

Representative Walden,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input into a matter very important to all of the members of our organization. We are Eastern Oregon All Terrain Association and represent well over 100 individuals and family members. Our members have enjoyed recreating on our Forests and public lands for multiple generations. We are responsible users of our lands and have always done our part to see that others use them responsibly also. Our organization focuses on off highway motorcycle and ATV use, but most of our members also enjoy driving on our National Forests roads, whether to reach a particular destination or just to enjoy the outdoors. Our organization also has an agreement with the Forest Service to help maintain the trails on two different trail systems. We spend a considerable amount of time each year maintaining these trails for our members and other users.

Over the last couple of decades our organization has given our input on multiple "Plans" that the Forest Service has started, yet never seemed to finish. These "Plans" have always included restrictions on motorized recreation and access to our Forests. Even though these plans have never been completed, our members have gradually seen their access to our public lands reduced, usually with no warning or reason for the closures.

The latest plan to be started, but not completed, was the Access Travel Management Plan (ATMP) for the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. This plan would have changed forest access from open unless designated closed, to closed unless designated open. There was a great deal of time spent by our club members and others to inventory roads and give input on their use of the forest and its roads and trails. After all of our efforts it seemed to us that our input (the input of the people that live and use this Forest) was not taken seriously, or just ignored. It seemed as though the outcome of the plan was predetermined by someone somewhere that has never seen or even knows anything about our Forest. There seems to be a one size/plan fits all mindset in Federal Forest management decisions.

Even though the ATMP was ultimately withdrawn and put on hold, we now have a different Plan to worry about. This is the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision. We are going through the same process of giving input, which we have done several times in the past, to a Forest Service that seems to never acknowledge the fact that they run the public through this same drill over and over again, and then ignore us in the end. It is as if they will keep coming back with a different plan until we get so frustrated with them or tired of doing the same thing that we just go away.

Over the last couple of decades the local Forest Service has gone from an organization of people who grew up and lived in the region, that knew the forest and its users, to people who really know very little about the forest they work on or the people that use it. They spend far too much time behind a desk doing paper work and very little time actually on the forest managing it. Their lack of management has become their excuse for closing the Forest to the public. Their

poor decisions are used as an excuse to punish the public by locking them out of the Forest. We are not the ones responsible for the Forest Service's incompetence.

We need to return to where local input into local Forest management decisions actually means something. Every Forest is different and should not be managed by one all-encompassing set of orders from somewhere in Washington D.C. That is why the Forest Access in Rural Communities (FAIR) Act – H.R. 4272 is so important to the members of EOATVA and the citizens of Northeast Oregon. This bill would return decisions on access to our Forests back to the people that actually use, know and love them.

Thank you for taking the time to hear our concerns and thoughts.

Mark Barber

Secretary/Treasurer EOATVA