From: Laura Schiltz
To: Wood, Lisa (DFW)
Subject: Comment for DNS 14-059 Stray Gulch Road Construction
Date: Friday, September 12, 2014 1:42:43 PM

Dear Lisa,

I learned this week that your agency has proposed to construct over one mile of road in the Colockum Wildlife Area almost adjacent to a road that was closed with public funds just 2 years ago. I reviewed the very basic information provided with your Determination of No Significance online, and found it disappointing and erroneous.

The Colockum Wildlife Area is a special place in our state for people and wildlife. The area that you propose to re-open a road into is the largest non-motorized portion of your state lands in this landscape, important to me as a hiker and wildlife watcher as well as to the animals I imagine. When the road was originally closed in Stray Gulch there was discussion of the importance of its closure not only for fish and water, but for creating security habitat for elk and reducing the spread of weeds into the wildlife area. There was also recognition that in this drier portion of the wildlife area, user created expansion or extension of motorized routes is not uncommon especially when a route has live water on it as the Stray Gulch road had. I saw no discussion in your environmental checklist of wildlife species impacts, or of impacts to non-motorized recreation and wildlife viewing on the landscape.

Your documentation also said there were no environmental concerns or information available that would raise concerns for opening a road in this location, but that contradicts the information your agency presents online for the Naneum Ridge to Columbia River Recreation Plan which I've been paying attention to. The impressive series of maps looking at biological and other issues across that large landscape show that Stray Gulch does raise concerns for species and special habitat features. This was not recognized at all in your documentation.

Finally, I question the use of our public dollars going to construction of a road on a landscape that is going through analysis and a public process to determine the appropriate balance of recreation and protection of habitats on this landscape. I have been waiting to hear when a public comment period would open on the Naneum to Columbia River process, and only in looking for that did I learn that a road was being constructed within the planning area. In addition to that concern, it upsets me that public dollars in times of tight budgets were spent just 2 years ago to protect natural resources literally just feet away from this new road. Natural vegetation has hardly had time to respond to the closure before new construction would begin. The DNS documentation never presents a case as to why we'd reverse the decision and now spend dollars in the same location to undo a closure that was in place - it only presents a case that it is moving the road slightly upslope to hopefully

prevent water running down the road as it has in the past.

I am not a resident of Kittitas County, but I am a voting taxpayer of Washington State that has a vested interest in both the wildlife area and our public lands in general. I use the Colockum currently, and would be more prone to do so in the future if there were fewer roads and greater opportunities for quiet appreciation of the landscape and wildlife. I ask you to withdraw this proposal and refer to the mapping efforts conducted through the ongoing recreation planning process to find a more suitable location for access into the future.

Laura Schiltz
Seattle, WA