Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision Team
Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests

Subject: Protecting Motorized Access and Rural Livelihoods in the Blue Mountains

Dear Forest Planning Team,

My name is _____, and I live in _____. I am writing to provide comments on the Preliminary Draft Forest Plan for the Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests.

As someone who depends on public lands for _____, I am very concerned that this draft plan does not protect the open access we have today and will lead to long-term restrictions on motorized use across these forests.

Key Points of My Concern:
Motorized Access is Not Protected. The plan should clearly state that roads and cross-country travel will remain available for access. Without that, our way of life and the ability to care for family and land are at risk.

Cross-Country Travel Must Remain Open. Especially in areas where families have accessed wood, hunting spots, or historical routes for decades, the plan should protect that use as a formal right, not a future decision.

The Plan Repeats a Withdrawn Version. This draft appears to be almost the same as the version withdr awn in 2019. The Forest Service should not move forward with a plan that has already been rejected, especially without major public support.

The Forest Service Used a Group That Violated Federal Law. I am concerned that Wallowa Resources, a private nonprofit, was part of the Blue Mountains Intergovernmental Council without proper legal aut horization under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). This could make the whole planning proce ss invalid.

New Legal Standards Apply. Under the Supreme Court's Loper Bright decision, the Forest Service must now follow the law exactly as written. Courts will not just accept what the agency claims. This mean s the agency has to clearly show where in the law it has the power to close roads or restrict access .
The Plan Uses Recreation Zoning to Hide Closures. Areas are being labeled "Primitive" or "Non-Motori zed," but that's just another way to close access without saying so. These kinds of hidden closures must be analyzed under NEPA and should not be allowed.

My Request:

Please revise the Forest Plan to:

- Affirmatively protect open motorized access and cross-country travel,
- Remove or limit restrictive recreation zoning,
- Respect RS 2477 rights and pre-1976 roads,
- Recognize non-tribal subsistence use as a cultural tradition,
- And ensure legal compliance under Loper Bright, FACA, and NEPA.

I support the full legal comment submitted by Forest Access For All (FAFA) and ask that you include my voice in support of their position. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

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