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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Service:

Please consider this message as our comment on the proposed Spirit Lake Tunnel Intake Gate Replacement and Geotechnical Drilling Project, within Mount Saint Helens National Monument. The project would entail a temporary road across the Pumice Plain bordering on Spirit Lake.

I grew up in Portland and moved to the east coast as a requirement of my military service. My family spent many happy weekends camping and hiking at Spirit Lake in the years before the 1980 eruption. We want the Forest Service to protect the lands, waters, and the recovering natural ecosystems, so future generations will be able to enjoy Spirit Lake and its surroundings and learn about the eruption and how nature is re-creating the landscape. Research on the natural recovery process is an important activity in the national monument.

We urge the Forest Service to reject the idea of a temporary road as described in the project proposal. (If it is supposed to be in service for five years, it is hardly "temporary.") On a pumice surface, we believe it would be very difficult if not impossible to erase the impacts of the road after the project is completed. The road would cross five permanent streams and ten seasonal streams, creating sediment erosion that could impair the aquatic ecosystem in the lake.

Recreation visitors would see the road and hear the noise of project activities from several popular areas, such as Harry's Ridge, Windy Ridge, Johnston Ridge, and the Mount Margaret Backcountry.

Please hold up this project and look for other alternatives that will not involve the impacts of the Pumice Plain road.

Thank you for considering our thoughts.