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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Green water ATM

Dear Mt. Baker/Snoqualmie National Forest Service,

It comes as crushing news to me, my family, my friends and my community that the US Forest Service is considering further restriction of access to public lands: Lands that were set aside and paid for by the public; For recreation, enjoyment, and protection of the outdoors.

Thousands of individuals chose the State of Washington, specifically the East side of Puget Sound for its close proximity to hunting, fishing, mountain biking, motorcycling, berry picking, and camping. As it already stands now, most of the forest road infrastructure in the Cascade Mountains east of Puget Sound is ALREADY gated off, and the public disallowed access to the lands that they pay for.

It was just this week that I learned that over 130 square miles of land near Enumclaw (that the public owned) was sold to the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe. The Tribe has already started to gate-off access to these lands, enforcing its unnegotiable stand on trespassing, and have even threatened those who "trespass" in the forest; Forest land that we've responsibly shared for years.

Camping underneath Mt. Rainier near Haller Pass is now just a memory. A picnic at Lonesome Lake: Just a memory. Fishing in the White River: just a memory.

I'm scared. I'm scared that the already-struggling business owners along Highway 410, business like the "Last fuel for 52 miles" gas station, Naches Tavern, and Greenwater Outfitters (just to name a few) will have to close their doors in an already arid economy. I'm scared that my family no longer will have an escape from the pollution, sirens, horns, and sounds of the city. I'm scared that the few and thinning number of campgrounds that remain will be full before I even get out of work on Friday evenings.

These businesses rely on the thousands of land users of the area surrounding Greenwater who specifically visit for this particular area for its proximity and breathtaking views of Mt. Rainier.

I beg that you consider alternatives. Downgrade the maintenance level of the roads. All roads can revert to "Road Maintenance Level 2". Do we really need to bulldoze, grade, and provide new gravel as often as we do? Stop fixing potholes. Put up signs that say, "Unmaintained road". We are ok with this. Increase the number of fee-based campgrounds. The people that enjoy these lands are some of the biggest supporters for environmental consciousness and protection of resources that you will ever find.

I hope that the United States Forest Service deeply considers the economic impact that closing these roads will have to businesses and community's...impacts beyond just a "line item" on the annual budget. These impacts affect King, Pierce, AND Yakima County. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Brown

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