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## Congress of the United States House of Representatives

September 30, 2009

Cliff Dils  
Forest Supervisor  
Umpqua National Forest  
2900 Northwest Stewart Parkway  
Roseburg, OR 97471

Dear Mr. Dils:

I am writing to you regarding the Umpqua National Forest Travel Management planning process. A number of my constituents have contacted my office expressing concerns for the proposed travel management plan and how it will impact recreational opportunities in the forest. Given that motorized use is a popular and important recreational activity for many individuals, families, and groups, I am seeking the Forest Service's response to the following outstanding issues.

First, I am concerned that the Forest Service may arbitrarily close roads and trails to motorized use that have not been properly inventoried or surveyed by the agency. It has been brought to my attention by impacted user-groups and individual constituents that the Forest Service has not recently completed an accurate and thorough inventory of hundreds of miles of roads and trails it proposes to close.

My understanding is that the travel management regulations published in the Federal Register (FR Vol. 70., No.216-Nov.9, 2005, pp68264-68291) requires the Forest Service to classify all known Forest Service roads and trails as either "open" or "closed" to OHV use in the final travel management plan. It is also my understanding that the Forest Service intends to designate roads and trails it has not properly inventoried and surveyed as "closed." This policy is problematic: in cases where the Forest Service lacks updated and reliable information about the condition of the roads and trails, why would the Forest Service not maintain an "open" designation until better information can be gathered? Has the Forest Service considered this approach, which would allow it to meet the requirements of the travel management regulations and provide the agency with time to carry out proper inventories and surveys of disputed roads and trails?

PETER A. DeFAZIO  
4TH DISTRICT, OREGON

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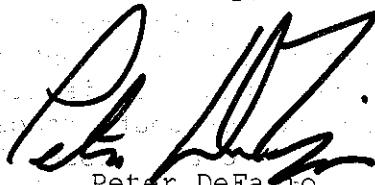
Second, I am concerned that the Forest Service has unduly restricted access to camping sites with historically high levels of visitation. Specific examples of areas that are currently excluded from the Umpqua National Forest proposed "camping corridors" that have served as camping areas in the past include: Fish Creek Desert Area, Watson Falls Area, Skookum Lake Area, Elephant Mountain, and Mowich Loop Area. Restricting access to sites of local importance and high usage without clear justification will further erode trust between the public and the Forest Service. I request that the Forest Service explain the need for camping corridors and why specific areas were selected by the agency for closure.

I understand that user-groups such as Oregon Hunter's Association (OHA), Umpqua Chapter is proposing that the Forest Service include language in the final travel management plan that would permit camping within 500 feet of an open road surface as long as campers do not cause environmental damage to the camping area. OHA, Umpqua Chapter claims such a provision would allow campers to continue to access important areas that have traditionally been open to overnight camping. Is this an acceptable compromise for the Forest Service?

Third, I am writing to ensure that any final travel management plan maintain the critical infrastructure necessary to respond to fire, disturbance events, insect and disease outbreaks, and emergencies. I have joined with my colleague Representative Norm Dicks in securing additional congressional funding for the Forest Service - including \$650 million in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act - to address its road maintenance backlog. I am hopeful that these appropriated dollars will be helpful in maintaining and improving Forest Service roads important to meeting the agency's responsibilities and decommissioning roads that are no longer needed or desirable.

I look forward to working with you to resolve these important issues. I appreciate your attention to this letter and thank you in advance for your timely response.

Sincerely,



Peter DeFazio  
Member of Congress