

CENTRAL IDAHO TRAIL RIDERS ALLIANCE

P.O. Box 586, McCall, ID 83638

(208)630-3094 cloudhidden2@hotmail.com



7/22/17

Caleb Zurstadt

Krassel Ranger District

500 N Mission St., McCall, ID 83638

Dear Caleb Zurstadt,

Please consider this as public comment on behalf of the Central Idaho Trail Riders Alliance or CITRA, with regard to the South Fork Salmon River RAMP. CITRA is a group of approximately 90 members dedicated to the preservation, maintenance, and access to trails on federal lands in Central Idaho.

I will address the items in the order presented in the "Opportunity For Public Comment" document.

Watershed Improvement Actions:

1. I've attended numerous meetings where this issue was addressed and I've always come away feeling as though all of these old roads are being treated as equal and it is assumed that they are all in need of obliteration and rehabilitation. This is the first document I've seen that addresses the fact that there are most definitely problem areas that need attention, but that a large percentage of the 160 miles in question has stabilized naturally and is perhaps better left alone. CITRA members agree that there are road sections that are creating or have the potential to create sediment loading and should be repaired but that a vast majority of the mileage listed is rehabilitating itself quite nicely. We would hope that the Forest Service evaluates this rehabilitation very carefully on a case by case basis as opposed to throwing a blanket over the entire road system and creating more environmental concerns than we have now by erasing the natural rehabilitation that's already occurred. Another concern is



- the appropriation of a huge amount of funding for this project in an era when funding is scarce and other important projects are stacking up.
2. We have no issues with decommissioning the Hamilton Bar road as long as 2 wheel motorized access is maintained and a substantial campground and parking area is constructed near the Secesh confluence to replace the existing dispersed camping as well as accommodating day use recreationists. We do see a need for a larger camping area than what currently exists in the Krassel District. There are no developed campgrounds that will accommodate more than a few vehicles with trailers and it is our hope that this campground will meet this need.
 3. It is our belief that the dispersed camping areas that created problems in the past have already been closed and the dispersed camping areas that still exist on the lower Secesh should be left open.
 4. We support the construction of the bridge over loon creek to access the Split Creek Trail however, we would like you to consider opening the Split Creek Trail to 2 wheel motorized. It is my understanding that 2 wheel motorized access was restricted years ago as a result of the wishes of a hunting outfitter. We have no desire to create conflict but we believe that forest trails should not be closed due to the wishes of a single outfitter. We would hope that you would consider a seasonal closure in the fall to protect the interests of the outfitter and open it to 2 wheel motorized prior to hunting season. Historically, this trail provided amazing loop opportunities and reopening it creates the added benefit of utilizing motorized recreationists to clear and maintain it.
 5. We support any efforts to preserve the integrity of the Jakie Creek Bridge.
 6. We fully support a reroute around the wetland that exists on the Phoebe Meadows Trail. We believe that especially given the recently burned nature of the surrounding terrain, that a reroute is a fairly simple matter and we would be willing to supply the human resources necessary to complete this task with direction from the Forest Service. The current trail routing not only compromises a sensitive area, but provides a substantial safety issue for anyone crossing it due to the deep water pockets that exist throughout the meadows.

Motorized Access Actions:

1. We believe that the word minimum should be struck from the first sentence and the sentence should simply read "Determine the road system needed.....". We believe that closing roads and trails and limiting access concentrates various user groups in

- smaller areas therefore increasing impact to resources as well as potentially creating more opportunity for conflict between user groups.
2. We support the issue of the easement to Valley Co. for the maintenance of the South Fork Rd.
 3. We support the construction of the proposed ATV trail in Little Buckhorn Creek. We believe that ATV trails provide access for people who may be limited by age or ability. Currently, the South Fork Salmon drainage provides very few of these opportunities.
 4. We support the plan to repair the trail on Lower Buckhorn Creek. This trail is an important part of several loop opportunities in the area and also provides the least difficult loop in the entire drainage.
 5. We support the repair of the Krassel Knob Trail and will be happy to volunteer human resources to that end. This trail is another important trail that provides several loop opportunities.
 6. While we would love to see the Martin Ridge Trail repaired and opened once again to 2 wheel motorized, we feel that if only one is to be chosen, opening the Cougar Creek trail is a more sensible option. Opening Martin Ridge represents a substantial project that will require a great deal of time and resources. We, as a club, would be happy to take on that project to repair the trail as well as agree to keep it maintained. In the mean time we'd ask that you consider opening the Cougar Creek Trail to 2wheel motorized traffic. Contrary to the reasons given for closing the trail years ago, we believe the trail to be in very good condition and therefore requiring nothing more than changing the sign at the bottom. I was present at the South Fork Collaborative meeting when this was being discussed and it seemed no one else present could answer why the trail was closed initially. One person speculated that it perhaps had to do with water crossings. In reality, the only creek crossing occurs nearly 5 miles up the drainage. At that point in the drainage, the creek is very small and the crossing is over flat granite boulders creating little or no sediment discharge. Cougar Creek is a much beloved trail and is greatly missed by the 2 wheel motorized community.
 7. We are in favor of reconstructing trail #076 but we believe that if taxpayer resources are to be used for creating access for private landowners, that it should be open to the public. Furthermore, we ask that you consider the construction of a pack bridge over the South Fork in the area to create access to #076 from the west side of the river as well as a multitude of opportunities for various user groups.

8. We support the construction of a turnaround and parking area at the end of Zena Creek rd.

Additionally, whether a part of the RAMP project or subsequent to it we would like to propose that the following trails be evaluated and considered for re designation to 2 wheel motorized. These trails are in addition to the ones mentioned above and were all open to 2 wheel motorized traffic at one time and the reasons for closure have been various.

1. #088 Six Mile Ridge- this trail was apparently closed due to redundancy and it's proximity to other trails in the area. This trail follows a ridge, has no water crossings, would take very little effort to recommission, and would create several interesting loop opportunities.
2. #093 Four Mile Creek- Goat Creek- I don't know the reason for closure but access to this trail would create yet another loop opportunity.
3. #092 Log Mountain- This trail to the lookout from the Eagle Rock area would provide a unique opportunity to ride to a mountain top vista.
4. Camp Creek- I wasn't able to find a number for this trail but it follows Camp Creek from the South Fork Rd. to the Eagle Rock area. It's my understanding that this was an amazing trail that provided numerous loop opportunities.
5. #069 Parks Creek- This is another trail that I understand was closed due to the interests of a single outfitter. This trail in conjunction with the #070, #071, And #072 would create a multitude of loop opportunities as well as access to the South Fork Salmon, which would create an amazing loop utilizing the pack bridge I proposed above.
6. #128 Steamboat Ridge- Another remarkable trail creating loop opportunities.

Our experience with most trails in the Krassel Dist. has shown that there is very little user group conflict as, outside of hunting season, we are the primary user group. We are starting to see more mountain bike usage but, mountain bikers as well as hikers continue to be dependent and appreciative of motorized recreationists and motorized trail crews for the work they do to clear these trails. We are quite happy to assume the maintenance responsibilities for these trails and would hope that the Krassel District would be open to having a conversation about changing the designations on the abovementioned trails to 2 wheel motorized. Furthermore, we would hope to have you help us understand why the closures were implemented and if the reasons for closures continue to be relevant.

We believe that the motorized user community in this area historically hasn't been very good at participating in the public process and has therefore not utilized their collective

voice with regard to trail designation management. It is CITRA's mission to change that. We hope to become reliable partners to the Forest Service and prove that our group can be a responsible and valuable asset. We believe that as Forest Service budgets decrease, we can help fill the ever increasing void by assisting in maintaining trails as well as teaching others about responsible use. CITRA members firmly believe in helping to offer solutions and not simply making demands.

Sincerely,

Steve Lacey
President

Central Idaho Trail Riders Alliance