation in the Project Area. BRC is a nonprofit corporation that champions responsible recreation and encourages individual

environmental stewardship. BRC members use various motorized and nonmotorized means to access public lands and waters. BRC has a long-standing interest in protecting access to roads and trails, preserving recreation opportunities, and promoting cooperation between land managers and the recreating public.

I. Introduction

Blue Ribbon Coalition (BRC) submits this formal objection to the Steeple Rock Rigdon Project on the Willamette National Forest. Our objection is based on new information that has emerged since the close of the public comment period, specifically:

- The U.S. Forest Service's ongoing analysis of rescinding the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule.
- The issuance of the "Making America Beautiful Again" Executive Order.
- The introduction of the EXPLORE Act in Congress.

These developments have significant implications for the management of roadless areas and the decommissioning of roads leading to them. Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Forest Service is required to consider new information that may affect the environmental analysis and decision-making process.

II. New Information

A. Proposed Rescission of the 2001 Roadless Rule

The U.S. Forest Service is currently analyzing the rescission of the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule, which has historically protected inventoried roadless areas (IRAs) from road construction, reconstruction, and timber harvesting. The potential rescission of this rule could alter the management of IRAs, including those within the Steeple Rock Rigdon Project area.

B. "Making America Beautiful Again" Executive Order

The "Making America Beautiful Again" Executive Order directs federal agencies to prioritize the restoration and enhancement of public lands, including the maintenance and improvement of roads that provide access to recreational opportunities. The decommissioning of roads leading to IRAs, as proposed in the Steeple Rock Rigdon Project, may conflict with the objectives of this Executive Order.

C. EXPLORE Act

The EXPLORE Act, introduced in Congress, seeks to promote outdoor recreation and access to public lands. The decommissioning of roads that provide access to IRAs could hinder the goals of the EXPLORE Act by reducing recreational opportunities and public access to these areas.

III. Legal and Policy Violations

The proposed decommissioning of roads leading to IRAs in the Steeple Rock Rigdon Project area may violate the following:

- **2001 Roadless Rule:** If the rule is rescinded, the management of IRAs may be subject to new regulations that

could permit road construction and timber harvesting. The current proposal does not account for these potential changes.

- **"Making America Beautiful Again" Executive Order:** The decommissioning of roads may contradict the directive to enhance public lands and improve access for recreational purposes.
 - **EXPLORE Act:** Reducing access to public lands by decommissioning roads may be inconsistent with the objectives of promoting outdoor recreation and public access.
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IV. Request for Action

In light of the new information and potential policy changes, BRC requests that the Forest Service:

1. **Reevaluate the Steeple Rock Rigdon Project:** Consider the implications of the proposed rescission of the 2001 Roadless Rule, the "Making America Beautiful Again" Executive Order, and the EXPLORE Act on the project's objectives and actions.
 2. **Conduct an Updated Environmental Analysis:** Assess the potential environmental impacts of the proposed road decommissioning in the context of the new policies and regulations.
 3. **Engage in Public Consultation:** Provide opportunities for public input on the revised project proposal, ensuring that stakeholders are informed and can participate in the decision-making process.
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V. Conclusion

Blue Ribbon Coalition submits this objection to the Steeple Rock Rigdon Project to ensure that the Forest Service considers new information and complies with applicable laws and policies. We urge the agency to reevaluate the project in light of the proposed changes to roadless area management and to engage in a transparent and inclusive decision-making process.

We request a resolution meeting in accordance with 36 C.F.R. § 218.11 to discuss these concerns and potential remedies.

Ben Burr
BlueRibbon Coalition



Sincerely,



Ben Burr
Executive Director
BlueRibbon Coalition



Simone Griffin
Policy Director
BlueRibbon Coalition