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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

I want to see the No Action Alternative plan taken at this time. Government bureaucracy has made the forest a liability instead of an asset for the American People. We need our local government more involved and in control, where we the people of this economically depressed area have more say and control. With the USDA's strategic goal of assisting rural communities to create prosperity so they are self-sustaining, repopulating, and economically thriving, the proposed wilderness in + the other plans will be of no help to our area. In your own information it's stated that no overcrowding occurs in the existing wilderness and less than 1% of visitors to the forest go into the wilderness. My own personal experience with the Salmo-Priest wilderness, which I have visited many times on my own and with my family over the years, has been that we have yet to see anybody else in the already designated Salmo-Priest wilderness. I've used the wilderness for hunting and family hikes and found it no better than the other more accessible areas of the forest. According to the 1988 plan, the forest should sustain a 170+ million board foot growth, yet with all the rules and regulations, you allow nowhere near that amount, and it looks like it cost tax payers money to log. I see the need for more logging to get the forest healthy again and to have better access for fires and recreation, but until we can get logging back to a profitable affair like the state and private industry seem to be able to do, I don't want to see an increase. As for roads and road density I think all roads should be designated permanent road and there is no need to remove a road only to have to rebuild it in the future at a greater cost. They do not need to be maintained to a high level, the outdoor enthusiasts such as hunters, hikers, pickers, firewood gatherers, sightseers and ORV riders will maintain for access if they want to go there, and if not the next time there's a sale or fire the road could be opened in a short time at minimal cost. I hear a lot about roads needing to be safe for public travel, we all know that however we access the forest, by vehicle, foot, horse or bicycle we do it at our own risk, the U.S. government is not responsible for our actions. I also see a lot of game in areas with high road density, like the towns around here with more wildlife in them than in the adjacent forest. I feel that all 2206 miles of highway legal roads should be open to road legal ATV's as they can now run on most all of the county roads in Pend Oreille, Stevens, and Ferry counties, as well as in most of the towns including a city the size of Colville. To date there is an outstanding safety record for the mix. With these roads open we would draw a lot more outdoor enthusiast use for the area like the Wallace Idaho area where I go to ride my ATV at least once a year. There's a lot of money brought into that area with out-of-town riders. I have been told that ATVs are not allowed on the roads because they are built to go off road and people tear things up off the road. Yet I can take my street legal jeep with twice the weight, 10 times the horse power that is also designed for off-road on them. Which vehicle do you think would do more damage? The majority of ATV riders are responsible people, so don't punish us for the actions of few. Let us help in the education to use our forest wisely. As for the grazing of range animals in the forest, I see all plans say no change. But I also see a lot of language about stubble length and water quality, etc. This looks like you're laying the groundwork for future cut backs if not the complete removal of grazing from the forest practice. I have been around grazing of livestock my whole life whether in the forest or private and the grazed land is the nicest looking, best kept, greenest areas you'll see. I've hunted, fished and drank the water from this area my whole life and I'm still here so I think it's a fairly safe environment. This is a major part of our local cattlemen making a living and a big boost to the economy and the wellbeing of the forest. In closing I would like to say that we the people of Pend Oreille, Stevens, and Ferry County who reside in, drive through, make a living in and use the forest year round, should have a say in the outcome of this forest more so than a person or club that will never come here or that might visit once or twice in a lifetime.