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Organization:

Title:

Comments: The Blue Mountains forests are deeply tied to how my family and community live, work, and spend time together. For the last forty years, the Northside Unit has been my stomping grounds. I've raised my children in the American traditions of fishing, hunting, and woodsmanship right here in Grant County, and now I'm passing those same values on to my grandchildren. My family hunts, camps, gathers firewood, and we enjoy snowmobiling and ATV riding on the roads throughout Grant County-these activities are a core part of our lives. Harvesting mushrooms has been a blessing for generations in my family, and I do not believe any government agency has the right to charge local residents for picking mushrooms from the forest floor. With the cost of living and gas already so high, adding unnecessary fees only makes it harder for families like mine. The final forest plan must protect and maintain all existing motorized access, and restore access where it has already been reduced. Wildlife and habitat management must not be used as a reason to take away motorized access that families, workers, and older or less-mobile residents depend on. The Forest Service must be fully transparent about the effects of any new direction on roads, routes, and the lives of rural people. Roaded and historically motorized places must not be moved into more restrictive management that would reduce long-term public access. The plan's analysis must account for household use, rural dependence, family traditions, and the needs of older and disabled people. It is also essential that alternatives are compared directly with the 1990 plans being replaced, so the public can clearly see what is increasing, decreasing, or changing. The final plan must include measurable baselines, regular public reporting, and required corrective action if promised outcomes are not met. Direction for old growth and large trees must support needed active management and clearly explain how standards will affect forest health, necessary treatments, and public access. The plan must prioritize fuels work, active forest management, reliable emergency access, and effective fire response. Well-maintained roads are especially crucial for fighting forest fires, not just managing them. River corridor direction and interim protections must also protect and maintain existing access and lawful uses, with the Forest Service showing exactly where and how those rules would affect roads, routes, and traditional uses. Finally, access for mining claims, material sources, and related lawful uses must be protected. As a building and remodeling contractor in Grant County for 37 years, I know firsthand how much local families and businesses depend on access to every part of our forests. These aren't just recreational issues-they're about our livelihoods, traditions, and safety. The Forest Service must get this right.