



Kanchenjunga, 28,169 feet; world's third tallest peak

July 10, 2016

Ms. Cheryl Probert  
Forest Supervisor  
Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests  
903 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
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Ms. Probert:

I recently had the opportunity to float the Main Salmon. We had a great trip but one night, when camped in a designated wilderness management area, I was disappointed to discover four wheeler tracks at our campsite at Bluebird Hole.

Walking downriver I was surprised to encounter a team of Forest Service employees camped above the Mackay Bar Bridge equipped with four wheelers. Why were these employees violating the area's wilderness designation? In fact, after years of wilderness management why has the road up to Fivemile not been naturalized and rendered impassable?

The Mackay Bar bridge is shown on maps as a pack bridge. Signage on the bridge also indicates it is a pack bridge and that motorized traffic is prohibited. In fact, at some point, stanchions were added to the bridge to exclude four-wheeler traffic. However, quite some time ago, these stanchions were cut off with a welding torch and the bridge is now heavily used by mechanized vehicles. Why is this allowed?

Mackay Bar is private property and hikers are not allowed to cross this property to access the South Fork Trail. The "new" high route around the property is difficult and unsafe. In effect, reasonable and safe public access to the South Fork trail system has been cut off. As a result, the Mackay Bar Pack Bridge only provides access to private property and no longer offers a benefit to the general public. Rather, the bridge has become a source of abuse and degradation of the wilderness resource.



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If the Forest Service is unable or unwilling to eliminate this abuse and if a public easement cannot be negotiated across this property, perhaps it is time for this bridge to be removed. Assuming the bridge is of significant value to Mackay Bar, the Forest Service has the clout to resolve both issues. The question is, does the Agency have the will and determination to do so. Perhaps the answer lies in the apparent long-term use of the Mackay Bar Pack Bridge by motorized vehicles.

I ask for your written response to the following questions.

Why are Forest Service employees accessing wilderness on motor vehicles?

Why is the road to Fivemile still open to motorized traffic?

Why is the Mackay Bar Pack Bridge open to motorized traffic?

What is the long-range management objective for the Mackay Bar Pack Bridge?

I look forward to your response on this matter.

Sincerely,

Arthur Pope