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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Access to Public Lands

Access to our public lands is the life blood to our economy in Baker County. Using existing roadway systems through agriculture, mining and recreation, every facet is tied to the access we all share to our public lands. Many of the local citizens have used the public road system their entire lives for jobs, recreation, hunting, fishing, mushrooming, and berry picking.

Because of all the restrictions that have been placed on our forests, we have less than 25% remaining for motorized access. Many of our friends and family are at an age when hiking long distances is no longer an option. We still love our forests lands and have used them for a very long time for day trips or overnight camping.

By the attempts to reduce our access to our public forest lands and closing the amount of open forest roads we currently use, will force everyone to overuse the same roads. Reducing the number of roads, we use will greatly limit the increased economy that has developed in recent years and helped to stabilize the recreational income to our county. Without an economy, there will not be a community.

Baker County has lost most of the logging that has helped support our community for over 150 years. Back in the 60[rsquo]s and 70[rsquo]s we had six lumber mills in Baker County but now we have zero due to over regulation and reduction to the use of our forest lands for logging. We have had to refocus the direction for a stable economy for our community by increasing our recreational side. We have done a good job taking care of our public lands and now we have a larger recreational opportunity by using what we currently use of the public land system. Keeping our open forest is vital for the health, safety, and welfare of public land now and forever.

All current forest roads, within our forest systems, should remain open as they have been since the beginning of our Oregon statehood to this day. The position of the Forest Service within the Plan Revision should be that we retain Open Forest Status and that all roads that remain to this day be open for all the citizens to freely use as congress mandated for multiple use.

Thank you for the ability to comment.

Bill Harvey