

June 8, 2016

Leslie Weldon
Deputy Chief
U.S. Forest Service
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Deputy Chief Weldon:

We are writing today to commend your efforts to move the Forest Service road system to a more sustainable condition. A sustainable and appropriately sized road system results in improved water quality, ecological integrity, and reconnected habitat – all of which reduce stress to forests and make them more resilient to climate change. In particular, we want to thank you for instituting a national review of the Travel Analysis Reports (TARs), prior to their finalization, to ensure consistency with the intent of subpart A of the Travel Management Rule and Washington Office direction. The travel analysis process, in which forest managers analyze the costs, benefits, risks, and opportunities associated with the current road system to identify a list of needed and unneeded roads, is an important and necessary element of the agency's recreation and restoration agenda. We also want to congratulate the agency for reaching another restoration achievement - the milestone of 1000 culverts replaced to reconnect stream habitat and enable aquatic passage using Legacy Roads and Trails program funds.

Given the Forest Service's considerable and growing road maintenance backlog, it is very important that the agency continue to build off this important work and ensure that findings and recommendations from TARs are integrated into future projects and plans so that they can be expeditiously implemented on-the-ground.

We thank you for your leadership on this important matter, and look forward to working with you to advance this essential element of the agency's recreation and restoration agenda.

Sincerely,

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