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Comments: After reviewing the Austin Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement, I am left with significant concerns about the proposed changes and how they will impact both the landscape and the people who rely on it. My family and I regularly access these areas using our side by side, and activities like hunting, fishing, gathering firewood, and general recreation are an important part of our lives and this rural community's way of life.

One of my main concerns is the shift to designated routes only-specifically, the use of "stored roads," which effectively eliminates cross-country travel and restricts access to roads that have traditionally been open to the public. The Draft EIS does not make clear why this level of restriction is necessary to meet the project's stated Purpose and Need. There is also a real risk that this approach lays the groundwork for even more access restrictions in the future. The lack of a clear, enforceable plan direction to support ongoing motorized access leaves rural residents uncertain about whether they'll still be able to meet basic household needs, like gathering firewood or responding to emergencies.

Emergency access and public safety are major concerns that have not been fully analyzed in the DEIS. If roads are closed or only "stored," how will emergency vehicles or local residents respond in urgent situations? In addition, the maps in the DEIS do not line up with definitions in the project or with statements made by staff, who have said no road closures are happening. This inconsistency makes it very hard for the public to understand what is actually being proposed and how it will affect access on the ground.

I am also troubled by what looks like an overstatement of timber production numbers in the DEIS. It appears the agency may be exaggerating these figures to justify the project, which could end up closing motorized access and creating unnecessary division between those who support access and those who depend on mill jobs-jobs that may never materialize if the numbers are not realistic. The DEIS should be straightforward about the actual timber mix, market feasibility, and how these assumptions affect the analysis.

There are also stream "restoration" projects proposed that involve placing large amounts of down and dead trees in stream areas. Past efforts in places like Camp Creek and the Middle Fork have resulted in unsightly blockages that limit access and impede water flow for other uses, including water rights. The DEIS does not clearly define what restrictions might be put in place in these restoration areas, or how they will impact access and resource use.

Given all these concerns, I am asking the Forest Service to provide clear, specific disclosure-including accurate maps and tables-so the public can understand what is being proposed. The analysis should clearly explain how each action is necessary to meet the project's Purpose and Need, and not go beyond what is required. If the agency says roads are open, then they should actually be open and accessible. Without this level of transparency and on-the-ground impact analysis, it is very difficult for the public to provide meaningful input or trust the decision-making process.