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Comments

I am 62 and have lived in the Sierra foothills since 1973. I have spent much time exploring the PUBLICLY OWNED land of our National Forests. I drive my camper into these lands, and when I leave, the land is better than before my visit. Although there is surprisingly little trash left in our forests, I always manage to find a little something, an empty bottle or can, and I pick it up and bring it out. As I said, there is NOT a trash problem in the many hundred miles of logging and Forest Service roads I have traveled. During and since the Clinton years, I have noticed that several of my favorite roads have been blocked by rocks or berms. This is very disappointing to me and quite unnecessary, as I have witnessed very little signs of traffic and hardly any damage to any of these areas when they were open. In fact, I think the well-being of these areas is compromised by these closures.

Without occasional traffic on these roads, the roads will eventually be impassable. At first bushes and small trees will begin to cover the way, then as the vegetation grows, the roads become less usable and eventually impassable. These arteries into the woods serve as useful access for fire protection. Most fires are started by lightning--not people. It might be a good idea to set up a system of roadways into our forests for the purpose of fighting fires. Of course, that would be quite expensive. But, here we already have a nearly free solution. Keep the existing roads open during the summer months and allow the people to at least partially (through use) maintain them by not allowing plant growth to block passage.

Concerns about human intrusion on the animal world is, I believe, overstated. We could have far more roads than currently exist, and there would still be vast areas where vehicles cannot access. I have seen bears, mountain lions, and even a weasel in addition to all the more common wildlife. I'm not suggesting we build freeways throughout the Tahoe National Forest. I am suggesting that we are no where near a time for concern, and keeping all the existing roads open makes more sense than closing them. Moreover, we should re-open the roads that have been closed over the last several years. One fire will do far more damage than any imagined or perceived problem caused by us, the public, the people who own these places. Why do we call them "public lands" if the public is denied access.

I AM STONGLY AGAINST ANY FURTHER CLOSURES.

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