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January 20, 2015

Maria Ulloa
US Forest Service
Forest Plan Revision, 1839 So.
Newcomb Street, Porterville, CA 93257

Re: Forest Plan Revision - PCT Proposal objections

Dear Forest Planners,

We object to the recently released PCT Proposal in the Sequoia, Inyo and Sierra Forest Plan Revision for a number of reasons. Please include these comments in your Scoping for the Forest Plan Revision and consider them as you develop the Alternatives and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

As one of several organizations who maintain the Pacific Crest Trail in the Sequoia National Forest, we fully support the existing PCT; however we do not see any need for creating a PCT corridor, PCT view shed or limiting trails crossing the PCT. We have intimate knowledge of the PCT, having helped to maintain 27 miles of this trail over the past three years as well as travelling the PCT which leads us to conclude:

- All forms of recreation including the PCT in Sequoia National Forest currently exist in harmony on both Non Wilderness and Wilderness lands. The current PCT Proposal restrictions such as a PCT corridor, PCT view shed and limiting trails crossing the PCT will needlessly create user conflict by pitting multiple use recreation against PCT use.
- Pacific Crest Trail users on Non Wilderness lands in Sequoia are few due to large elevation gains, short season, lack of water and setting compared to nearby Wilderness sections of the PCT. On the whole, we do not believe that users of the Pacific Crest Trail on Sequoia Non Wilderness lands have taken issue with the PCT passing through areas where OHV recreation and where OHV trails cross the PCT.

- New PCT based restrictions will harm other forms of recreation and land use, as well as the struggling local economy.
- New PCT based restrictions will concentrate use of other forms of recreation by reducing where multiple use trails can be located and closing historical roads and trails. This will needlessly increase environmental impacts.
- These new PCT restrictions are not in keeping with the PCT Comprehensive Management Plan.
- The PCT Proposal will create an undue burden on the Forest Service.

Although our volunteers are primarily composed of horse and mule packers and hikers who maintain and use mostly wilderness areas, we recognize that non-wilderness recreational trail users are being increasingly shutout of their trail areas unfairly. Their high recreational user numbers and strong support of non-wilderness trail maintenance, warrants improving or at least maintaining the current non-wilderness and OHV trail systems. We believe that if the OHV trail opportunities are reduced, there will be a greater number of motorized violators on non-motorized trails.

We urge the Forest Service not to include any changes to the management of the PCT in the Forest Plan Revision which are not in keeping with the PCT Comprehensive Management Plan. If changes are needed to the management of the PCT, the Forest Service must first perform a separate EIS with full public involvement to revise the PCT Comprehensive Management Plan. We oppose the creation of a PCT corridor, PCT view shed and limitations on trails crossing the PCT.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our knowledge of the PCT with regards to your Forest Plan Revision.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Pfeiler

President, UTMC