



File Code: 1950

Date: October 20, 2014

John Allen  
Deschutes National Forest  
Forest Supervisor  
63095 Deschutes Market Road  
Bend, Oregon 97701

Dear John:

The last objection meeting on September 29, 2014 to discuss the Sisters Community Trails Project was intended to determine if there was any way to find a community compromise around the Sisters-Black Butte Ranch paved trail and its location. Based on what I heard at the meeting it appears that for some objectors there is no compromise. There is also clearly a strong amount of community support for a paved path connecting communities around the community of Sisters. Many of the comments we received throughout the process were in support of the concept. Tollgate and Black Butte Ranch indicate the majority of homeowners surveyed support the concept. However, there is a segment of the community who do not support the concept of a paved path as presented in the environmental assessment released for public review this past summer.

While we were looking for a way to move forward with the current proposal that would be accepted by the larger community it appears that a compromise isn't possible given the polarization of segments of the community around the idea of a paved path. Rather than generate additional disagreement within the community I have decided to withdraw my draft decision notice at this time. I am doing this because the intent of the paved trail project was to create a stronger connection between the communities in the greater Sisters community and believe this will not happen given the design of the proposal and the emotions currently at play in the community.

I still believe there is the possibility of generating community support around the idea of alternative means of transportation and a paved path could be an integral part of community connections. In the future I will be looking for a way to build support for community trails by inviting people within the community to participate in a conversation about community trails in the greater Sisters community. This conversation would begin early this winter and will be ongoing throughout the winter. The intent is to generate broad community support for a variety of trail proposals within the community that we can move forward together in the near future.

Sincerely,

KRISTIE L. MILLER  
District Ranger

cc: Michael L Keown, Susan Skakel

