

April 6, 2005

Gary Edson
Ninemile District Ranger
Lolo National Forest

Gary,

Thanks for getting back to me in regards to a number of concerns that arose following a recent monitoring trip the Native Forest Network conducted with twelve citizens in the Frenchtown area of the Lolo National Forest.

As I mentioned to you on the phone on March 28, 2005 we did some on-the-ground monitoring of the Fournier/Mill Creek Limited Timber Harvest CE and proposed Units 6 and 52 of the Frenchtown Face Ecosystem Restoration project.

As I mentioned to you on the phone last week, the reason I brought up the issue concerning vandalism, dumping and illegal ATV trails in the Frenchtown Face area of the Lolo National Forest was because of a monitoring trip NFN did March 28, 2005 to the area.

That day, we monitored the Fournier/Mill Creek Limited Timber Harvest CE and found that the logging skid trails on that sale had the unintended consequences of really opening up this area to vandalism, dumping and illegal ATV trails. We had a 15 person monitoring team out in this sale area pre-logging on October 26, 2003 and didn't notice any problem within the project area regarding vandalism, dumping and illegal ATV trails.

However, on the March 28, 2005 monitoring trip we documented numerous garbage piles along skid trails within the project area, numerous piles of shotgun shells and clay pigeons within the project area as well as illegal ATV traffic already going up and down some of the new logging skid trails.

Later on that same day we went into the Frenchtown Fact project area right next store and within the proposed logging units we documented extensive vandalism, dumping and illegal ATV trails. We thought if the vandalism, dumping and illegal ATV trails within these proposed logging units was already out of control what would be the unintended consequences once the forest is opened up by the 6,000 acres of industrial logging (skid trails, landings, etc) are running through the forest? In our mind, this would only cause a bad problem with vandalism, dumping and illegal ATV trails to get more out of control.

As I mentioned to you on the phone, we had never really thought about the unintended consequences of these logging projects in terms of inviting more vandalism, dumping and illegal ATV trails due to opening up the forest with logging and skid trails running

through the woods, but I know it's something that we will want the USFS to look at/analyze in regards to future projects.

We would also request that the BNF look at/analyze this specifically in regards to the Middle East Fork Hazardous Fuel Reduction project. In other words, will the logging, skid trails, etc associated with the treatments proposed as part of the Middle East Fork Hazardous Fuel Reduction project increase the likelihood of vandalism, dumping and illegal ATV trails in the East Fork area?

The more we think about this issue, the more we would argue that the consequences in terms of increasing vandalism, dumping and illegal ATV trails might be pretty well known (or at least the potential is there for abuse) and therefore hardly "unintended" (which to me means more not known).

Sincerely,

Matthew Koehler
Director, Native Forest Network
406.542.7343