

Norton, Michelle - FS, HAMILTON, MT

From: mailagent@thesoftedge.com on behalf of Mike MacKeage <mailagent@thesoftedge.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 19, 2022 11:52 AM
To: FS-comments-northern-bitterroot-stevensville
Subject: Bitterroot Front Project

Dear Mr. Brown:

I am writing regarding the Bitterroot Front Project. I enjoy recreating on public lands and believe it is important for the public to be able to have access to these lands. I support keeping these areas healthy through proper treatments to avoid closures and to protect important water sources for multiple-use.

Throughout the years we have seen an increase in devastating wildfires that have destroyed public lands. Radical conservation groups are working to destroy the lands they claim to protect by blocking active management projects. Land agencies should be able to manage the land through proper treatments to avoid these fires and protect our lands and watersheds.

Not only do fires cause temporary closures of roads but often times those lead to permanent closures. I am encouraged to see the USFS acknowledge the important role that roads play in fire treatments and fire prevention by acting as control lines. Wherever new control lines are constructed and the length of the control line is within required lengths, the USFS should conduct analyses to evaluate keeping them open for wildfire control and multiple-use. Public land use and recreation has grown tremendously the past few years and will probably continue to do so. There is a desire more than ever to connect with the outdoors and have those experiences. The USFS has an obligation to the public to keep the land healthy through adequate treatments and proper education to ensure access will continue.

I also support the objectives of this project to maintain healthy watersheds and protect hydrologic resources. With the West experiencing prolonged drought, we can't make it rain and snow more, but we can manage our forest better to ensure that more water is available for use in our reservoirs and rivers.

I believe the Forest Service should create an alternative that addresses not only maintaining current roads and trail systems but is a true recreation alternative that analyzes adding additional opportunities for recreation.

Sincerely,

Mike MacKeage

Boise, ID 83702