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August 19, 2021

Ms. Erin Phelps  
New Meadows District Ranger  
Payette National Forest  
P.O. Box J  
3674 Highway 95  
New Meadows, ID 83654  
(208) 347-0300

Submitted Electronically via Project Webpage:

<https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public//CommentInput?Project=60549>

**RE: Idaho Conservation League's Scoping Comments for the Proposed Lost Ant Recreation Management Project**

Dear Ms. Phelps:

Please accept the Idaho Conservation League's scoping comments for the proposed Lost Ant Recreation Management Project, located in the New Meadows District of the Payette National Forest. Since 1973, the Idaho Conservation League (ICL) has had a long history of involvement with public lands issues. As Idaho's largest state-based conservation organization, we represent over 40,000 supporters who have a deep personal interest in improving recreation opportunities through trail improvements and creation, campground improvements, and trail relocations that support watershed restoration and health.

ICL appreciates the Payette National Forest demonstrating a deep commitment to improving recreation opportunities in areas affected by the vacated Lost Creek/Boulder (LC/BC) Creek Record of Decision. We concur that this project, consisting of trail non-motorized trail reroutes, trail decommissioning, parking lot improvements, vault toilet installation, road to OHV trail conversion, a new OHV trail connector segment, and approximately 7 miles of new non-motorized trail construction, should move forward as a categorically excluded project based on the definition found in 36 CFR 220.6(e)(1) and 36 CFR 220.6(e)(22). ICL is a member of the Payette Forest Coalition (PFC) and we have retained our "good standing" within the collaborative. In letters from the PFC dated June 9, 2021, and August 11, 2021 regarding the Cold July Environmental Assessment the PFC encouraged the Payette National Forest (PNF) to look for opportunities to include watershed restoration and recreation improvements in either the

Cold July proposed actions (June 9 letter) and to highlight the PNF's intent to follow the Cold July Restoration project and its vegetation management focus with projects that return the focus of watershed restoration and recreation improvements back towards the former LC/BC and current Cold July landscape. ICL submitted separate comments on the Cold July proposal (dated June 10, 2021) that echoed many of the PFC comments.

ICL supports the proposed Lost Ant Recreation Management Project and agrees with the comments and recommendations made by the collaborative, specifically:

- **Ant Basin Trail 324 and Ant Basin Trailhead:** Since Trail #324 passes through open country, we recommend the Payette National Forest ensure effective closure of the trailhead and trail with both physical structures and signage directing users to the Ant Basin South Trailhead. We also recommend that the Forest Service provide signage redirecting users from the decommissioned segment of Forest Road 50079 to the Ant Basin South Trailhead.
- **Corral Creek Area:** We believe that the Forest Service should consider access and parking for users, especially those using trail and pack stock, and clarify where the agency proposes to locate the trail access point. We also recommend that the agency consider potential trail use conflicts between mountain bikers and stock, and incorporate signage that educates all user groups on proper trail etiquette and shared use practices.. Finally, we recommend the Forest Service install adequate signage and barriers to prevent unauthorized motorized activity, especially if the northern edge of the trail intersects a seasonal road.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments for the proposed Lost Ant Recreation Management Project. Should you have any questions regarding these comments and recommendations, please do not hesitate to contact me. We look forward to working with the New Meadows Ranger District on this and future projects.

Respectfully submitted,



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