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Organization:
Title:
Comments: January 10, 2020

IPNF, comments-northern-idpanhandle-bonners-ferry@usda.gov : Jennifer.anderson3@usda.gov

Bonners Ferry Ranger District, Attn: Jennifer Anderson, 6826 Main St, Bonners Ferry, ID 83805

Re: Westside Restoration Project #56888

To Whom it May Concern,

Please consider the following comments regarding the proposed Westside Restoration Project.

I am a third-generation Boundary County resident who appreciates all that the forest provides, including scenic beauty, recreation, and habitat, along with commercial forest products which have historically supported our local economy.

Objectives:

I support the efforts of the Forest Service to actively manage our National Forests. As comprehensive planning to reduce the impacts of wildfire is imperative, I appreciate the primary objectives of fuels reduction and improving landscape resiliency, and fully support the methods listed to include commercial harvest along with precommercial thinning and prescribed burning.

Other objectives listed include improving both motorized and non-motorized recreation experiences. I support improving access to accommodate increasing demand and provide for safety.

I also support the improvements and construction of non-motorized trails. Outdoor recreation can provide tremendous health and economic benefits for both individuals and communities. As the population of Boundary County continues to increase, it is important to plan for and provide access to local recreational opportunities while maintaining forest health and habitat sustainability.

Another objective listed is to benefit the local economy. While the sale of commercial products is a

major economic driver which I fully support, I would like to recognize the growing economic importance of outdoor recreation, which generates $7.8 billion in consumer spending in Idaho, according to the 2017 Outdoor Recreation Economy report from the Outdoor Industry Association, as reported in the Idaho Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2018. Idaho Parks and Recreation studies determined that OHV participants spent over $434 million in 2012, and snowmobilers spent $197 million in 2015.

Proposed Actions:

I support the maintenance and reconstruction of roads for transportation. I recommend that a couple select roads slated for storage be left open for OHV use when storage is not required for core habitat. Off highway use is a growing industry and there are currently no designated OHV trails in this area. Having designated trails may help to curb attempts at illegal access which can degrade the landscape.

I support all of the recreation improvements being proposed, and am interested to hear more details about the proposed warming hut, along with changes to and additional parking areas. I would also be interested in hearing why trail reconstruction is preferred over easement negotiation for the existing routes. I would like to see trail reconstruction/construction include provisions for both equestrian and mountain bike use for the longer trails which are suitable for mixed-use (nonmotorized).

The proposed Roman Nose Warming Hut is an important safety measure with potential economic benefits. I recommend the warming hut include provisions for trash disposal and a toilet.

I would hope that the proposed parking areas along Snow Creek Rd at the 3 and 5.5 mile are planned to provide designated turn-around areas for vehicles with trailers and include provisions for winter use.

Sincerely yours,

Olivia Drake