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Title:

Comments: Comment on Coyote Valley proposal.

The Forest Service's ability to manage public lands within the Forest system has been hampered by budget cuts. I am glad to see this plan for Coyote. It has been something needed badly for this area. The Coyote Valley is a very special place within our Eastern Sierra. People can access this area and explore it with a number of roads and trails.

Numerous outdoor activities are available in this area for all users. I have strong reservations or concerns with some of this plan, overall I am glad to see this area get attention it has needed for some time.

In my experience of Coyote, with living in Bishop for close to 30 years. I have seen times when you most likely would be in Coyote Valley and not see another person or persons over vehicles. Today, when I visit it, there are several users in the area even on week days, but on the weekend it explodes. The last trip into Coyote my wife and I counted 43 vehicles in three separate parties and some individual users. If the area is made more assessable and easier to get to, it will not be able to handle that many visitors. Also as it is now, the quality of users able to get to it is generally very good, who will not trash it. The ones who will trash such places cannot access it with their types of vehicles.

I have concern with the road work to repair and restore different areas of roads within Coyote Valley.

Coyote Valley Road.

There are sections of this road that need some attention to address safety concerns. This route provides access to the Valley as it is, presents a good experience for off road users who want a challenge with some level of difficulty. I think this aspect of Coyote is its saving grace as a destination for folks to experience if they take the challenge the route presents.

It's a destination that needs to be treated in a sustainable manner that continues the experience of the trip in and out, and the travel throughout the area, as well as enhancing the off road camp out time that the experienced users enjoy.

The repair of road sections should lend to safety first. Then comes maintenance to help prevent further erosion. The onion creek reroute is not needed to reroute away from the seep where Onion creek originates. This could be a lot more easily done without creating a new grade above the existing grade, this route down to Baker creek road and to Big Pine, currently is a good road for a challenge to the more experienced OHV off road drivers as well. The current road location through the seep area could be developed with native rock and soils to elevate the road through the area. Line the route with rocks and boulders to discourage off road travel. Seepage systems utilizing perforated drain pipe can be laid under the road section in the seep area. I would like to see the single track that is in the plan to be utilized for a by pass of this section, to be developed into a single track, with the existing road in question to be left to four wheel vehicles. It is signed as most difficult at either end.

This section has been improved with hand work after a recent rash of vehicle accidents and rescues in 2020 and 2021. Safety concerns there were alleviated and I imagine the incidents pretty much stopped. Instead of the proposed reroute, do a minimal amount of work and cost in comparison to the proposed alignment change's cost. Preserve the present experience as with Coyote Valley Road.

This road further down toward Big Pine has work to be done to correct problems and maintain the road in a safe and difficult manor. This can be done with simple hand work from a small crew with various hand tools.

Whereas with some sections of Coyote will involve some machine work with placement and replacement of some drainage facilities as well.

I oppose the Baker creek road segment closer without any explanation and discussion of why it is being closed. The same with the green creek overlook. It had been discussed with a FS personnel with the understanding that it is a legitimate destination on the Coyote route system, There could be a low impact parking area laid out at the current location for people to park, to walk a short distance to enjoy the scenic overlook of Green lake and the mountains surrounding it. A low impact handicap access could be developed as well?

Reopening spur routes, this is a valuable decision to be included. I have been seeing heavier use of existing campsites where users have expanded the campsites with additional users having to compete for places to camp with the limited availability of campsites due to the closure of roads with camp sites on those routes. I have thought that it might be in part due to spur route closures which effectively took away several campsites. Also some deer camps are no longer available with these closures. One such deer camp I loved was one that is no longer available to access with the road closures. So I think it will help to open spur routes to help with opening camping opportunities to users.

The current location of the kiosk on Coyote Valley Road before the lower switch backs just needs some improvement to the turn out area. There is no need for parking there, other than for vehicles stopped to read the kiosk information and get a map of the area. I strongly disagree with trash receptacles being placed there. My experience with trash receptacles in such locations as this is that they will be a pain to deal with. The long term campers will fill them up and when containers are full trash will be left next to them for pick up. Take a look at the Poleta Open area's staging area, there are no trash receptacles there and the trash and litter problem is almost nonexistent. There was a problem with long term campers there who let litter blow out in the brush. Users who come to use the open area don't leave it trashy. I really do not think a toilet will be good either. Education is key, giving people direction. The existing kiosks have very good info regarding proper trail etiquette and various ways to practice stewardship. Inform people how to Tread lightly and to pack it in pack it out. Maps of the routes in the area with educational material on the back can be placed at the two kiosks.

The Forest service's new commitment to partnership is a needed direction in these times of dwindling monies to various departments and shortages of qualified people to work. Forests around the country and other govt. agencies are turning toward partnerships with user groups who can provide volunteer hours for match, but more importantly for needed labor to help with projects.

With partnerships a lot of the work to be done in this project can be done with less cost to the department. Again a lot of work being scoped out in this project can be done with less effort and costs and less impact.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these concerns and suggestions.

Sincerely,  
Glenn Clark  
Bishop.