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Organization: Bitterroot Backcountry Cyclists

Title: President

Comments: The Bitterroot Backcountry Cyclists (BBC) mission is to promote, preserve, and enhance mountain biking opportunities in the Bitterroot Valley.

Given the proximity of the entire area of the Bitterroot Front Project to residents of the Bitterroot Valley, as well as the accessibility to visitors to the valley, we would like to emphasize the importance of the recreational opportunities that the area of the project provides. The project should be executed in a way that minimizes impacts to existing trails, including trails that are not currently adopted into the Forest Service system. During the scoping phase of the Bitterroot Front Project we proposed that the project include further improvements to recreational opportunities, through adoption of existing user-made trails as Forest Service system trails, as well as construction of new trails. We find it unfortunate that improvements to recreation opportunities were removed from the scope of the project. Nevertheless it is our request that all forestry projects that are undertaken as part of the Bitterroot Front Project take into account potential impacts to trails, including both system and non-system trails.

Of particular concern are the trails located both north and south of the Lake Como National Recreation area.

*The trails immediately to the north are frequently used and highly valued by mountain bikers. While these are non-system trails, we request that any forestry projects performed in this area be done in a manner that minimizes impact to these trails.

*In recent years we have worked in partnership with the Bitterroot National Forest to develop a network of trails south of Lake Como (the Bunkhouse Trail system) totaling approximately 17 miles. These trails have quickly gained in popularity for mountain bikers as well as for other trail users. The Draft Environmental Assessment indicates proposed transportation changes that have potential impact on these trails.

oThe map provided as Figure 2-3d shows a road on the north side of the Bunkhouse drainage, which it specifies as an 'Undetermined road added as NFSR'. The newly constructed Bunkhouse trail #584 utilizes a large portion of this road. The portion that is utilized by the Bunkhouse trail is as highlighted in the figure below (see attached file), encircled and annotated as 1. We request that this be maintained as a National Forest System trail.

oThe map provided as Figure 2-3d shows a road in Shannon Gulch, annotated as 2 in the figure below (see attached file), which it specifies as 'Undetermined road, obliterate'. The Shannon Gulch trail #587 is located on this road bed. In addition to summertime use, this trail is groomed in the winter by the Bitterroot Cross Country Ski Club. We request that this trail be maintained as a National Forest System trail.

Thanks for considering our concerns.

Sincerely,

Jeff Kern

President, Bitterroot Backcountry Cyclists