

June 3, 2004

Dale Bosworth
Chief
U.S. Forest Service
Washington, DC 20250-0003

Dear Chief Bosworth:

Thank you for meeting with me and others from the conservation community on June 1 to discuss a wide range of forest issues, including the agency's off-road vehicle rulemaking. During that discussion, you highlighted a number of "incentives" that might impact upon the willingness of interested parties to work with the agency to designate roads and routes for off-road vehicle use. You suggested that the timeframe for route designation, which a broad cross-section of conservation, recreation and other groups have urged the Service to include in a proposed rule, would provide an incentive for these interests not to collaborate with others to designate routes. In some respects, this theory implies that the conservation community is proposing a timeframe in order to "run out the clock" and eliminate off-road vehicle use on National Forests.

On behalf of the members of the Natural Trails and Waters Coalition, I appreciate the opportunity to make clear that our members are prepared to actively participate in constructive and balanced efforts to address this serious problem. In fact, many of our members have long track records of engaging with the Forest Service to identify and designate appropriate roads and routes for off-road vehicles. With respect to the timeframe itself, our consistent position, including in letters to you, is that at the end of the timeframe, off-road vehicle use would not be terminated, but limited to those roads and routes designated by the Forest Service following environmental review and public participation. We share your conclusion that this problem must be addressed "now." Including a timeframe in the regulations, by which designations must be complete, is essential to achieving this goal.

I appreciate this opportunity to reiterate our position as well as the willingness of our members to play an active and productive role in addressing a problem of mutual concern. We look forward to continuing to work with the Forest Service on this important issue in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

Scott Kovarovics
Director

cc: Jack Troyer