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Title: Ready, Set Go! Coordinator

Comments: Lake Wenatchee Fire & Rescue is the local fire district within the Upper Wenatchee Pilot Project (UWPP) and I serve as the Ready, Set, Go! Coordinator for the district. The Ready, Set, Go! Program is aimed at educating the local residents and visitors about wildfire and how to prepare for and react to a wildfire should one occur in their area.

One of the prongs of the program is for the residents to be prepared for an evacuation if the need arises and to know the route options available.

I bring your attention to the Ponderosa and Standing Rock Ranch subdivisions and Camp 12 Rd. located within the UWPP. This consists of about 450 full-time residents and 1,000+ residents and visitors on summer weekends. Today, Camp 12 Rd. toward Plain is the only way out of the subdivisions.

Up until about 2012, Camp 12 Road consisted of a county maintained road from downtown Plain through most of the Ponderosa subdivision where a county primitive road takes over into Standing Rock. The road continued as a logging road where it becomes County maintained again near Fire Station 32 on the Chumstick Highway. Around 2012, a washout occurred on the logging road and the landowner at the time, Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), decline to fix it and closed the road.

During the Chiwakum Fire in 2014, a Type-1 Incident Management Team was in the area ready and willing to repair the washout and reopen Camp 12 Rd. toward the Chumstick due to the wildfire heading toward the subdivisions and impending evacuation. The Forest Service and local fire district were in favor of it, but DNR was against it and no work was performed. Sometime around 2018-19, the DNR portion of the logging road was sold/transferred to Forest Service ownership.

Within the UWPP, the Forest Service has identified a specific number of miles of roadway the Forest Service is considering to decommission in their proposed alternatives. I have to assume the Forest Service has identified these roads because the Forest Service knows the miles of roadway considered to be decommissioned, but no where in the project scoping are the roads identified. This shows no transparency on the part of the Forest Service. This is a disservice to the community by not identifying the roads considered to be decommissioned and allowing for specific public comment.

We are requesting Camp 12 Rd. NOT be one of the roads under consideration for decommissioning. I am asking Camp 12 Rd. be repaired during this project as it is within the project area and it be accessible during an emergency evacuation. The Lake Wenatchee Fire & Rescue District would be agreeable to the road being gated with accessibility during an emergency.

Over the last few years, these subdivisions have seen a concerted effort to Firewire their communities to reduce the spread of a wildfire. The Fire District has invested in the community by upgrading the emergency evacuation siren.

The residents of these subdivision have only the one winding road to get out of the subdivision should an evacuation occur. The only other way out is by air or jumping in the river which are impractical options on a large scale. Leaving Camp 12 Rd. open and improving it, will reduce anxiety among residents, reduce injuries and likely save lives during a wildfire evacuation.