

Rhododendron Community Planning Organization
P.O. Box 33
Rhododendron, OR 97049

August 28, 2008

Mr. Bill Westbrook, District Ranger
Zig Zag Ranger District
Mt. Hood National Forest
70220 E. Hwy 26
Zigzag, OR 97049

Dear Ranger Westbrook,

As President of the Rhododendron Community Planning Organization (CPO), I have been asked by the community to contact you about an area of great concern to many citizens who reside in or near Rhododendron. That concern is the poor condition of the Forest Service Roads that are used by many residents and visitors in the area.

If anyone does any traveling of the Forest Service roads in the area, it is apparent that all of the Forest Service Roads in the District are in desperate need of repair and maintenance. However, of primary concern is Road 20, extending its entire length from Highway 26 up to Mile Bridge where it intersects with Road 12 and Still Creek Road.

Several citizens, who frequently use Road 20, have taken it upon themselves to fill in some of the potholes along Road 20 between Highway 26 and Holden Road after experiencing damage to their vehicles and near crashes because of the veering that needs to take place to navigate around the potholes. It is unfortunate that they had to resort to such action and expense, but their numerous attempts to get the Forest Service to repair the road went unheeded.

While we realize that road repair and maintenance is not the primary mission of the Forest Service, we believe that it does bear some responsibility to at least keep the roads passable and free of major potholes that could be and have been damaging to vehicles. We understand that funding is a major concern, but surely annual Forest Service District budgets must have some contingency for road repair and maintenance.

Unfortunately, I'm afraid that it will take a serious mishap in order to get the Forest Service to take action. If the roads continue to degrade, that day will not be far away. Recently, I witnessed a near head-on accident on Road 20 at the corner where it intersects with Marion Avenue because of a major pothole that takes up nearly half of the road. Fortunately, both vehicles were traveling at a slow enough rate that they were able to avoid a major collision. However, it's a proven fact that even at slow rates of speed, major property damage and personal injury can occur. While accidents will continue to occur because of driver error, I would hate to have an accident caused because of the poor road conditions.

On behalf of all the citizens and visitors of Rhododendron who use the many Forest Service Roads in the area, I ask that the Forest Service give some attention to road repair and maintenance. We realize that funding is an issue, however, it is much more cost

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effective to maintain the roads and fill the potholes then it is to allow them to degrade to a condition where major renovations will be necessary.

If there is anyway the CPO can help the Forest Service in pursuing this request for road repair and maintenance, please don't hesitate to contact us.

The CPO appreciates your prompt attention to this matter and we look forward to improved road conditions on not only Road 20 but also all of the Forest Service Roads in the District.

Sincerely,

Steven G. Graeper, President
Rhododendron Community Planning Organization

Cc: Mr. Jim Tierney
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Clackamas River Ranger Station
Mt. Hood National Forest
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Estacada, OR 97023

Mr. Burnham Chamberlain
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