



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Mt. Hood
National Forest

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File Code: 2310, 1950-2

Date: JUL 30 2001

Dear Wilderness Enthusiast

I have decided to withdraw my December 6, 2000 decision on the wilderness Protection Plan Environmental Assessment modifying the Standards and Guidelines for the Mt. Hood, Salmon-Huckleberry and Hatfield Wildernesses. I am withdrawing this decision in order to allow the opportunity to undertake additional deliberations around the issue of solitude and consistency with the Wilderness Act. These issues were raised during the appeal process and I believe warrant additional time to review.

While we are continuing the deliberation process I am very pleased to report on the success of the Wilderness Stewardship Program that was started last summer. We started out training thirteen stewards last year and this year the program has expanded to over 45 stewards. These stewards are volunteers who are dedicated to protecting the wilderness resource and have committed their time and energy to providing wilderness education "Leave No Trace" training to users and potential users of wilderness both within the wilderness setting and in the metropolitan area. This program is not dependent on the final decision and we look forward to continuing to build on the support of wilderness protection.

At this time we don't know the extent of changes in our analysis or decision until we deliberate further. We should know better in the next few months and will inform you at the time of what the next steps will be. Thank you for your continued interest in wilderness.

Sincerely,



GARY L. LARSEN
Forest Supervisor



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