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First name: John

Last name: Vogel

Organization: Oregon State Snowmobile Assoc.

Title: Public Lands Chair

Comments: Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision

My name is John Vogel, and I live in Hood River, I have lived in Central Oregon for over 45 years, and my family and I regularly use the Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests for activities like camping, boating and snowmobiling.

These forests are not just public lands - they are part of my everyday life. The proposed plan deeply concerns me because it threatens long-standing access that myself and people in my community depend on. I am submitting this comment because I want to ensure effective change happens to the preliminary draft plan as it does not meet me or my neighbors needs and to make sure our voices are heard and that our traditional use of the land is respected and protected.

1. Motorized Access Not Protected

The plan fails to guarantee continued motorized access to roads and areas my family have used for generations. Add a desired condition that clearly states motorized access will be maintained forest wide for all residents throughout the life of the plan.

2. Cross-Country Travel Not Allowed

Cross-country travel by ATV or pickup is no longer permitted, even where it's currently practiced. Include in the plan a standard affirming that cross-country travel is permitted across the forest, unless restricted through a separate public Travel Management process.

3. Participation of Wallowa Resources May Violate FACA

The Forest Service allowed Wallowa Resources to participate in the Blue Mountains Intergovernmental Council (BIC) without complying with public transparency rules under FACA. Remove any content influenced by improper advisory groups, disclose their role, and restart a public planning process that complies with the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

4. Plan Repeats the Withdrawn 2018 Version

Over 85% of this plan is identical to the 2018 version that was formally withdrawn by the agency itself in 2019. Start a new planning process using new analysis, public input, and direction from the 2019 withdrawal decision.

I respectfully request that the Forest Service revise the draft plan to protect motorized access, recognize rural traditions, and ensure that long-time users of these public lands are not excluded by vague zoning or process shortcuts.

This plan should reflect the needs of the people who live or visit here and rely on these forests - not just outside groups, or prior rejected plans. I appreciate the opportunity to comment and ask that you carefully consider the real-world impacts this plan will have on families like mine.

Thank you for your time and for taking public input seriously.