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Organization:

Title:

Comments: MY PERSONAL Comments on the Colville National Forest Revised Forest Plan.

This in NO WAY is the opinion of any group, board or agency I am a member of.

Please remove my contact information before posting to the internet.

XXXXXXXXXX

Thank you for the chance to comment on the plan.

I would like to start out with some positive things to say about the Forest Service Sullivan Lake.

Forest Service employs three local people that I know of, that live in this district. These employees and their families are very invested in the community. Their kids are growing up or grew up here. They volunteer for fire department, school, local clubs and events. They are committed to this area and what happens here.

Things that the Forest Service was previously handled better.

I remember growing up watching commercials depicting a happy Smokey the Bear reminding me that only I can prevent forest fires. He was there to help remind us it is OUR LANDS and we need to protect them. I also have positive memories of interacting with Rangers growing up in southern Oregon while hunting and fishing. Most of those interactions were positive. The Rangers were friendly, kind, and seemed to truly enjoy working in the forests protecting our lands.

NOW

The last time I saw Smokey in a parade he had laser pointers on him during much of the parade route, in silent protest of local practices of the USFS on our lands.

Yes it is our lands.

The USFS was created way back in the 1870's and its primary mission was to administer the federally managed lands FOR THE PEOPLE. Their motto is "Caring for the land and serving people.

Many of the Rangers back in the day were prior farmers, ranchers, loggers and miners. They were people who worked the land, understood the land and understood the public's fundamental right to use their lands.

Fast forward to today and we find many within the USFS with starkly different attitudes towards just whose land it is and how they interact with the public who pays their salaries. My personal experiences with the USFS firefighters are 100% positive as long as they understood my rights to my property and animals and did not get in the way of those rights during a fire.

Now I am seeing almost on a weekly basis, all over the west, regulatory and management agencies paid for by

the people, to manage the people's land turning against the very people who entrusted them to take care of their lands

The Forest Service LEO's, (law enforcement officers) have garnered an "us vs them" attitude and it is alarming. I now have to always question the job description these people think they are empowered with and what they actually have power to enforce. This unfortunately seems to be the norm with some USFS Supervisors and staff.

Things the Forest Service does right for the Colville National Forest, Sullivan Lake area:

The District Ranger here works well with Pacific Northwest Trail Association Board Members. I would like to see more of the PN trail off the road and have it come down the old flume bed from Mill Pond. I would also like to see it get off the road near Flume Creek Boundary Road and head behind the private property towards Abercrombie / Hooknose. I look forward to the growth of hikers on the PNT in North Pend Oreille County.

A couple of polite suggestions.

The plan was hard to read. Hard to research even on the CD format and wording at times difficult to understand.

Language needs to be simplified and clear to the laymen and users of the land.

Everything pertaining to specific aspects of the land for example recreational prospecting, or timber harvest should be easily searchable and all in one place.

After receiving my CD it took an hour and five phone calls stretching over two days to the Forest Service to get it to open up to be read in English. When I allowed the computer to open it up as I would any folder on my hard drive all that was visible was what appeared to be HTML.

When I did open it up I was not able to search for specific topics on the CD to narrow my reading time down.

I am for the

NO ACTION PLAN.

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The plan we have now was never fully implemented and has been amended 42 times already which proves we can tailor it to the local land and county needs.

Why I feel the way I do.

Pend Oreille County 911,966 sq acres

Federal Forest Land in Pend Oreille County 269,631 sq acres

Percent of land in Pend Oreille County not in control of the people of the county. 29.5659 %

- 30% of the land in Pend Oreille County is under federal control.
- 2012 Distribution Pend Oreille County received \$968,892.06
- That is a payment of \$3.59 an acre. Counties could manage the land much better.

Things I don't like to see the Forest Service doing in this area.

#### THE PLAN

- The language of the plan is to vague, nothing set, may, potentially, might be a concern is used way too much. As are trigger words like bulltrout.

Forgetting the Mission Statement of the USDA

- The forest service should be supporting the development of rural communities, providing economic opportunities for farm and rural residents, as well as expanding global markets for agricultural and forest products and services.

Too much wilderness

With less than 1% of visitors to the forest going into the wilderness we have way too much land being kept out of reach of the general public. Adding to that would be the death nail in the coffin of all rural forest communities which rely so heavily the forest.

Our forest in the Forest Service's own words, should sustain a 170 million board foot growth and the bureaucracy does not allow enough logging. We need more logging to gain the forest health, have better access for fires and recreation. Yet another reason to get the logging back in to profitable hands like private industry.

Closing of roads

- Should not be happening.
- Roads should be open, and open to all; with a travel at your own risk warning.

Road Density

All roads should be permanent with no need to remove a road only to have to rebuild it in the future, and at a greater cost. Just make everyone travel at their own risk and do not harass users who chose to help maintain them.

Others have commented on about roads needing to be safe for public travel. This is too much of a bureaucratic mess now. Open the roads.

To quote another commenter, "We all know that however we access the forest the U S Government is not responsible for our actions."

With roads open and accessible to all we would draw a huge amount of tourism to the area. There is plenty of land here for all of us to use.

Having ATVs not allowed on roads already used by street vehicles is a good sample of bureaucratic nonsense. The excuse is they are made to go off road and people will tear things up. But to quote another commenter, "a street legal jeep with twice the weight and 10 times the horsepower that is also designed for off-road is allowed on them. Which vehicle do you think would do more damage? The majority of ATV riders are responsible people and you should not be allowed to exclude everyone for the actions of a few."

I agree!

#### Land under federal control

- We have way too much of it already

#### Poor forest management practices

- The majority of timber land is over grown, unhealthy, dead and dying.
- Permit process for rock collecting as well as Christmas tree cutting on public land, wood cutting, berries and mushroom picking is confusing. USFS staffs believe you have to have a permit to pick berries and mushrooms for personal consumption.

#### Poor harvest policies of wild growing foods

- Permit process is over used for people who are just picking berries to eat or keep. Forcing a permit for people not selling and not picking more than the amount allowed for personal use is ridiculous.

#### Timber thinning and harvest.

- This important practice is nonexistent. Timber is so overgrown in this district, (known as the asbestos district) Colville National Forest Sullivan Lake District, that starting burning it is going to decimate the landscape. We will have the worst fires in recorded history.
- Harvest is too expensive for the Forest Service to manage through the bureaucratic nonsense. Private businesses should be encouraged to harvest and should take over the management of the public forest on a more proactive management plan. Harvest should be positively impacting the local community it is taken out of. Tax from sales of timber would better benefit the area.

### Cattle grazing

- If I understand correctly all the plans say no change. But our own forest manager said plan P was the best option for grazing.
- Grazing needs to happen more and at lower cost and restriction on stubble length. The writing is on the wall. It shows you are implementing cut backs and show future plans for a complete removal of grazing from the forest.
- Grazing need to happen with less cost to the cattle owner, till over growth is reduced by 90 percent. Just traveling the back roads in this national forest. You can go from one parcel to another and without looking at a map see private land looking amazingly healthy and state land slightly worse and then National Forest over grown, diseased and dying.
- We need our local cattlemen to be able to make a living, grow food locally and make a profit doing it. It is a boost to our economy, provides healthy grass fed beef that is healthier than anything you can buy in the supermarket.

### Fire prevention

- More of it done more often to reduce the risk to the communities and private land owners.

### Woodcutting

- More of it happening at lower cost to those harvesting it for personal use.
- Areas like Crescent Lake Camp Ground and others need to be open to wood cutters. The thinning of dead trees and wind fall will help considerably to reduce the risk of fire and injuries to the public.

### Closing of campgrounds

- Should not be happening at all.
- If the Forest Service cannot manage the camp grounds then they all should be turned over to the county.

### Concessionaires running campgrounds

- Concessionaires are abusive to locals, campers, bicyclist, street legal motorcyclist, parents with strollers' elderly and disabled on motorized wheelchairs.
- They are abusive to anyone parking on county right away.
- These campgrounds should be turned over to and run by the county they are in. Having people who are invested in the area running them would foster better relations with the forest service in the communities.

## The Forest Service NON motorized plan

All the plans have too much trail taken away from the mountain bikes except the no action plan.

Wilderness trails and the upkeep to maintain the trail open using cross cut saws is over reaching and out of touch with the world. Or better put how do we keep the trails open? Our volunteers like the back country horsemen are growing older and not being replaced by a younger generation. When you have 12 to 20 foot thick treefalls as we do in Idaho and Washington on the PNT it makes the trail unusable by most and unclearable by our ageing volunteers.

Forest Plan alternative P does not allow for more new trails of any kind and holds at the same system. This keeps the Pacific Northwest Trail unfinished and not locked down or off the roads.

## WHERE ARE THE SNOW VEHICLES IN THE PLAN?

- This plan appears is incomplete and should include them.
- I was told it is something Forest Service is looking at in the plan now and will be coming out with it after the plan so I must comment on it now. I was also told the plan focuses on zoning and there is a table in the plan for it. I just cannot seem to find it.
- I also cannot find a winter non-motorized use map.

People who are against motorized use of the forest have been missinformed about the non-motorized use of the rural forest and economic impact.

I personally feel there is room for all non- motorized and motorized uses in this forest.

- People who are against motorized use do not realize that roads accessible to licensed street vehicles cars are not accessible to all motorized vehicles.
- Forest Service staff does not realize that people can ride a street legal motorcycle on roads; into the campground and facilities anywhere a car can go. EVEN IF THAT MOTORCYCLE LOOKS LIKE A DIRT BIKE to them.

Duel Sport Riders bring an average of \$100.00+ into each of the communities they stop in. Please EDUCATE Forest Service Personnel AND CONCESSIONAIRES. I had more than 30 riders come through on a sunny weekend last month and check in with me about places to stay, eat and play. 17 out of 30 of them were harassed at Sullivan Lake for driving into the day use area and parking in the car park. They were getting ready to look for a camp spot were told it was illegal for them to be there. They then traveled on into Metaline. A few bought food and gas at the store and they then they all headed on over to Northport to stay the weekend over there. They had planned a two day stop in our area and left taking their spending money elsewhere.

- Hikers and kayakers on average spend less than \$10.00 in the communities they visit unless they are long distance hikers or paddlers. Those will spend an average of \$30.00 a day in those same communities. The amount increases slightly if they stay in a local motel or hotel. Most do not.
- Motorized users spend between \$200.00 a day to \$400 a day depending on if they brought family with

them. Amounts go up with motorboats and ATV's. Down with travel trailers and motorhomes. (This data comes from tracking and questioning of tourists in North Pend Oreille County completed by volunteers from the Selkirk Trail Blazers, Pacific Northwest Trail Association, Boundary Tours and the North Pend Oreille Chamber of Commerce. Questionnaires were taken in person and on line at local events such as That Dam Paddle, Tri Town Float Down, Affair on Main Street and Local Campgrounds. 100 people a year were asked over three years, from 2011 to 2013 )

#### Recreational Prospecting

- Page 70 of the draft 1998 through 2017 does not address recreational prospecting.
- More prospecting and longer times allowed for dredging should be implemented to clean up the creeks.
- Just while running a sluice box for a day in August two years ago my son and I cleaned up a half of quart jar of mercury out of Sullivan Creek.
- The fry in the creek were gathering so thick at the end of our little sluice box we could not see the stream bed. At the end of the day adult fish were seen in a spawning behavior, appearing to lay eggs in the gravel bed we had run through the box. It was amazing to watch the fish sweep and dig a hole and settle into it while others gathered around.
- My son did not get much gold but we had allot of fun and a great learning experience.

#### Research Natural areas

- These areas seem to be able to be set up without a second thought. There is already too many of them and to many restrictions on land they are on.

#### Guide and Outfitting

- Please tell me where to find this in the forest plan so I can comment on it. I do not believe it was addressed.

As I have time to read the plan and get more information from Forest Service on questions I have called about I will be making further comments.

#### Questions still unanswered

Miles of trail broke down by county currently open and pending shut down by plan and county.

Special Use Authorization language is confusing.

Where is the Special Use permit process is clearly and concisely spelled out?

I also had trouble finding information on the process for declaring wet lands and what constitutes that process.

Where is the process spelled out for claiming a county road as a FS road? What is the process when this has

been done in error and a community has suffered monetarily because of it? Should it take a year or more to get answers?

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