

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/2/2020 7:00:00 AM

First name: Casey

Last name: Kuenzli

Organization:

Title:

Comments: February 2, 2020

Re: Objection to the Revised Environmental Assessment and Draft Decision Notice for the South Fork Restoration and Access Managemejt Plan.

Dear Objection Reviewing Officer:

The following comments and objections relate to three different areas that are located within the Payette National Forest Krassel District. The Confluence Site Plan, the Hamilton Bar Road (Forest Road 50673), and Former Davis Ranch Road (Trail #076).

1.

a. With regards to the Former Davis Ranch Road: The chosen combined alternatives to re-designate it as non-motorized and classify it as a Trail Class 1 pedestrian and pack and saddle trail create concerns for me. There are currently long stretches of the road that are grown in with ground cover vegetation making it stable and non-eroding. I object to any use of motorized or heavy equipment in the reshaping or repairing of the trail in those areas. While I concede that some areas might need heavy equipment to re-stabilize things like slide areas and water crossings there are large portions of the road that are in ideal condition for a trail and should be left alone. By not using heavy equipment to re-establish a slope, and thereby disturb the vegetation roots, the ground will become de-stabilized and potentially cause more slides and erosion. Any and all trail work should be done by hand when possible to help protect forest resources.

b. Historically, the Davis Ranch Road was used to bring necessary supplies to the Davis and Fritser Ranches via 4 wheel drive vehicles. These privately owned properties depend on reasonable access that has been severely limited by the fires and subsequent flooding that caused the road to wash out. With designating the road as a non[shy] motorized pack and saddle trail, the dependency of property owners on Trail #076/#077 from the end of Hamilton Bar Road to the Fritser Ranch (5 miles downstream), greatly increases as it becomes the only real, viable, year-round access to the properties to transport needed supplies and materials. This trail needs many repairs and improvements with several areas that need major reconstruction. Due to erosion and de-stabilization from the recent fires, there are areas that have eroded and are narrow and unsafe. It has become very dangerous to use pack animals or motorcycles to haul supplies into the private properties. In a recent walk-through trail audit with the Forest Service, these areas were noted as problem areas that need addressed. Trail #076/#077 to the Davis Ranch and Fritser Ranch on the west side of the river is not in the SFRAMP. This trail is a vital link that is directly impacted by the decisions being made and its maintenance and viability for future use needs to be addressed. By designating the Davis Ranch Road as a non-motorized trail and making the needed improvements to Trail #076/#077 (the only 2-wheel motorized access trail in the area), it would improve access to the private property and to the river corridor for the public, as well as allow non-motorized public access on the east side of the river on the Davis Ranch Road.

2. With the selected alternative for the Hamilton Bar Road, the authorized entities who are allowed to use full-sized vehicles beyond the locked gate include 2 separate private landowners, Native Americans, and the Forest Service. A maintenance plan needs to be established between these entities to ensure a fair distribution of responsibility and maintenance costs. This should include provisions for preventative maintenance activities such as culvert cleaning and brush and rock removal. Such a plan in place would help prevent future washouts that would cause resource damage and diminish water quality.

3.

a. The selected alternative for the Confluence Plan to make improvements for camping, parking, turn around and general access will create more traffic on the Hamilton Bar Road. Proper and highly visible signage at the gate is necessary to alert people to the private usage of the road beyond the gate. This will help avoid confrontations with those who do not understand who is allowed to use this section with full-size vehicles.

b. With the addition of facilities for the public to use, there will be an inevitable increase in the number of people who will utilize Trail #076/#077. This is another reason for my concerns about the trail outlined in my responses above. The trail needs to be widened and made safer especially through the canyon area where there are no areas wide enough to pass, nor any turn around areas, which will be very dangerous if not corrected.

Thank you for considering the solutions outlined above in my objection response which I believe will help ensure future enjoyment and access of the area while protecting water quality and forest resources.

Sincerely,

Casey Kuenzli