



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Columbia River Gorge
National Scenic Area
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Hood River, OR 97031

File Code: 7700

Date: November 18, 2002

Dear Interested Friend of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area:

The USDA Forest Service, Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area is conducting a “forest-wide” analysis of National Forest jurisdiction roads.

This analysis is prompted by the adoption of the final National Forests Road Management Rule, which was published in the *Federal Register* in January 2001. This rule became necessary for the following reasons:

- to ensure that the National Forest Transportation System meets current and future land and resource management objectives as well as provide for public uses of National Forest System lands;
- to provide for safe public access and travel;
- to allow for economical and efficient management; and
- to address maintenance needs to ensure safe public travel.

This analysis will examine National Forest roads within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (NSA). Generally, these roads are the fundamental transportation system and are used to administer and access large land areas or recreation areas. The analysis will produce a road management strategy and is NOT a decision document; however, the process is anticipated to identify potential watershed and project level proposals, which will go through the National Environmental Policy Act process including public involvement. You are encouraged to help with the identification of road-related benefits and risks in this process so that a complete analytical framework can be developed. This framework will ultimately lead to guidelines for addressing future road management issues and setting priorities.

We are requesting comments you may have that will help us determine the social, cultural, environmental, and economic concerns and issues associated with these roads on the National Forest lands within the National Scenic Area. The NSA seeks to find an appropriate balance between the benefits of access to National Forest lands and the costs of road-associated effects to ecosystem values.

Forest Service staff from the National Scenic Area office will hold two public “Open Houses” on the process for the “forest-wide” roads analysis. These Open Houses will be held Tuesday, December 3 from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the Hood River Inn in Hood River, OR and on Wednesday, December 4, from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the Rock Creek Center in Stevenson, WA. People unable to attend the public open houses can participate by informing the National Scenic



Area office of the roads you feel are important to you and why, along with any social, cultural, environmental or economic concerns and issues you may have. Maps of the roads being considered in this analysis will be available at the two Open Houses and at the Forest Service's National Scenic Area Office in Hood River, Oregon.

Written comments are requested by December 10, 2002 and can be mailed to: Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, Attn: Roads Analysis, 902 Wasco Ave., Suite 200, Hood River, OR 97031. Comments will also be accepted via e-mail at: amorrisette@fs.fed.us.

Additional information related to this analysis can also be reviewed at the National Scenic Area website address: www.fs.fed.us/r6/columbia.

Sincerely,

KIM M. TITUS
Acting Area Manager