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Whitney Thayer

Environmental Coordinator

Huckleberry DFPZ Project

Whitman National Forest

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Dear Huckleberry Planning Team.

Thank You for the chance to give my comment on the Huckleberry Project. My name is _____, I live in Austin just across the county line on the Malheur, but we have property on the Wallowa-Whitman just below Greenhorn. These two forests are especially important to both me and my family, we have lived in these mountains for 119 years. My grandparents came to Austin in 1915 from Kentucky to work on the Sumpter Valley Railroad and we have been here ever since. We have seen the change in our forest over the last 50 years and hope we can make our voices heard to hopefully stop what has taken place over that time.

I attended your meeting in May at the Sumpter Fire Station, with concern regarding the fact you did not follow the NEPA process in your planning process, this being the fact you failed to hold meetings and include public participation. A big Thank You goes out to Whitman acting District Ranger Stephaney Kerley, who saw the mistake and turned it around. It has been a long time since I have seen someone from the forest service follow through with a statement they made at a meeting. Thank You.

Another place this office is lacking is communication, it is very hard to participate in a comment period when you have had no project public meetings, where the public can ask their questions, I say this because I called your office with a couple questions one that never did get answers, I am still waiting for Walter to call me back.

One question I had was, I noticed in the burn plan you speak of three different types of fire implementation, broadcast burning and prescribed fire, what is the difference between the two? Does broadcast burning do as much damage to the landscape as prescribed fire? If so, please do not do either. Pile and burn is less destructive in areas where no management has occurred for years. Every time we go to Baker, we look at the mess your prescribed fire left at Deer Creek and Morich Loop.

I also am wondering how you are going to do the logging and thinning in the project. Are you going to use

spacing between the trees, are you going to thin the small stuff and mechanically log the rest or are you going to do a clear cut on both sides of the road so it will look like a landing strip when you go through? It would be nice if you could get someone with an emasticator to go in and eat it up as you go. That way you would not have to burn it at all.

I would hope you are doing spacing and pile and burn. But something tells me NO.

These questions are why it is important that when you do the process, you give the public the information so they will know what is going to happen, then hold a public meeting so they can ask their questions and be able to give good comments. This is not a good comment because I am very unclear what the project is doing, your maps are not clear it is hard to tell where the project even is. Please do a better job at this the next time. The Forest Service needs to take a class in mapping, to figure out how to do it. I would think with all the fancy mapping equipment you have in your offices that the whole agency would put out some of the best maps around but I haven't seen that yet , your maps suck, what you need to include on your maps is the township and range, so folks can at least look at a normal map and tell what they are looking at, your maps are almost impossible to read.

I do support what you are doing, just not sure how you are doing it.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and again Thank You Stephanie Kerley for giving us the chance to comment.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
