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Comments:

The Hayden Lake Watershed Association Inc. represents over two hundred landowners and many others interested in the wellbeing of Hayden Lake and its Watershed. The English Point national forest parcel managed by the Forest Service is of great interest to the Association and its members. The parcel borders the property of some of our members and provides a local hiking, mountain biking or horseback riding opportunity to many others.

The Association agrees that the forest health of the parcel is in decline as a result of loss of the long lived seral species ponderosa pine, western larch and western white pine. Interruption of the natural fire regime coupled with sanitation logging of the pine in response to a bark beetle infestation some twenty years past, have combined to favor more shade tolerant and disease susceptible tree species. The Association appreciates that the Forest Service cannot use prescribed burning to its full extent to shift the forest stands to the desired seral species. Thus the Association agrees with much of the prescription suggested to restore the forest health with some reservations and suggestions.

Some of the shelterwood and certainly the group shelterwood harvests will require more effort and cost to replant with the desired seral species. These costs should in no way inhibit the replanting and nurturing of the regeneration. In addition, if brush is not controlled in the early years, the time necessary for the planted seedlings to dominate the canopy will be lengthened. Some protection of seedlings from the numerous deer in the area may be required as well. The Forest Service should monitor the regeneration and if necessary, address these potential threats to the young trees.

The Association is constantly concerned with plant growth nutrient loading to Hayden Lake. Erosion and sedimentation is a major source of these nutrients. A few small tributaries to the lake have headwaters in the English Point Parcel. The fine soils developed from the underlying Miocene basalt can form quite turbid water when eroded. The Association requests the Forest Service implement all best management practices and other management methods to limit any sediment migration from its activities. The proposed horse skidding of logs should limit disturbance that would generate sediment.

The Association requests that some revenue from timber harvest is used to improve the parking area and the facilities located at the parking area/trailhead. During project implementation, we trust that any vehicles or equipment engaged in the work will not hamper parking in the designated area.

The English Point Trails are a significant local outdoor recreation resource. The Association appreciates that the planned forest management activities will interfere at times with the trail's use. The Association agrees with the plan to phase the project to affect the two sides of the parcel at different times which will help mitigate the impact. We further suggest that given the use of the area and the well-established parking area which has sign boards, the project provides an excellent opportunity to educate the general public on the role of fire in the forest environment, the consequence to forest health of its long term suppression, and the management necessary to overcome this problem. The Association believes that such an education effort will garner acceptance of the management activities by English Point neighbors and users and also develop more understanding of management activities in the Honey-Badger planning unit that will occur in plain sight of many Hayden Lake Watershed residents and users.