



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Columbia River Gorge
National Scenic Area

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File Code: 1560

Date: September 6, 2007

Klickitat Count Board of Commissioners
County Court House
205 S. Columbia Ave, MS Ch-04
Goldendale, WA 98620

Dear County Commissioners:

I am writing today to express my concerns over the proposed Husum/BZ Corners sub-area plan and zoning amendment. I am limiting my comments to those issues associated with the proposed plan amendment that may have an effect on the White Salmon River's outstandingly remarkable values (ORV's). As you know, the White Salmon River was designated a Wild and Scenic River (WSR) in order to protect water quality, resident fisheries, scenic quality and recreational opportunities on the river. A management plan for the river corridor was developed in cooperation with local citizens and the county. Management plan standards and guidelines were established in order to protect the ORV's. The WSR management plan has been in place for over 15 years and throughout this time the county, local landowners, and the Forest Service have worked cooperatively to achieve the protection goals identified in the management plan.

As is true with all things in life, nothing remains the same forever. I recognize and support the need for the local communities and the county to plan for the future. Of equal importance when conducting that planning is taking into consideration the designation by Congress of the White Salmon River as a Wild and Scenic River. The WSR designation requires that river managers (Forest Service) and local jurisdictions protect ORV's over the long-term. A slow degrading of these protections is not acceptable. The proposed Husum/BZ Corner sub-area plan proposals threaten to undermine ORV protections associated with the standards and guidelines in the management plan.

Of greatest concern is the proposal to allow for the conversion of Resource Lands to residential development. It is stated that the intent of this change in zoning would be to allow for a gradual conversion of resource lands to residential uses. This gradual conversion is to be accomplished through a site by site evaluation rather than a comprehensive assessment of what the cumulative effects this scale of conversion would have on the environment. Of special concern to me is the effect development may have on water quality and quantity, scenic protection, and fish and wildlife habitat, including habitat fragmentation within the WSR corridor. The proposed shift to a 2 acre minimum within the Resource lands designation may have significant adverse effects, particularly the loss of open space lands adjacent to the White Salmon River.

If the proposed changes are adopted, they would essentially change the protection measures in place within the WSR corridor and would allow for continued development within the corridor in excess of what was determined to be supportable if ORV's are to be protected. The Husum/BZ Corners subarea plan proposal establishes a system whereby resource lands can be reevaluated



every 5 years in order to allow for gradual conversion of these lands. This gradual conversion, especially within the WSR corridor, means ORV's are likely to be compromised over the long-term.

In 1990 Klickitat County and the Forest Service signed a memorandum of agreement in which we pledged to cooperatively work together to ensure the goals of the WSR management plan are reached over the long-term. I am renewing our pledge to work with the County and local citizens toward that end. In the spirit of cooperation I am asking the County to drop the proposed sub-area plan changes within the WSR corridor boundary. Particularly, the change associated with the conversion of resource lands to residential development. I am asking that you commit to leaving the housing density within the corridor (resource lands designation) at 1 dwelling per 20 acres, establish the 200 foot setback on the river as stipulated in the MOA, and reaffirm your commitment to comply with the Shoreline Management Act and the County's Critical Area Ordinances.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this important matter. I and/or my staff would be happy to discuss this further at your convenience.

Sincerely,

DANIEL T. HARKENRIDER
Area Manager