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Comments: To Whom:

Just a rather short note to express my total support for the plan to decommission FS Road 478 along the South Fork of the Madison River. Having traveled this road during the past 20 years, often riding a bicycle with my son, I always questioned why that stretch had not been closed long ago. During dry periods the road is covered in a thick layer of talc-like dust that surely washes directly into the river during each rain event. This may well explain the reduction in insect food sources over the years that is caused by siltation of micro habitats in the stream bottom. This is a strictly anecdotal observation but is based on the presence of mud bars and loss of deeper holding areas for fish that one sees in wading the river.

The other valid reason for closure has to do with the flushing of muds and sediments into Hebgen Lake which is accelerated by the pounding that 478 takes from the wheels of every form of wheeled vehicle that uses the road.

This is a great plan and I do hope you will hold firm on your position to carry through. I also hope erosion mitigation is applied to areas along the South Fork where the new bike trail is being constructed at least through the period of re-vegetation.

I also favor increased limitations regarding seasonal ATV and dirt bike useage of roads within the North Fork area. As one who cuts wood each summer within this area, it is a rare day when I do not pick up and transport trash, both old and recent, from this area. I have also cleaned up shooting galleries that have used live trees as targets during their "event". The number of tracks leading from the established roads has increased over the years and I have, at times, seen ATVs spinning circles on the road surface in order to raise large dust devils. I have also prodded illegal campers from their spots.

Anecdotally once again, but the number of wildlife sightings and the number and variety of animal tracks seen throughout the summer and shoulder seasons has diminished greatly in the past decade as the number of ATV rentals has increased in town and we continue or journey toward becoming a Moab-type playground for population centers within easy reach. I believe strongly in the USFS "Multiple Use" philosophy until it reaches a point of multiple abuse, where we seem to have arrived in some areas of our local forests.

Thank you for all you do for our great forest resources. It is surely appreciated by this writer.

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