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Mike Livingston WDFW Region 3 Director  
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Mike:

I haven't been in contact with you for several months but I assume you are aware of the present status of Region 3 staff working towards Green Dotting the area behind the "Green Gate" in Kittitas County. If you aren't aware, we need to talk. My purpose in sending you this letter is to make a record of some of the non-published verbal comments made by Region 3 staff and others regarding this subject and to provide you with a perspective for where our challenge to this project is heading if we as "users" have to go to the next level. As you know, Region 3 staff was dragged into the Naneum to Columbia River Recreation Analysis process (N/C) kicking and screaming because they really don't care about developing a recreation plan and they were afraid they would lose control of public access issues (road closures) on both WDFW and WDNR managed lands within the landscape. So, to actually take advantage of the N/C, WDFW injected a scheme into the document to restrict or eliminate motorized access that was never vetted by the public. This was enhanced by the powerful persuasion of the Fish and Wildlife Commission that had a similar agenda looming behind a veiled curtain. Here is just one exchange of many that we acquired by way of Public Disclosure Requests (PDR's), between two Fish and Wildlife Commissioners. The exchange was made just prior to the beginning of the N/C process:

*"Some discussion on shed hunting, but no decision or proposal. Mostly associated with road closure and seasonal closures. We must keep pushing the Dept to act as this is a conservation problem, as well as a road and area maintenance problem. -----also, road closure is being planned and it appears that they are reluctantly resigned to doing this. Little commitment, because of the anticipated pushback. We will need to keep insisting that this be done on a seasonal basis, some permanent, on a gradual basis. ----- road closures, physical closure, may reduce the tribal take to some degree. We need to follow up on this area and keep pushing for road closures"-----.*

Although Legislative mandate 1112 requires the Agency to base its actions or policy decisions on "science", none of the documents we have containing statements similar to the above have a basis in "science". They are all based on personal hypothesis and emotion from individuals that are obsessed with closing roads for invalid reasons. This theme carries into the proposed closing of roads behind the "Green Gate" as well. As you know, individual Commissioners and the Commission at large are appointed by the Governor and they in turn appoint the Director. They are powerful and persuasive individuals especially while they are in direct contact or even peripheral interaction with WDFW staff. The road closing scheme was being orchestrated by WDFW, the Commission and others behind a veiled curtain going into and through the N/C process to-date and WDNR has been maneuvered into culpability by WDFW Region 3 staff. While some of the players have changed, the agenda is alive and well and it is presently being driven by Region 3 staff. If anybody from WDFW or WDNR chooses to assert that this agenda was only being orchestrated by WDFW for the "Colockum" and not the "Green Gate" perhaps they can sit and help us peel back the veiled curtain page by page.

Here are some of the words or phrases used by WDFW staff or others in a recent Kittitas County Field and Stream Club meeting in an attempt to justify closing roads:

- "the roads are dangerous and the Department is concerned about the liability"

- “The roads are in bad shape or in ill-repair and the agency has no money to fix them”. note: this statement is actually designed to be a direct shot to blame the Legislature for impacting WDFW’s budget. Additionally, funds from the 10 wind towers on WDFW land in Section 35 are supposed to be dedicated to L.T. Murray operations. Instead, WDFW assigns no funds for operations (road repair) within the L.T. Murray, it all goes to wages.
- “this green dotting is consistent with other roads that were Green Dotted in the mid 80’s”
- “enforcement is confused about when to write citations for off-road violations”

All of these excuses are made in a weak attempt to persuade casual observers that WDFW and WDNR have a legitimate plan in place but none of them are based on actual problems or provable science.

Here are two inconsistencies that we have heard:

- a reasonable “loop road” is being eliminated in the plan to Green Dot---however, in the N/C process, “loop roads” were repeatedly described as the only good roads
- RMAP is being invoked to define the roads in this schrub-steppe even though the elements of RMAP don’t apply to schrub-steppe. This was confirmed in a phone call to Wildlife Lands Forest Manager Richard Treveten who stated that WDFW is not applying RMAP to the area behind the “Green Gate”. WDNR representatives were present but did not object to or comment regarding WDFW using RMAP to close roads in schrub-steppe.

As for ADA Access, no matter what is concocted by WDFW at this point, the remedy for accommodating ADA access is to leave the area as is---except for fixing the roads as necessary to provide equal access for all.

No matter what WDFW Region 3 staff or WDNR staff thought they heard at the 2-12-2018 Kittitas County Field and Stream Club meeting, or in prior meetings where this subject was discussed, the membership of KCFSC is not on record for being in favor of Green Dotting behind the “Green Gate”. The general membership voted to “do nothing”, “leave it alone” or “status quo”. This logically and simply means NO GREEN DOTTING. Furthermore, there is a large number of other citizens who use this area that Region 3 staff pretends don’t exist that have expressed opposition to Green Dotting the area. Therefore, as stated in the N/C, it is the “users” of the area that are to be asked for input, not two or three select people of the Club who do not have the privilege to speak a different message than that of the membership. We can help you if you need contact information for “users” inside and outside of the Club.

Finally, many of us including the Legislature are very aware of the culture within WDFW that is out of control and is currently being scrutinized by a Legislative mandate .As you are staging to speak on behalf of the new incoming administration as Region 3 Director we are hopeful that you will make the right decision in this matter. The project to Green Dot behind the “Green Gate” was ill-conceived from the beginning. There is no compelling or legitimate reason to go forward. This can be an opportunity for WDFW to work towards a new beginning within a newly adjusted culture while in partnership with the users instead of opposing them.

Thank you, Dennis Ohlde



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