

USFS Again Proposes to Reconstruct Dose Road (2005)

... but National Marine Fisheries Service letter says road plan poses risk to threatened salmon run

The Forest Service has recently published a Notice of Intent to reconstruct the Dosewallips Road in Olympic National Forest through critical Chinook salmon habitat. Although the Forest Service will be completing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which requires consideration of several alternatives, the most responsible option of converting the last five miles of road into a non-motorized trail would not be studied at all. By choosing to ignore the obvious benefits of a road-to-trail conversion above the massive washout, the Forest Service has essentially thumbed its nose at the many thoughtful citizens who have previously submitted comments in favor of ensuring the future integrity of the Dose.

The Forest Service's new preferred alternative would reconstruct the road using a single-lane "low-water crossing design" of 600 feet in length that would be eight feet lower than the existing road grade. This seasonal-access road would curve close to the steep washout bank, designed to be overtopped by the river during flood events. While not only forcibly altering the Dose's natural dynamics and harming threatened salmon stocks, the Forest Service would seek a Northwest Forest Plan amendment to waive compliance with the Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS). This, despite the fact that the Bush Administration has already rendered the ACS largely toothless, indicates the severity of the damage the Forest Service expects to inflict on the river.



The Dosewallips once again depends upon you! The Forest Service has indicated they will gladly sacrifice this Northwest icon for the sole benefit of getting motor vehicles five miles farther upvalley. Only a concerned and vocal public can keep the bulldozers out of the river. Please write the Forest Service. Ask to be put on their mailing list. Suggested talking points are as follows:

- An alternative that would convert the last five miles of road above the washout into a non-motorized trail must be included in the EIS. The Forest Service cannot simply disregard the public's prior and current demands for studying this option. Access to the upper valley via foot, bicycle, wheelchair or stock is not only best for experiencing the beauty of the Dose, but also the most respectful towards the fragile landscape and watercourses there.
- The proposal to waive compliance with the ACS is an egregious violation of the public trust, a reckless continuation of the Bush Administration's weakening of core environmental protections, and runs directly counter to time-intensive and expensive salmon recovery efforts throughout the region. Any degradation of Chinook salmon critical habitat is likely illegal under the Endangered Species Act.
- In these days of stretched public funds, the Forest Service must deliver an honest accounting of both short-range and long-term comparative expenditures to taxpayers. The poorly conceived road along the Dosewallips will continue to sustain severe damage into the future, due in part to global warming phenomena. Is it worth the price? A comprehensive economic analysis is necessary.
- Any re-routing of the road through the old-growth forest and unstable bank above the washout, as would occur in other "non-preferred" alternatives to be studied in the EIS, is not only illogical, but would be an illegal incursion into Northern Spotted Owl critical habitat.

Please address your comments to:

Dale Hom, Forest Supervisor
Olympic National Forest
1835 Black Lake Blvd. SW, Suite A
Olympia, WA 98512

You may also email your comments to: comments-pacificnorthwest-olympic@fs.fed.us, but be aware that this mode of communication to the Forest Service has not been fully reliable in the past.

If you choose to email, please ask for a confirmation from the agency that they have indeed received your message. Thank you from the bottom of our Dosewallips-loving heart for your participation! As always, personalizing your comments is helpful (e.g., relating a particularly pleasant hike you may have taken on the closed road above the washout).

More Dosewallips news

NMFS Blasts USFS Road Plan

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the federal agency charged with enforcing the Endangered Species Act for listed critters like the Puget Sound Chinook, has submitted a strongly worded letter to the Forest Service.

NMFS's letter warns the Forest Service that its proposal to reconstruct the Dose Road within the river channel would degrade the Chinook's critical habitat to the point of jeopardizing this salmon run's very existence.



NMFS additionally urges the Forest Service to include an alternative in its upcoming EIS that would consider permanent closure of the Dose Road above the washout.

[Read](#) this important letter.