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First name: Dan

Last name: Holman

Organization: Flowery Trail Community Association

Title:

Comments: Amy Dillion - Forest Plan - Revision Team

Colville National Forest

Colville Supervisor Office

765 South Main

Colville, WA 99114

Re: Draft Colville National Forest Proposed Land and Resource Management Plan

Dear Ms. Dillion

I am writing on behalf of myself and Flowery Trail Community Association. This year will be the fortieth year I have live at Flowery Trail Community Association, which is a neighbor to the Colville National Forest. My compliments to you and your colleagues for the time and work involved with this massive project. I will keep my comments to a minimum as this is an area where I do have some very strong feelings on many issues discussed in the Proposed Land and Resource Management Plan.

I have been a Board Member of F.T.C.A. since the 1970's. I am the President of "Firewise Communities", of which F.T.C.A. is a member. I have been trained to evaluate and help our members "Firewise" both their home and surrounding property. Two years ago F.T.C.A. was honored and chosen as an original member of Washington Fire Adapted Communities, this is funded by B.L.M. I am also the lead person for WAFAC. I am very concerned with issues dealing with the health of our National Forests, the heavy fuel loads we currently have, and how to help members of F.T.C.A. live with and survive the Wildfire that will someday burn through our development.

Last November 3, 2015 I attended a "Wildfire & Society" conference at Central Washington University. The keynote speaker was Alan Ager, PhD., a research forester at the Missoula Fire Sciences Laboratory, USDA Forest Service. His talked mirrored the theme of this conference, addresses many issues discussed in your Proposed Management Plan, and brings many issues together we all face with potential WUI wildfire risks. Sometime in the future all forested land, does not matter if it is National Forest, D.N.R., or private property, will be involved with a Wildfire. How best to manage this forest is the challenge.

The statement (line 1329) "Use of natural ignitions for resource benefits would be expanded to the whole forest", this needs to be stressed to the general public because the general public still feels all wildfires need to be put out. Allowing wildfires to burn will work to a degree. The problem is the lack of fires in our forests for so many years with heavy fuel buildup. (An example of a wildfire that was left to burn and the end result was not successful is the Wolverine Fire.) We need to be careful where we do allow a wildfire to do its fuel reduction work. We also need to be prepared to defend homes, property, and lives from a wildfire. Rather than lowering timber harvest, we would like to see consideration to increased logging and prescribed burning to help with lowering fuel loads. This has been shown to reduce total carbon loads and produces a healthier forest.

The National Forests are managed for all to enjoy. The closing of roads being proposed will actually hinder the public from getting into the National Forest. The area around F.T.C.A. has experienced many roads that were used for firewood gathering or huckleberry picking being gated or bulldozed at the entrance. Please consider leaving current access to our National Forest open for all to use.

My last comment is the most important to Flowery Trail Community Association. This issue also affects 49

Degrees North, Chewelah Peak Learning Center, and to all those that live along Flowery Trail Road. The Alternative B and Alternative R recommend wilderness for "Quartzite", the preferred proposal is for a "Backcountry" proposal for "Quartzite". This may have a large impressive rock formation, but this is not a "Wilderness", nor is it "Backcountry". This area can be walked to from the town of Chewelah. This proposal borders many private homes, private property, and comes very close to Flowery Trail Road and 49 Degrees North. This is not a description of a "Wilderness" or "Backcountry" area. This is what a special interest group wants for their private use.

If anything needs to be done with "Quartzite", it would be a massive fuel reduction project. Anyone living to the north or to the west of "Quartzite" is currently at risk when a wildfire starts in the "Quartzite" area. When a wildfire does start in Quartzite with its current heavy fuel loads, what will be the response if "Quartzite" is a "Wilderness", or has a "Backcountry" designation? It looks like there would not be a response. Those living along Flowery Trail Roads, F.T.C.A., Chewelah Peak Learning Center, 49 Degrees North, and all those living to the east towards Pend Oreille Valley are at risk. History of recent fires in Central Washington tells me the embers/firebrands will be over a mile in advance of the fire and everyone is in sever danger. By putting a "Wilderness" or "Backcountry" classification on "Quartzite" the Forest Service is putting all of us living to the north or west of "Quartzite" in grave danger. Please consider the heavy current health of the forest and current fuel loads in "Quartzite" and consider fuel reduction projects such as logging and prescribed burning.

Thank You, Dan Holman