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Title:

Comments: EAST FORK SOUTH FORK RESTORATION AND ACCESS MANAGEMENT PLAN

PAYETTE NATIONAL FOREST

Payette National Forest Supervisor's Office

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I appreciate the opportunity to make comment on the different alternatives proposed for this area.

As a non-participant in any of the meetings and dialogue up to this point, I am relying on the story map process of this plan to explain the proposed alternatives. I have experienced this process in past USFS projects and it seems to be a reasonable method to get educated on some of the particular parts. This is especially true concerning access for motorized recreation.

Unfortunately, upon my initial viewing of this plan there appears to be a designation on the story map that is not included in the map's legend. It shows the existing road heading northeast out of Yellowpine in yellow which is a color with no designation in the legend. Is it an ML2AP designated route, or something else?

Also, the written description of motorized opportunities with Alternative D contradict what the map shows. The map of this alternative shows almost as many proposed decommissioned roads as Alternative B. Alternative C map shows more motorized opportunities than Alternative D. In fact, in Alternative D, a particular road that cherry-stems into the Frank Church Wilderness Area has been targeted for decommissioning. Being that this particular road had been proven to be of substantial value when Congress determined the boundary of the Wilderness Area it creates some concern that the reasoning for decommissioning it might not have been prudently discussed. This situation is puzzling, at best.

From reading other comments it seems that the current Payette Forest administration might feel that an increase of motorized recreation opportunities would have little, or no, visitation increase or financial impact of this area. I feel that this is an uneducated comment and wonder if the Payette Forest personnel have any studies to support this idea.

With the current influx of new residents to Idaho, along with existing residents, it is becoming more obvious that folks are wanting to get out and enjoy what the National Forest has to offer. In doing so, many are using recreational motorized means, such as motorcycles, ATVs, UTVs, and high clearance vehicles. During the years of COVID the increase in motorized recreation was quite noticeable and has definitely not diminished.

This brings me to the discussion of dispersed camping. With what appears to be a significant increase in forest visitors, the increase in camping is going to continue and areas are going to be discovered. Visitors will camp whether in a designated area or not. I believe it would behoove the USFS to take this into consideration and work at accommodating this situation instead of deterring it.

I disagree that there is a benefit to any of the road decommissioning that is being proposed. I believe that utilizing some of the existing less improved roads as specific vehicle (ATV/UTV) trails would be a better consideration of the situation.

Several trails that have been closed in recent years to motorized use should be reevaluated for motorcycle

single-track or ATV/UTV trail use. Some that have been discussed are the #092, #069, #074, and #070 trails. A couple of the roads that were closed several years ago which should be reconsidered are the Sugar Creek Road and the Red Metals Mine Road.

Currently, I feel that the alternative that creates the most opportunities for motorized recreation should be considered. This is possibly a combination of Alternative C and along with some portions of Alternative D.

For the recreationists that might feel the need for more solitude than what this possible "combined" alternative would supply, they only have to step next door into the Frank Church Wilderness Area. It offers over 1.3 million acres to wander around and experience non-motorized recreation.

Thank you for your consideration of my input.

Mark Wood
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