

Date submitted (UTC): 6/23/2016 3:45:24 AM

First name: John

Last name: Bremer

Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1: 2604 Kentucky St.

Address2: Address Line 2

City: Bellingham

State:

Province/Region: Washington

Zip/Postal Code: 98229

Country: United States

Email: johnpaulbremer@gmail.com

Phone: 3605273503

Comments:

Dear Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue. As a volunteer land monitor for the Whatcom Land Trust, over the past ten years I have gained lots of experience with dirt bike and quad riders. A salient consequence of dirt bike and quad use is the loud noise that stresses songbirds and other creatures dependent on their hearing to identify predators. This important consequence is easily overlooked because of its immediate short-term environmental impact.

I am concerned that while our natural capital is community property, an enormous portion of that value is committed to frivolous entertainment for a tiny minority. There are parks available to dirt bike riders, for reasonable fees, to race their engines and throw dirt around. We don't owe them a free opportunity to destroy our natural capital.

The Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest is deeply important to me, as well as to fish, wildlife, healthy ecosystems, outdoor recreationists and local communities. It's important that the Forest adopt a sensible and sustainable Travel Management Plan that moves the forest towards a balanced motorized road and trail system that provides access to the national forest while protecting and restoring natural resources, including fish and wildlife.

The current Motorized Travel Management Plan proposals are a missed opportunity to holistically address the issue of creating a sustainable road system on the OWNF that balances motorized access with natural resource protection and quality non-motorized recreation. And adoption of a final plan is only a first step. Over 8,000 miles of roads currently traverse the OWNF, many of which are of low value to recreation and forest management, while placing fish and wildlife habitat at high risk. While this plan closes cross country travel and motorized use on all Level 1 (closed) roads, as highlighted by the travel analysis reports released last year, much work remains to create a sustainable motorized travel system on the forest that balances access needs with natural resource protection.

Of the alternatives presented, I believe that a modified Alternative C that protects important fish habitat by restricting dispersed camping on roads within 300 feet of streams recognized as Critical Fish Habitat while also opening WATV use on existing open roads on six routes collaboratively identified by forest stakeholders is the best option as an initial step towards a sustainable motorized road and trail network on the forest. Investments in implementation, enforcement, and education are vital to the success of a final Travel Management Plan.

Adoption of a final plan must be followed with a forest-wide approach to winter motorized use, as well as landscape recreation planning efforts and project level decisions to address problem roads that pose a risk to natural resources and areas on the forest where motorized use (trails and roads) is out of balance with management goals for watershed protection and habitat such as the Yakima basin including the Snoqualmie Pass Adaptive Management Area.

As you finalize the Travel Management Plan, please continue to consider how problem roads and motorized recreation can negatively affect water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and opportunities for quality non-motorized recreation including hiking, horseback riding, wildlife watching, and hunting. Please continue to take

steps to limit negative impacts while appropriately balancing the diverse interests and needs of forest stakeholders, as well as the needs and health of the forest itself and the fish and wildlife that depend on it.

Thank you,