

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/23/2024 8:00:00 AM

First name: Krystal

Last name: Urbat

Organization:

Title:

Comments: My objections are:

-East Meadow creek to not be a RWA.

-Current uses of East Meadow creek should still be allowed (motorized and bicycles and chainsaws)

-I also object that there is no recreational objective for over 50" OHB USER GROUP.

-There should not be a semi-primitive non-motorized ROS overlay on roadless areas or roaded areas. We had an atv road that was decommissioned in a roadless area that was there before the roadless enacted. That could have been used to help fight the fire that went through Orogrande.

- I object that there is nothing addressing how a fire will be fought in the event that more Wilderness is created near towns like Elk City and Newsome. People's lives and homes will be on the line.

- I also object that this proposed Forest Plan has not listened to any communities and Idaho County Commissioners in their comments regarding wilderness. For example, the Idaho County residents passed a resolution vote put on a ballot stating that they do not support more acres of wilderness to Idaho County. And do not support adding wild and scenic river segments.

-The forest does not have the ability either financially or resource wise to manage the forest as they want to manage. The forest service people could not stop people from accessing. The forest had a difficult time managing areas where they allowed recreate. It isn't smart to do something that the forest cannot manage effectively to begin with. If they close an area it has to be manageable and definable or it is ineffective. In the end, the decision does damage to the lan

Dear Cheryl Probert,

Please consider these comments and concerns in regards to the Forest Plan.

My first concern is in regards to the economic impact of adding more wilderness and closing roads to motorized vehicles to the small communities of Elk City and Dixie. Several hundreds of folks come to the Elk City, Dixie, Orogrande, Newsome and surrounding areas to ride trails on their ATVs, jeeps, and pickups. Go camping, fishing, hunting, huckleberry picking, mushroom picking and See the old mining history and to just enjoy the great outdoors.

See Addendum below which clearly shows headcount in just the Orogrande area alone. This is the same data that is provided to you each year on the major holidays. By adding more Wilderness and closing roads down to motorized vehicles these folks will have no reason to come to the area if they are shut out of what they love. As a result this will take away customers to the Elk City and Dixie area and business doors will close and these towns will be Ghost towns. It's these Customers that keep the doors open in these small communities. So it is will great concern that you consider this in your decision process of the Forest Plan.

The Draft Forest Plan does not address or acknowledge motorized users in side-by-sides. These middle age users have transitioned from ATVs to Side-by-Sides in order to include their children and grandchildren when adventuring out to go berry picking or mushroom picking. One of our local residents has been diligently working

to gain access to gated roads. Gated roads offer access for these types of users which allow them to get off the main road and travel in less congested areas. For example, in the Orogrande area with the mining operation occurring year-around. The increased traffic from heavy equipment is going to have an impact to someone's safety. Evaluating and considering opening up gated roads will reduce accidents along a busy road corridor and allow users to have a backcountry riding experience, and not be congested and confined to close proximity of each other.

Another popular Jeep route is from Elk City to Selway Falls via the NF-443 road. Due to fires, landslides have closed this forest road to full size vehicles. A group of Jeep riders would travel over to Selway Falls and then proceed to Three Rivers resort for a bite to eat and then make the return trip back to Elk City on NF-443 road. This route is the shortest route (32 mi) and very scenic. The other route over Hamby Saddle down O'Hara Creek is much longer. This route is very popular with all the motorized users. This route has always been an Egress road for Elk City residents and needs to be re-opened.

ADDENDUM: The below headcount reports (Orogrande Activity/Utilization of Facilities/Resources Report) are performed annually every year and recorded at the Red River Ranger Office in Elk City. I only wanted to provide 2016 to 2019 headcounts so you can see how many visitors recreate in the Orogrande area and see that users are concerned with access being denied. Issues/Concerns reported at each headcount consistently are about gated roads that were opened the previous year and then closed the next year; concerns about the possible road and trail closures being contemplated by USFS 2019 Forest Plan Revision, and DRAMVU. Visitors expressed much displeasure and are quite upset at the possible implementation of such closures to the Public. Now with the barrier on the new Five Mile Bridge, this will become a major issue during 2019 hunting season. The reason the holiday numbers were down low in 2016 was due to SH-14 Landslide and Orogrande Fuels Reduction activities.

Report Title: Orogrande Activity/Utilization of Facilities/Resources Report

Another concern is Meadow Creek being considered for wilderness area. This is a unique area with motorcycle trails that people enjoy coming to and riding. Meadow Creek is a great place to take the family to ride the trails together. This is an area we have been looking forward to sharing with our children. As do many other folks. By turning this into wilderness we are depriving people of this experience and taking away customers to those Mom and Pop shops in Elk City. And especially the Red River Hot Springs. The below survey information was done recently by Elk City Resident, Karen Crosby. She performed a phone survey with area lodging businesses to document what type of users stay at local lodging businesses and what their guests do when they travel to the greater Elk City area. You can see that majority of recreation users are motorized. Businesses do not feel that wilderness users will support their businesses and generate income to carry them through lean winter months.

My Third concern has to do with Burpee Mountain being considered for wilderness. There is a lot of history in this area in regards to the Gold Rush. Utopia Mine is located in this area along with some great riding trails that we take our Jeep on every year as a family. We love sharing the history of this area with our children.

Pilot Knob is my fourth concern being considered for wilderness area. This is truly a one of a kind place. The history there with all the old wagon roads to explore is endless. The view at the lookout is truly magnificent. You can see for miles and miles in all directions. This in itself is critical in the ability to identify wildfires as they start to protect the communities. Folks enjoy coming to this area for the trail riding. By making Pilot Knob wilderness will have an economic impact on Elk City and Dixie.

My fifth concern has to do with Dixie Comstock being considered for Wilderness. If the Dixie Comstock is turned into wilderness, this will eliminate the ability to do the fuels reduction project around Dixie. The fuels reduction project allows the forest service to be proactive to wildfires instead of reactive. Without the fuels reduction and Dixie being surrounded by Wilderness when forest fire does occur Dixie will be burn up. Structures and lives will be lost. Regarding the Roadless areas, our communities would like to add in ATV trails, after a fuels reduction/timber sale, where applicable. For instance with the Fuels Reduction project in Orogrande there was one logging road that remained open for locals to travel via horseback, Hiking and ATVs. When the Roadless Commission came out for a tour this past fall. There was a environmentalist on the tour that brought up the old logging road not being decommissioned. The next thing you know, the forest service has somebody come out to decommission the road. The locals were being respectful of the environment. The locals understand some areas do not make sense to add in ATV trails in steep terrain. However, the access allowed us to hike, ride horses or ATV up onto the ridge to pick mushrooms and enjoy the outdoors with our families. This is a great example where locals would like to re-open access and enjoy the views on top of the mountain ridge.

Our communities do not support any additional recommended wilderness areas designations and wild and scenic river designations in our area. The Southfork of the Clearwater river will never have a dam on it, even though it was considered back in the 70s. There are mine tailings on the Southfork Clearwater river system and Crooked River that leads to Orogrande. I feel that there are active regulations for water quality currently with State and Federal levels. Adding this designation to the Southfork Clearwater River will add another layer of bureaucracy to an effectively managed checks and controls established by active regulations. The active mining company, Endomines, currently working in Orogrande would be impacted and slow down their permitting process which would cause miners to stop mining and further impact the economics they provide to the local lodging businesses, grocery store, fuel, cafes and bars.

I strongly encourage you to consider the detrimental economic impact that these communities will suffer if more wilderness is added and the lives and structures that will be lost due to wildfires.

Best Regards,

Krystal Urvat