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First name: Bryan

Last name: Ford

Organization: Selkirk Trailblazers

Title: Sceretary

Comments: Selkirk Trailblazers

P.O. Box 282

Ione, Washington 99139

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The Selkirk Trailblazers have discussed the Sxwuytn 'Trail' - Kaniksu Connections Project #54315 in depth with our membership and we find areas of both agreement and disagreement with the current proposal.

We are fully supportive of all efforts being undertaken to reduce fuel loads and increase logging activity thru proposed timber sales in this area. These activities benefit the public by reducing risk of catastrophic, large scale forest fires and increasing economic activity in Pend Oreille County, which is badly needed. As most of our members live in the local area and will be the people most directly impacted, both of the aforementioned benefits are appreciated. We are also fully supportive of all work in this project that increases trail connectivity with our neighboring lands in Idaho as this increases recreational opportunities for the public and will assist in increasing economic activity for the local community as people come to take advantage of new areas.

We are strongly opposed to the decommissioning of any roads in this area, or in any part of the forest as they run counter to providing benefit to the membership of our organization, the local communities affected, or the general public. Our opposition is based on the following aspects of maintaining the current road network;

1.Both the Gray Paper (2018) and McCauley paper (2019) support keeping even more roads open for forest management that ultimately mitigates climate change and reduces global greenhouse gasses.

2.Roads support law enforcement/first responder/search and rescue personnel as they conduct their missions. In the event of criminal activity in the forest and injured/lost persons in the forest, time is of the essence. The existing road network is used by our law enforcement/first responder community in these instances to access parts of the forest. As we have members who are part of the law enforcement community, the emergency medical services community, and the search and rescue community, we understand full well that being able to use an existing road, even if we cannot drive wheeled vehicles on it, can save hours in accessing areas of the forest.

3.Roads support fire fighters when forest fires break out. Our fire-fighting community is a limited resource. Their ability to access areas in the forest by use of an existing road is a huge advantage in the event that a forest fire begins to burn. With the current fuel load existing across the forest a very small fire can become a very large fire in short order. The use of the existing road network speeds the response time of firefighters and thus allows them to begin their work of reducing the catastrophic damage that occurs from large scale, catastrophic forest fires.

4.Roads support the logging economy. The Selkirk Trailblazers are fully supportive of all efforts to log and reduce fuel loads on our public lands and we live in the communities where loggers live and work. As proposed timber sales are a part of this proposal, it seems counter-productive to look at decommissioning roads that our local loggers can use to access areas for future timber harvesting. Roads that have been built either using taxpayer dollars or by the logging community as they work in the forest have value and they should not be decommissioned. The economic benefit for the taxpayer is obvious; the more expensive it is to harvest the timber, the smaller the return from that timber to the taxpayer, who is ultimately the land owner.

5. Finally, we at the Selkirk Trailblazers are acutely aware of how blessed we truly are to live in an area that has so much to offer to the recreational community. Some members of this organization have moved specifically to this area in order to enjoy the many outdoor activities that are available year round. These activities involve both motorized and non-motorized recreation on our public land. We firmly believe that the existing road network should be left in place in order to facilitate outdoor recreation. Whether it is the avid horseman/horsewomen, the bicyclist, the hunter walking the roads in pursuit of their trophy animal or members of the motorized recreation community, both summer and winter, we use the existing road network to access our public lands and enjoy them as intended.