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First name: Emily

Last name: Waters

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to oppose building a road across the Pumice Plain inside the Mt. St. Helens National Monument. One of the greatest learning experiences I had was when I got to do research within the Monument for an introductory environmental science class. We spent a week at the monument, and my own personal project focused on the presence of invasive species in distinct successional stage environments in and around the monument. Although the research was amateur, the importance of having such a unique and complex living laboratory in our backyard was impressed upon me. If nothing else, the mere fact that we have an undisturbed landscape to study as it recovers from the 1980 eruption is worth preserving. In addition to scientific values, the monument, and in particular the pumice plain, is a highly valuable scenic and recreational asset that would be severely diminished by the construction of a road through it. While I understand the safety concerns and reasons for wishing to improve access, I urge the Forest Service to reconsider it's alternatives and select one that would have less of a visual, permanent impact on the landscape.