Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/19/2020 11:00:00 AM
First name: Jean
Last name: Clancy
Organization: Back Country Horsemen
Title:
Comments: Hello, Dean,

Thank you for your attention to our previously expressed concerns about the Flat Country Project. I represent the Emerald Empire Chapter of Back Country of Oregon in now responding to the DEIS which was issued in January 2020.

We reiterate our earlier requests that roads #2664 (to Robinson Lake); #2643, #2657,#2649, and #865/640 (to Tenas/Benson Lakes); and #2649 and #676 (To Fingerboard Prairie) be maintained and improved for horse trailer access.

Trailer parking and turnaround at trailheads are requested.

We also insist that thinning project areas that abut the Mt. Washington Wilderness boundary, especially trail # 3508 (Deer Butte Trail) and trail #3502 (Benson Trailhead segment), be protected by sufficient setbacks. It is our understanding that there is no requirement for contractors to create any setback at all from wilderness or trail boundaries. Trail #3508 wanders in and out of said boundary and is highly vulnerable to damage from thinning work. It is hard from maps in the DEIS to accurately determine which project cuts abut this trail. At least three appear to do so: 10F, 9D, and 16B.

Our organization has worked for nearly two decades to clear and maintain this and other trails in this section of Mt. Washington Wilderness. We cannot overstate how important this trail is to us and to all other visitors. It connects the Wilderness from west to east, gives access to the Scott Mountain and Benson/ Tenas Lakes areas, and provides the closest Central Cascades Wilderness access for those of us on the west side of the mountains. This trail network will become all the more important to recreationists as the Central Cascades Wilderness Management Project proceeds. It is of utmost importance that protection of trails #3508 and #3502 be enforced so that thinning and post-fuel treatments be set back as far as possible from them.

We also restate that adequate trailhead parking, turnaround for trailers, and trailhead toilets should be priority uses for captured funds from the project.

Thank you again for your attention to our concerns. Jean Clancey

cc: Jonathan Erickson, McKenzie River Ranger District