

Document Structure

The document is divided into five parts: the demographic summary, the response summary table, a summary of the content analysis, the content analysis, and a summary of public comment from the public meetings in Bishop, California and Dyer, Nevada (note: “response” will be used to refer to any piece of comment received from the public: email, fax, petition, US Post Office delivered, or public meeting comment form).

The demographic summary provides information on the responses and respondents. Information contained in this summary includes the number of responses received on the project, the type of respondent submitting the comment (e.g., individual, government entity, conservation group), and the geographic distribution of the responses.

The summary table assigns a number to each response received and indicates the individual or organization submitting the comment, the geographic location of the individual or organization (if included in the response), and any additional notes or comments on the response. Included in the notes section is the comment number(s) that tracks where the comments from the responses appear in the content analysis report.

For the content analysis, each response was read and individual comments were summarized and organized into three broad categories: Process and Planning, Alternatives, and Environmental Consequences. These broad categories were subdivided into more specific subcategories. Under each subcategory is the comment or comments as expressed in the public comment response. The response number in which the comment appeared is provided after the comment. In many cases, multiple responses submitted the same or similar comments and these comments will have multiple response numbers. Some responses may have multiple comments in the comment analysis, while others may have none (if, for example, the response was clearly out-of-scope or unintelligible).

Demographic Summary

Total Responses/Responses Included in this Demographic Summary

A total of **220** responses were read, analyzed, and included in the summary table. This total includes several duplicate responses and multiple responses from the same respondent(s). All responses were read, but the multiple responses were not included in the demographic summaries below. In addition, a petition was received that contained 216 signatures. For the purposes of the demographic summary, this response was counted as one response. A total of **209** responses were included in the demographic summary.

Organization Summary

Individual	196 responses	94%
Conservation Groups	5 responses	2%
Multiple Use /Access Advocacy Groups	4 responses	2%
Government Entities/Elected Officials	2 responses	1%
Special Use Permittee	1 responses	.5%
Other Group (constitutional rights group)	1 response	.5%

Geographic Summary

Of the **209** responses analyzed for the demographic summary, **183** provided an address (this figure does not include responses #113 and #220 which included multiple addresses). Of the responses providing an address, 183 or 63% were from Esmeralda, Inyo, or Mono Counties.

Response Summary Table

Response Number	Individual/Organization	Address	Comment Numbers in Public Comment Analysis/Notes
1	Bhairavi K. Asher (Individual)	Irvine, CA	comment #1
2	Linda Arcularius, Supervisor 1 st District, County of Inyo, Board of Supervisors (Government Entity/Elected Official)	Bishop, CA	comments #32, 33
3	Douglas Beach (Individual)	San Francisco, CA	comment #1
4	Karen and Mike Brorson (Individual)	unknown	comment #1
5	Delinda Briggs (Individual)	Lee Vining, CA	comment #1
6	Unknown (Individual)	unknown	comments #9, 45
7	Joann Barbee (Individual)	Johannesburg, CA	comment #1
8	Joellin Bacon (Individual)	Mammoth Lakes, CA	comment #1
9	Daniel Bacon (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
10	Steve Brittingham (Individual)	Mount Charleston, NV	comment #1
11	Larry and Ruth Blakely (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
12	Justin Black (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
13	Elisabeth Bingham (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
14	Cassie Beals (Individual)	Oakland, CA	comment #1
15	Steve Bloom (Individual)	Oakland, CA	comment #1
16	Helen Burke (Individual)	Berkeley, CA	comment #1
17	Edward Bennett (Individual)	Berkeley, CA	comment #1
18	F. Duane Bloom (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
19	Unknown (Individual)	unknown	comment #1
20	JoAnee Berg (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comment #9
21	Phyllis S. Benham (Individual)	Mammoth Lakes, CA	comment #1
22	Jeanni Collins (Individual)	unknown	comment #1
23	Joel Carotheas (Individual)	Goldfield, NV	comments #9, 34
24	Donna M. Carr, M.D. (Individual)	Vista, CA	comment #1
25	Leon Campbell (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comments #9, 34

Response Number	Individual/Organization	Address	Comment Numbers in Public Comment Analysis/Notes
26	Jeroll Campbell (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comments #9, 34
27	Harold Campbell (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comments #9, 34
28	Barbara Campbell (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comments #9, 34
29	Steve Curry (Individual)	unknown	comments #9, 34
30	Alan Carlton (Individual)	Alameda, Ca	comments #9, 34
31	Diana Cunningham (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
32	Donald B. Constans (Individual)	Big Pine, CA	comment #1
33	Diana Cunningham and Greg Smith (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
34	Donald B. Constans (Individual)	same respondent as #32 (different response)	comment #1
35	Peter Cummings (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
36	Tom Camara (Individual)	unknown	comments #1, 6
37	Unknown (Individual)	unknown	comment #1
38	Unknown (Individual)	unknown	comment #1
39	Martha A. del Rio (Individual)	Berkeley, CA	comment #1
40	Mr. and Mrs. DaDurk (Individual)	unknown	comment #1
41	Joanne Drabek (Individual)	Oakland, CA	comment #1
42	Mike Daley (Individual)	El Cerrito, CA	comment #1
43	Maura Dawgut (Individual)	Berkeley, CA	comment #1
44	Nicholas Dowers (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comments #9, 34
45	Shirley Carpenter (Individual)	unknown	comment #1
46	Kathy Duvall (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
47	John Deymonaz (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comments #34, 37
48	Taylor Dahlke (Individual)	unknown	comment #1
49	Mr. and Mrs. James L. Denison (Individual)	Long Beach, CA	comment #1
50	Bill Dunlap (Individual)	Mammoth Lakes, CA	comments #1, 6
51	Katharine R. Dreyfuss (Individual)	Santa Monica, CA	comment #1
52	Rod Dowers (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comments #9, 34

Response Number	Individual/Organization	Address	Comment Numbers in Public Comment Analysis/Notes
53	James P. Wallace (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comments #9, 34
54	Verna Wallace (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comments #9, 34
55	Norman R. Williams (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comments #9, 34
56	Angela M. Williams (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comments #9, 34
57	Marlene Wallace (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comments #9, 34
58	Leland Wallace (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comments #9, 34
59	Diane Seidenverg (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comments #9, 34
60	Alex I. Stewart (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comments #9, 34
61	Joe McCauley (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comments #9, 34
62	Joe McCauley (Individual)	same respondent as letter #61 (different response)	comments #9, 34
63	John C. Mabuke (Individual)	Goldfield, NV	comments #9, 34
64	Robert Moss (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comments #9, 34
65	Frank H. Hall (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comments #9, 34
66	Louis Hzeved (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comments #9, 34
67	James B. Hunter (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comments #9, 34
68	Mary Lou Hunter (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comments #9, 34
69	Wayne N. Hage (Individual)	Tonopah, NV	comments #9, 34
70	Maria Dowers (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comments #9, 34
71	Larry Dowers (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comments #9, 34
72	Claus L. Engelhardt (Individual)	unknown	comments #1, 7, 10, 16, 18, 35, 69, 79
73	Linda and Larry Emerson (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
74	John Deymonaz (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comment #34; Attached letter from John Ensign, United States Senator to Mark Rey
75	Mary Franke (Individual)	unknown	email asking how to comment
76	Doug Feay (Individual)	unknown	comments #1, 62, 87

Response Number	Individual/Organization	Address	Comment Numbers in Public Comment Analysis/Notes
77	Heather Gates (Individual)	Lee Vining, CA	comment #1
78	Adrian Griffin (Individual)	Sacramento, CA	comment #11
79	Ros and John Gorham (Individual)	Big Pine, CA	comment #1
80	Mario and Yolanda Gonzalez (Individual)	Valley Village, CA	comment #1
81	Roxanne Guide (Individual)	Fremont, CA	comment #1
82	David Grah (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
83	Walt Hoffman (Individual)	Benton, CA	comment #1
84	Charlotte Harbeson (Individual)	Mammoth Lakes, CA	comment #1
85	Richard Hereford (Individual)	Flagstaff, AZ	comment #1
86	Ray P. Holbert (Individual)	San Diego, CA	comments #1, 6
87	Tom and Jo Heindel (Individual)	Big Pine, CA	comment #1
88	Heidi Hopkins (Individual)	Lee Vining, CA	comment #1
89	Brice Harris (Individual)	Mammoth Lakes, CA	comment #1
90	Darla J. Heil (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
91	David Humes (Individual)	Mammoth Lakes, CA	comment #1
92	Patrick Huber (Individual)	Davis, CA	comment #1
93	Ann and John Hoffman (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
94	Robert A. Hudson (Individual)	Independence, CA	comment #1
95	Norman Herterich (Individual)	San Francisco, CA	comment #1
96	Carolyn Honer (Individual)	Santa Ana, CA	comment #1
97	Carolyn Honer (Individual)	same respondent as #96 (different response)	comment #1
98	Charlotte Harbeson (Individual)	Mammoth Lakes, CA	comment #1
99	Lynn Inouye (Individual)	Bridgeport, CA	comment #1
100	Stephen Ingram (Individual)	Swall Meadows, CA	comment #1
101	Irene Jensen (Individual)	Lone Pine, CA	comment #1

Response Number	Individual/Organization	Address	Comment Numbers in Public Comment Analysis/Notes
102	Lisa Jaeger (Individual)	Round Valley, CA	comment #1
103	Unknown (Individual)	unknown	comment #1
104	William C. Kirby (Individual)	Fish Lake Valley, NV	comments #34, 36, 67, 75, 80, 81, 84, 91, 92, 95
105	Jane Kenyon	Mammoth Lakes, CA	comment #1
106	Ann Klinefelter (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
107	Louise Kim (Individual)	Fullerton, CA	comment #1
108	Steve Krieg (Individual)	San Francisco, CA	comment #1
109	Phill Kiddoo (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
110	Andrew Kirk (Individual)	Independence, CA	comment #1
111	Phill Kiddoo (Individual)	same response as #109	
112	Cindy Kamler (Individual)	unknown	comment #1
113	California Wilderness Coalition, Center for Biological Diversity, Friends of the Inyo, and Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (Multiple Conservation Groups)	multiple	comments # 1, 3, 4, 5, 22, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 86, 88, 89; Attached photo documentation of damage to Furnace Creek Road
114	Norman La Force (Individual)	El Cerrito, CA	comment #1
115	Juliet Lamont (Individual)	Berkeley, CA	comment #1
116	Peggy Lin (Individual)	La Palma, CA	comment #1
117	V. Irene Livermore (Individual)	Dyer, NV	comments #9, 34
118	Mark Langner (Individual)	Bridgeport, CA	comment #1
119	Ilana Levin (Individual)	Mammoth Lakes, CA	comments #1, 6
120	Lane Labbe (Individual)	unknown	comment #1
121	The Wilderness Society (Individual)	Lee Vining, CA	comments #1, 44, 57
122	Jennifer Lapuca (Individual)	unknown	comment #1
123	Marilyn Missimer (Individual)	Bridgeport, CA	comment #1
124	Rita Minjares (Individual)	El Cerrito, CA	comment #1
125	Marjorie Mechis (Individual)	Mill Valley, CA	comment #1

Response Number	Individual/Organization	Address	Comment Numbers in Public Comment Analysis/Notes
126	Clayton Mansfield (Individual)	San Francisco, CA	comment #1
127	John K. Moore (Individual)	Sacramento, CA	comment #1
128	Peter J. Metropulos (Individual)	Atherton, CA	comment #1
129	K.M. Morey (Individual)	Mammoth Lakes, CA	comment #1
130	The Wilderness Society (Conservation Group)	same response as #121	
131	Dan Kozarsky and Carol MacFarlane (Individual)	Mountain View, CA	comment #1
132	Don Morrill (Individual)	Davis, CA	comment #1
133	Mark Matthews (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
134	Robert McIntosh (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
135	Betsy MacGowan (Individual) (Individual)	El Cerrito, CA	comment #1
136	William H. Mitchel (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comments #1, 3, 5
137	Carole Mall (Individual)	Campo, CA	comment #1
138	Robert McIntosh (Individual)	same respondent as #134 (different response)	comment #1
139	Gordon R. Nelson (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
140	Advocates for Access to Public Lands (Multiple Use/ Access Advocacy Groups)	Bishop, CA	comment #9
141	Board of Esmeralda County Commissioners (Government Entity/Elected Official)	Goldfield, NV	comment #9; 9/2/2003 resolution from the Board opposing the Furnace Creek Road closure
142	Anna Oursler (Individual)	Berkeley, CA	comment #1
143	Erika Obedzinski (Individual)	Lee Vining, CA	comment #1
144	Dave Oldenburg (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
145	Derik Olson (Individual)	unknown	comment #1
146	California Native Plant Society (Conservation Group)	Bishop, CA	comments #1, 38

Response Number	Individual/Organization	Address	Comment Numbers in Public Comment Analysis/Notes
147	Roy Poucher (Individual)	Anaheim, CA	comment #1
148	Jon Patzer (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #9
149	Jon Patzer (Individual)	same respondent as #148 (different response)	comment #11
150	Judy Parnish (Individual)	Livermore, CA	comment #1
151	Debby Parker (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
152	Carol Rushman (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
153	Sam Roberts (Individual)	Torrance, CA	comment #1
154	Bonnie M. Reed (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
155	Lynn Roberts (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
156	N.J. Riedy (Individual)	Pescadero, CA	comment #1
157	Greg Reis (Individual)	Lee Vining, CA	comment #1
158	Jack Robbins (Individual)	Berkeley, CA	comment #1
159	Georgette Rieck (Individual)	unknown	comment #1
160	Dominic Rubino (Individual)	Newhall, CA	comment #1
161	Don Rager (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #9
162	High Desert Multiple Use Coalition (Multiple Use/Access Advocacy Groups)	Ridgecrest, CA	comments #9, 13, 14, 20, 21, 31, 39, 40, 46, 70, 76, 83, 84, 90, 93, 94
163	Ralph Sillerman (Individual)	San Francisco, CA	comment #1
164	Andy Selters (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
165	Timothy B. Sanford (Individual)	Mammoth Lakes, CA	comment #1
166	Ralph Sillerman (Individual)	same response as #163	
167	Emilie Strauss (Individual)	Berkeley, CA	comment #1
168	Mary Siceloff (Individual)	Mammoth Lakes, CA	comment #1
169	Richard Spotts (Individual)	St. George, UT	comment #1
170	Jack Shipley (Individual)	Lee Vining, CA	comment #1
171	Stephanie Sheltz (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
172	Sara Steck (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
173	Fiona Sneddor (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
174	John Simeon (Individual)	Lee Vining, CA	comment #1

Response Number	Individual/Organization	Address	Comment Numbers in Public Comment Analysis/Notes
175	Robert Solotar (Individual)	Richmond, CA	comment #1
176	Ronald E. Smith (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
177	Dale Sandell (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #12
178	Reed Secord (Individual)	Lighthouse Point, FL	comment #1
179	California Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs (Multiple Use/Access Advocacy Groups)	Lakeside, CA	comments #15, 17, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 41, 42, 90, 93, 94
180	United Four Wheel Drive Associations (Multiple Use/Access Advocacy Groups)	Lakeside, CA	comments #15, 26, 27, 28, 30, 43, 49, 70, 71, 74, 77, 78, 82, 84, 85, 90
181	Constance Spenger (Individual)	Big Pine, CA	comments #1, 79
182	Greg Smith (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
183	Fran Stewart (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
184	Unknown (Individual)	unknown	comment #2
185	Ian Tsan (Individual)	San Francisco, CA	comment #1
186	Sherryl Taylor (Individual)	Mammoth Lakes, CA	comment #1
187	Georgette Theotig (Individual)	Tehachapi, CA	comment #1, 8
188	Larry Thompson (Individual)	Bishop, CA	Email correspondence regarding the role of Furnace Creek in forest health management
189	David J. Tawn (Individual)	Berkeley, CA	comment #1
190	Jacqueline Thalberg (Individual)	El Cerrito, CA	comment #1
191	Larry Thompson (Individual)	same respondent as #191; (different response)	comments #47, 68, 70
192	Ray W. VanDeWeerd (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #9, 19, 48, 50, 67, 73
193	Margaret Verba/Delinda Briggs (Individual)	Lee Vining, CA	comment #1
194	Dennis R. Villavicencio (Individual)	Carlsbad, CA	comment #1
195	Sierra Mountain Center (Special Use Permittee)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
196	Paul Vaughn (Individual)	Vallejo, CA	comment #1

Response Number	Individual/Organization	Address	Comment Numbers in Public Comment Analysis/Notes
197	Steven White (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
198	Sierra Club, Toiyabe Chapter (Conservation Group)	Mammoth Lakes, CA	comment #1
199	Lymil A. Walker (Individual)	Mammoth Lakes, CA	comment #1
200	Edgar Wayburn (Individual)	San Francisco, CA	comment #1
201	Bill Walsh (Individual)	Oakland, CA	comment #1
202	Stephanie Williams (Individual)	Costa Mesa, CA	comment #1
203	C.B. Wells (Individual)	unknown	comment #1
204	n/a	question regarding vehicle crossing in riparian areas	
205	Alice Wolfson (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #1
206	Eastern Audubon Society (Conservation Group)	Bishop, CA	comments #1, 62, 63
207	William E. Wright (Individual)	Big Pine, CA	comment #9
208	Judy Wickman (Individual)	Lone Pine, CA	comment #1
209	Dean Webb (Individual)	Lancaster, CA	comment #1
210	Blanche Wylie (Individual)	unknown	comment #1
211	John Wilson (Individual)	Mammoth Lakes, CA	comment #1
212	Wilma Wheeler (Individual)	Mammoth Lakes, CA	comment #1
213	Blanche Wylie (Individual)	Bishop, CA	comment #8
214	Bryce A. Wheeler (Individual)	Mammoth Lakes, CA	comment #1
215	n/a	unknown	newsletter from Carroll "Butch" Hambleton Jr, Supervisor, Fourth District, County of Inyo Board of Supervisors
216	People for the Constitution (Constitutional Rights Group)	Tonopah, NV	comments #9, 65
217	Azzia Zur (Individual)	Berkeley, CA	comment #1
218	Valerie Zachary (Individual)	Los Osos, CA	comment #1
219	Unknown (Individual)	unknown	comments #23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 66

Response Number	Individual/Organization	Address	Comment Numbers in Public Comment Analysis/Notes
220	Petition (Multiple Individuals)	multiple	comment #9; petition objecting to the Furnace Creek Road signed by a 216 individuals (150 of the signers are from Fish Lake Valley—76% of the population over 18 years of age)

Content Analysis Summary

Scoping comments on the Furnace Creek Road proposed action were sharply divided between those that wanted to see the road open and those that believed the road should be closed. There was little comment offered that suggested a middle ground or compromise on the issue. As far as closing the road, a number of reasons were given. Some respondents said that the road adversely impacts important desert riparian areas, including desert springs and seeps that provide locally important habitat for wildlife. A number of comments stated that there are plenty of other places to drive on public lands in the eastern Sierra and that it is a waste of taxpayer money to rebuild a road that washed out in the 1980s. Others said that a road closure will protect sensitive riparian, biological, roadless, and other resources in the canyon. Overall, respondents that favored a road closure indicated that they believed that the protection of desert riparian habitat should take precedence over off-road recreation use.

On the other hand, a number of comments were received that supported opening the road for motorized use. These respondents wrote that the any damage caused by the current road could be easily mitigated through volunteer money and labor. These writers also stated that a road closure would be extremely detrimental to accessing the White Mountains by Fish Lake Valley residents as there are limited opportunities to access this area. In addition, others claimed that the road has been used by Fish Lake Valley residents for over 100 years and that the closure was implemented without offering the public due process or opportunity to be involved. A number of the comments pointed to the recreation, economic, social, and forest health considerations that may favor leaving the road open.

A plethora of laws, policies, and regulations were cited by both those in favor of a road closure and those in favor of keeping the road open. Road closure advocates cited forest plan standards and guidelines, the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment, the National Forest Road Management Rule, and the Roadless Rule as legal reasons for not rebuilding the road and closing it permanently. Supporters of keeping the road open also cited various laws to back up their case. Provisions of RS2477 were frequently offered as a reason for not closing the road. Some respondents also said that the recently passed Healthy Forest Restoration Act mandates that the road stay open.

Other comments addressed additional aspects of the Furnace Creek situation including the road's relationship with the Tres Plumas area north of the Furnace Creek Road. Some of these respondents expressed concern over the impact of the road on the Tres Plumas Meadow and Flat area and the Cottonwood Basin area. These respondents say that the agency should analyze the impact of reconstructing or opening the Furnace Creek Road. In addition, another comment questioned the actual length of the Furnace Creek Road and whether it actually extends into the Tres Plumas area. According to this respondent, the 1986 and 1988 Recreation Opportunity Spectrum maps show that the road does indeed extend into Tres Plumas Meadow and that this should be reflected in the environmental document prepared for the road.

Some respondents offered comment on the public involvement related to the Furnace Creek Road issue. According to a number of writers, the Forest Service should resist influence from environmental groups and work better with local residents to address the Furnace Creek situation. Another respondent, on the other hand, wrote that the Forest Service should not give greater weight to the comments and opinions of local residents than the comments of Bishop and San

Francisco residents. While one respondent stated that the November 2003 public meeting should have been better managed so that it did not deteriorate into a diatribe against environmental groups, others said that the Forest Service did not adequately record the overwhelming support at the public meeting for keeping the road open. According to these respondents, the agency should have accepted a petition at the meeting to reopen the road and recorded the sentiment of public meeting attendees by allowing a show of hands to indicate whether a majority was against the road closure. In addition, some respondents were displeased with the lack of information provided on the Furnace Creek Road closure at the November 2003 meeting.

A number of comments addressed the consistency analysis report. While some responses pointed to the report as an important justification for closing the road, other responses strongly questioned the adequacy and accuracy of the report. Overall, comments criticizing the consistency report stated that the report was written with a clear bias towards closing the Furnace Creek Road. More specifically, other comments asserted that the report quoted the forest plan out-of-context and did not provide a causal link between recreational activities and resource degradation, perceived or otherwise, of the Furnace Creek area. These responses clearly stated that the report should not be relied upon as a rationale for closing the Furnace Creek Road.

Other planning related issues were commented on by respondents. Some writers asked that the Forest Service explain whether “green sticker” monies earmarked for the maintenance of the Furnace Creek Road were misappropriated for other uses. Other respondents asked that the Forest Service clarify the inventory and roads analysis process that would be used to analyze the Furnace Creek Road. Specifically, these writers wanted information on the team and process that would be used in the inventory and roads analysis. Still other respondents wanted clarification of the dual agency process that would be used to analyze the road.

Some comments asked that specific issues and concerns be addressed in the environmental document that is prepared for Furnace Creek. In terms of riparian areas and water quality, one respondent asked that the Forest Service, when analyzing alternatives, take into consideration the vast number of other nearby creeks, riparian areas, and vegetation. Other writers said that the Forest Service should explain the scientific basis for the width of riparian buffer zones. Wildlife considerations were also addressed by some commentators. One response asked that the Forest Service analyze the impact of the Furnace Creek Road on recovery efforts for the federally threatened Paiute cutthroat trout. The same writer also said that the Furnace Creek Road should not be rebuilt outside the canyon as this would fragment the habitat of various wildlife species in the area. Another respondent asked that the Forest Service clearly document in the EA the recreational activities that pose significant threats to any plants or animals that are listed as threatened or endangered. According to this writer and others, the Forest Service should fully analyze the impact and extent of damage caused by wild horses in the Furnace Creek area.

Recreation and socioeconomic considerations also received some scoping comments. For example, one writer claimed that the Furnace Creek Road closure is discriminatory to the elderly and handicapped. Other writers ask that the EA consider the cumulative effects that the road closure would have on recreational access from the eastern side of the White Mountains. A call for a thorough social and economic analysis of the road closure appeared in some comments. According to some of the respondents, the Forest Service should analyze the economic impact of the road closure and the importance of the road as it relates to local custom, culture, recreation, economies, and family activities.

Content Analysis

I. Process and Planning

Furnace Creek Road and Area (Reconstruction and Closure)

Comment 1: The Forest Service should close the Furnace Creek Road: (responses #32, 34, 98)

- Because the road adversely impacts important desert riparian areas that provide habitat to wildlife (responses #1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 30, 31, 33, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45, 49, 51, 73, 76, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 87, 88, 89, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 107, 108, 109, 110, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 118, 119, 127, 129, 131, 132, 133, 135, 137, 138, 139, 187, 190, 198, 206).
- Because there are plenty of places to drive on public lands in the Eastern Sierra, including 8300 miles of roads, that do not harm rare wildlife habitat and riparian areas (responses #1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 13, 15, 16, 31, 39, 41, 42, 43, 45, 46, 49, 50, 76, 81, 82, 84, 86, 87, 88, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 99, 100, 102, 103, 106, 108, 109, 112, 114, 115, 116, 118, 119, 120, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 128, 129, 131, 132, 133, 134, 136, 137, 142, 143, 144, 145, 147, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 158, 159, 160, 163, 165, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 178, 181, 183, 185, 189, 193, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 205, 208, 209, 210, 212, 214, 217, 218).
- Because rebuilding the route up Furnace Creek will be a waste of taxpayer dollars, particularly when only a handful of people benefit from the road and the new road would also be susceptible to future washouts (responses #1, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 30, 36, 40, 45, 46, 48, 49, 50, 51, 73, 77, 79, 86, 88, 90, 100, 102, 103, 105, 119, 128, 129, 131, 132, 135, 138, 143, 153, 154, 157, 167, 168, 169, 181, 194, 195, 196, 198, 200, 202, 203, 206, 211, 214, 218).
- Because the closure of Furnace Creek to vehicles would affect less than four miles of a rarely used four-wheel drive trail (responses #1, 116, 136, 202).
- Because the road causes significant erosion that impairs the hydrology of the system (response #206).
- Because resource specialists have clearly established that off-road vehicle use in Furnace Creek is causing significant damage to the creek's unique riparian habitat, streambed, water quality, and wildlife habitat value (responses #7, 8, 11, 24, 48, 102, 105, 109, 136, 143, 157, 168, 169, 194, 211).
- Because there is no true road up the canyon as the old road washed out in the 1980s (responses #8, 11, 21, 24, 48, 50, 77, 79, 83, 86, 106, 113, 122, 136, 137, 143, 144, 157, 168, 183, 186, 195, 199, 200, 212, 214).
- Because Inyo National Forest land use regulations, in addition to California Fish and Game and water quality laws, mandate that streams and their associated riparian habitats

- be protected (responses #8, 24, 46, 48, 102, 103, 105, 109, 143, 157, 168, 169, 186, 194, 198, 202, 211).
- Because while there are 8300 miles of open roads in the Eastern Sierra, only 2% of the entire Inyo National Forest supports riparian vegetation (responses #8, 24, 48, 103, 105, 157, 168, 169, 194, 211).
 - Because in desert environments like the White Mountains the few desert springs and seeps provide locally limited and ecologically important habitat for wildlife (responses #8, 18, 48, 102, 105, 136, 143, 157, 194, 211).
 - Because there is no justification for leaving a road open that destroys the functioning of a biological and hydrological system (response #10).
 - Because motorized use will cause the constant disruption of the riparian substrate which destroys the aquatic and terrestrial vegetation, the substrate which insects and fish nest in, and agitates the fine soil material into suspension, coating the gills of resident animals (response #10).
 - Because whether or not motorized traffic used the Furnace Creek Road in the past is irrelevant; it is clear today that this use is inappropriate (response #206).
 - Because leaving the road open sends a dangerous message to a small group of irresponsible riders who ride their dirt bikes wherever they want, even if there is no road (response #183).
 - Because of the noise pollution associated with OHV use (response #201).
 - Because future generations will benefit from the preservation of the area (response #18).
 - Because there are enough roads that access the east side of the White Mountains (response #35).
 - Because there are economic benefits associated with keeping this area pristine (responses #37, 38).
 - Because the protection of desert riparian areas should take priority over off-road vehicle recreation (responses #1, 72, 76, 78, 84, 85, 106, 116, 153, 182, 212).
 - Because over four miles of the Furnace Creek Road travel directly within the riparian floodplain of Furnace Creek (response #113).
 - Because the agency, after reviewing documents and conducting field visits, determined that “motorized vehicle use is causing significant impacts to riparian habitat and water quality [and] consequently the need for immediate agency action is of critical importance” (response #113).
 - Because the Forest’s Consistency Analysis with existing land management standards and guidelines found that the damage to Furnace Creek was in violation of over a dozen individual guidelines from the 1988 Forest Plan and the 2001 Sierra Nevada Framework Plan Amendment due to the road’s proximity to the creek, damage to riparian vegetation,

and degradation of riparian and aquatic dependent species habitat (response #113, 146, 206).

- Because such a closure will protect the sensitive riparian, biological, roadless, and other resources found in the canyon (response #121).
- Because access to the area can be easily accomplished now with a bit of walking or horseback riding (responses #164, 165).

Comment 2: The Forest Service should close Furnace Creek Road and only allow vehicular use on Silver Canyon, Queen Canyon, Middle Canyon, Indian Creek, and Wyman Canyon and protect the White Mountains from off-road vehicle use (response #184).

Comment 3: The Forest Service should not rebuild the Furnace Creek Road outside the canyon as this reconstruction would take place on steep and erosive granite slopes and would be very expensive (responses #113, 136).

Comment 4: The Forest Service should not rebuild the Furnace Creek Road as it is not eligible for repair and realignment since there is no system route up Furnace Creek (response #113).

Comment 5: The Forest Service should not rebuild the Furnace Creek Road outside the Furnace Creek canyon as the areas north and south of the canyon bottom and east of the southeast corner of Section 35 are in Prescription 2, Forest Service Proposed Wilderness (responses 113, 136).

Comment 6: The Forest Service should not rebuild the Furnace Creek Road because rebuilding the old road will destroy Furnace Creek, one of the few places in the White Mountains with extensive riparian vegetation, free flowing streams, and desert wetlands (responses #36, 50, 86, 119).

Comment 7: The Forest Service should provide assurances to the public that if the Furnace Creek Road is left open, the road will be maintained in a manner that protects riparian and other environmental values and cuts down on the proliferation of new routes, will be graded periodically, and be patrolled on a regular basis in order to identify problems before the damage becomes too great (response #72).

Comment 8: The Forest Service should encourage more passive use, e.g. hiking, in the Furnace Creek area (response #187, 213).

Comment 9: The Forest Service should not close the Furnace Creek Road (response #161)

- Because the road closure is inconsistent with the concept of dual use of public lands (response 6).
- Because the economic, social, and recreational benefits of the road outweigh any environmental damage that may occur (response #207).
- Because the damage can be mitigated through volunteer service (responses #140, 207).
- Because the road allows access to prime deer and chukar hunting (response #207).

- Because motorized traffic, if done properly, causes relatively little continuing damage and offers people a way to visit interesting places (response 6).
- Because the road and area is not being damaged by the little motorized use on the road (responses #20, 148).
- Because the area should be left open for recreation, mineral exploration, and grazing (response #207).
- Because the appropriate studies have not been done to determine the condition of the road (responses #20, 192).
- Because there are limited existing motorized opportunities to access the White Mountains from Fish Lake Valley (responses #23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 44, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 117).
- Because the Furnace Creek Road has been used continually by local Fish Lake Valley residents for over 100 years (responses #23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 44, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 117, 140, 141, 220).
- Because despite some damage to the riparian areas in the past decades and during flooding cycles, the riparian areas have not only survived but have thrived along the road (responses #23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 44, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 117).
- Because the road was closed without due process as the public had no opportunity to offer an alternative solution to the concerns of the agencies over the motorized use that they say is causing adverse impacts (responses #140, 141, 220).
- Because the road, like many others in the White Mountains, passes through areas where it sometimes is necessary to share the most practical travel route with a stream and riparian area (response #140).
- Because the road provides an outstanding opportunity for motorized wilderness experience and should be maintained as primitive motorized access (response #140).
- Because the road closure will have an adverse effect on the economy of Fish Lake Valley, Nevada (response #141).
- Because the road closure will limit activities in the Furnace Creek area (response # 141).
- Because the portion of the road in the riparian area is a short segment in relation to the 18 total miles of road (response #148).
- Because the will of wealthy, special interest groups should not take precedent over the rights of individuals to access their land (response #215).
- Because hikers and horses using the area have caused the majority of the damage (response #148).
- Because there are rerouting options available (response #148).

- Because the management prescription for the road, Prescription 17, allows for the maintenance of the existing road and it would be consistent with the Land and Resource Management Plan if the Furnace Creek Road is brought up to higher environmental standards. The continued use of existing roads was confirmed by the Inyo National Forest managers in 1988 by the Management Prescription 17 designation and this should be honored by current managers (response #162).
- Because the Forest Service has no legal right to close a RS-2477 right-of-way without the permission of the owners of the right-of-way, who, under Nevada law, are the users, the county, and the state (response #216).
- Because the road may be needed for search and rescue situations (response #62)

Comment 10: The Forest Service should better provide the history leading up to the temporary road closure and the basis for the decision (response #72).

Comment 11: The Forest Service should reroute the Furnace Creek Road around the muddy portions of the area (response #149).

Comment 12: The Forest Service should provide better OHV access in the Furnace Creek area (response #177).

Comment 13: The Forest Service should include, in the EA, the fact that the agency has allowed the road to deteriorate to the point of disrepair despite good-faith offers from the public to provide assistance to the Forest Service to improve the condition of the Furnace Creek Road to a more acceptable standard (response #162).

Comment 14: The Forest Service should better explain the dual agency process to close the Furnace Creek Road and how any decision made by the Forest Service will affect the closure implemented by the BLM and by what mechanism (response #162).

Comment 15: The Forest Service should disclose the authority under which the joint “route designation” project is being conducted (response #179, 180).

Comment 16: The Forest Service should provide more information on how the Furnace Creek Road would be maintained by local residents (response #72).

Comment 17: The Forest Service should ensure that the EA provides an adequate description of the Furnace Creek area (ie. what the boundaries of the analysis area are) (response #179).

Green Sticker Monies

Comment 18: The Forest Service should clarify the historical use of “green sticker” monies used to maintain the Furnace Creek Road and whether the use of these funds was inappropriate (response #72).

Comment 19: The Forest Service should investigate the misappropriation of “green sticker” fees that were earmarked for the maintenance and repair of the Furnace Creek Road (response #192).

Tres Plumas Considerations

Comment 20: Exhibit B, the map associated with Forest Order 04-03-01 is incorrect as it deceptively implies that the 1988 Level II OHV Inventory does not include motorized access beyond the Tres Plumas Flat. The two-track road actually extends all the way to Tres Plumas Meadow as shown on the 1986 and 1988 Recreation Opportunity Spectrum maps associated with the Draft and Final Land and Resource Management Plan EIS. The upcoming environmental document should include a map and language that clearly indicates that the current Land and Resource Management Plan allows motorized use of the Furnace Creek Road all the way to Tres Plumas Meadow with the designation of Management Prescription 17 in Semi-Primitive Motorized Recreation designation (response #162).

Comment 21: The Forest Service should clarify whether the Furnace Creek Road extends beyond the Tres Plumas Meadows, as it appears as though it does. If it does not, the Paiute cutthroat trout should not be a significant factor in the subsequent environmental document (response #162).

Comment 22: The Forest Service should analyze the impact of opening or reconstructing the Furnace Creek Road on Tres Plumas Flat and the Cottonwood Basin, particularly since motorcycles have been using the Furnace Creek Road to access these areas (response #113).

Inventory/Roads Analysis Process

Comment 23: The Forest Service should disclose the individuals that will be conducting the inventory process survey (responses #179, 219).

Comment 24: The Forest Service should disclose the criteria that will govern the 'looks like a road' determination and since this is a joint project whether the Forest Service inventory will be matched against the BLM inventory (responses #179, 219).

Comment 25: The Forest Service should disclose the criteria by which a "not passable" determination will be made (responses #179, 219).

Comment 26: The Forest Service should make clear the data that will be collected during the route inventory process (responses #179, 180, 219).

Comment 27: The Forest Service has indicated that after the inventory data is gathered, a roads analysis will be done. The agency should disclose the process for the roads analysis and who the members of the interdisciplinary team associated with the roads analysis will be (responses #179, 180, 219).

Comment 28: The Forest Service should make clear whether there is a defined scientific data collection and analysis process associated with the Furnace Creek Road. At the public meeting, there were comments pertaining to ongoing monitoring efforts and previous reviews of the Furnace Creek Road area. If there has been ongoing monitoring, the Forest Service should provide the data and indicate whether the data is supported by scientific/peer-review analysis (responses #179, 180).

Comment 29: The Forest Service should provide historical observation reports that document the serious resource damage that justifies the emergency road closure (response #179).

Comment 30: The Forest Service should indicate whether there are monitoring reports which will be used to make a decision on the Furnace Creek Road area (responses #179, 180).

Prior OHV/Road Inventories

Comment 31: The Forest Service should acknowledge that there was no legitimate OHV or road inventory in 1988 when the Forest Plan was developed. After several attempts, a road inventory was completed that missed a number of routes in the White and Inyo Mountains. Forest Officials acknowledged some of these road oversights at a meeting in 1996 (response #162).

Public Involvement

Comment 32: The Forest Service should ensure that the entire public, not just environmental groups, is involved in decisions related to public lands. It appears as though the environmental community has considerable access to the Forest Service at the expense of other interests. Often times, the public is responding to predetermined ideas and commitments that have been refined to such a level that the public's ability to respond is limited accordingly (response 2).

Comment 33: The Forest Service should better open up lines of communication between the agency and local Board of Supervisors (response 2).

Comment 34: The Forest Service should resist influence from environmental groups and work better with residents of Esmeralda, Inyo, and Mono Counties to undertake the mitigation measures necessary to maintain motorized access on the Furnace Creek Road (responses 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 44, 47, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 74, 104, 117).

Comment 35: The Forest Service should have better managed the November, 2003 public meeting so that it did not deteriorate into a diatribe against environmentalists and environmental groups (response #72).

Comment 36: The Forest Service should consider the unanimous support at the public meeting for reopening the Furnace Creek Road (response #104).

Comment 37: The Forest Service should have better involved the public at the public meeting, including the recording of public approval for opening the road and accepting a petition to reopen the road (response #47).

Comment 38: The Forest Service should not give greater weight to the comments and opinions of local residents than those of residents in Bishop and San Francisco (response #146).

Comment 39: The Forest Service should include, in the final EA, the fact that the public has participated in at least four public processes involving these roads and is once again being asked to address the road. This is inexcusable and reflects the Forest Service's lack of commitment to the public (response #162).

Comment 40: The EA should analyze the potential for collaborative processes and partnerships with local businesses, organizations, and individuals to bring the Furnace Creek Road up to more acceptable environmental standards including the use of volunteer services, donated materials, as well as cooperative grant funding opportunities (response# 162)

Comment 41: The Forest Service should explain whether the scoping phase of this project was initiated with the appropriate level of public notification (response #179).

Comment 42: The Forest Service should have provided, at the November 2003 public meeting, adequate written documentation of the Furnace Creek Road situation. The lack of a complete document for public comment is not in keeping with NEPA as it makes it very difficult for the public to provide substantive comments. The Forest Service should provide a complete documentation of Forest Service and BLM intent within the scoping phase of the project to date so the public can review the documents and provide meaningful comments (response #179).

Comment 43: The Forest Service should halt scoping for the Furnace Creek Road situation as it is premature until the forest-wide route inventory is complete and Inyo National Forest routes of travel are reviewed within the public review process (response #180).

Comment 44: The Forest Service should set several parameters to help facilitate discussion among the various stakeholders in the Furnace Creek Road issue including setting clear expectations for participants; keeping discussions largely field based and focused on potential, reasonable solutions; maintaining discussions in advisory nature only; and ensuring that the public process does not violate the Federal Advisory Committee Act (response #121).

Public Lands Management, General

Comment 45: The Forest Service should manage public lands, not exclude people from them. (response 6)

Legal

Legal (general)

Comment 46: When quoting from any standards and guidelines, Codes of Federal Regulations, Forest Manual/Handbook, BLM handbook, rule, law, or other official instruction, the Forest Service should include the full language of the section or part cited in the document. At a minimum, the agency should provide the location where the language can be found on the Internet (response #162)

Comment 47: The Forest Service should realize that the road closure is unlawful due to failure to comply with 36CFR261.51(a)(b) which deals with the posting of closure orders (response #191).

Comment 48: The Forest Service should investigate the dynamiting of the Furnace Creek Road by agency employees (response #192).

Comment 49: The Forest Service should manage National Forest System lands in consideration of the relative values of the various resource uses in accordance with land and resource management plans which are prepared in compliance with the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960; the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act, as amended by the National Forest Management Act; and the National Environmental Policy Act (response #180).

Legal (Endangered Species Act)

Comment 50: The Forest Service should not enforce the Endangered Species Act to protect the Paiute cutthroat trout as these fish are not native to this region (response #192).

Comment 51: The Forest Service should analyze the impact of illegal vehicle use in the Cottonwood Basin, facilitated by the Furnace Creek Road, on efforts to protect the habitat of the Paiute cutthroat trout (response #113).

Legal (road management considerations)

Comment 52: The Forest Service should comply with National Forest Direction in CFR Title 36, Part 261, Section 12 and Title 36, Part 295 and Section 5 in the Furnace Creek area (response #113).

Legal (consistency with forest plan direction, including goals, standard and guidelines, and prescriptions)

Comment 53: The Forest Service should comply with several Forest goals in relation to the Furnace Creek Road, including economic/social, facilities, recreation, watershed, and wildlife goals (response #113).

Comment 54: The Forest Service should comply with forestwide standards and guidelines in relation to the Furnace Creek Road, including facilities, recreation, riparian areas, watershed/soils, and watershed/water standards and guidelines (response #113).

Comment 55: The Forest Service should comply with Forest Management Prescription #17 which includes the lower 2.5 miles of the road. Currently, the road is not in compliance with this management prescription as the road is damaging wildlife and recreational values (response #113).

Comment 56: The Forest Service should comply with Inyo National Forest plan direction that directs the forest to “avoid the use of soil disturbing equipment, OHVs, and trampling by livestock on wet or poorly drained soils wherever possible” (response #113).

Comment 57: The Forest Service should analyze the potential impacts of various alternatives on the proposed White Mountain Wilderness, including the Forest Service’s own proposal for the White Mountains (response #121).

Legal (Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment)

Comment 58: The Forest Service should comply with the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment in managing the Furnace Creek Road including the compliance with the provisions for protecting Riparian Conservation Areas and Critical Aquatic Refuges (response #113).

Legal (Roadless Area Conservation Rule)

Comment 59: The Forest Service should comply with the Roadless Area Conservation Rule’s prohibition on road construction in Inventoried Roadless Areas. This would preclude any reconstruction or realignment of the Furnace Creek Road within the Roadless area (response #113).

Legal (National Forest Road Management Rule)

Comment 60: The Forest Service should comply with the National Forest Road Management Rule which directs forest managers to identify the minimum road system needed for safe and efficient travel and for administration, utilization, and protection of National Forest System lands. This Road Rule also directs the Forest Service to give priority to decommissioning those unneeded roads that pose the greatest risk to public safety or to environmental degradation (response #113).

Legal (Executive Order 11990)

Comment 61: The Forest Service should comply with Executive Order 11990 which directs federal land managers to protect wetlands (response #113).

Legal (Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act/Lahontan Basin Plan)

Comment 62: The Forest Service should comply with the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act and the Lahontan Basin Plan (responses #76, 113, 206).

Legal (State of California regulations)

Comment 63: The Forest Service should comply with California Department of Fish and Game, Section 1600 (responses #113, 206).

Legal (Healthy Forest Restoration Act)

Comment 64: The Forest Service should ensure compliance with the Healthy Forest Restoration Act before permanently closing the Furnace Creek Road (response #188).

Legal (RS2477)

Comment 65: The Forest Service should recognize that the agency only has a “servient estate” to the land under any RS-2477 right-of-way (response #216).

Comment 66: The Forest Service improperly closed the Furnace Creek Road by relying on 43 CFR Subpart 8341.2 (Special Rules) which deals expressively with damage caused by vehicles traveling off-road, but does not apply to vehicles traveling on a RS-2477 right-of-way (response #219).

Comment 67: The Forest Service should consider that the Furnace Creek Road closure is in direct conflict with RS 2477 and that agency policies are subordinate to federal law (response #104, 192).

Comment 68: The Forest Service should explain the legal authority upon which the Furnace Creek Road was constructed. Until this determination is made, the Inyo National Forest, by closing the road, may be violating a portion of FLPMA at 43 USC Section 1769 (response #191).

Comment 69: The Forest Service should clarify the legal ramifications of closing this road in view of its historical use (response #72).

Forest Service OHV Road: Consistency Analysis Report

Comment 70: The Forest Service should reconsider information in the Furnace Creek OHV Road Consistency Report and its application to the road closure.

- Because the report is clearly written with a clear bias toward closing the Furnace Creek Road (response #162).
- Because the mileage used to calculate the percentage of riparian impacts does not reflect the actual historic extent of the road and implies exaggerated riparian conflict. Based upon personal experiences, the road actually extends to a hunting camp located at the edge of an aspen grove on the northern side of Tres Plumas Meadow as indicated on the recreation opportunity spectrum map from the 1986 and 1988 Recreation Opportunity Spectrum maps associated with the Draft and Final Land and Resource Management Plan EIS (response #162).
- Because the consistency report discusses eight stream crossings but it does not define what is considered a stream crossing (response #162).
- Because the consistency report quotes the forest plan out of context (response #162).
- Because the report gives no quantified examples or explanations of what species are affected by motorized access (response #162).
- Because the report mentions beneficial uses of water as stated in the 2000 Lahontan Basin Plan but does not indicate the beneficial uses that would be impacted by the situation in Furnace Creek (response #162).
- Because the report is based on the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment signed in 2001, not the current ROD which was signed in January 2004. (response #180).
- Because the report does not provide an analysis of impacts to Furnace Creek from sources other than OHV use (e.g. foot trails, wild horses) (response #180).
- Because the report is biased in its methodology, draws conclusions based on inadequate sample size, was conducted without sufficient control group, cannot be verified or repeated, and was too small or localized to support the area-wide or population-wide extrapolations set forth in the document (response #180).
- Because the document has not proven a causal link between recreational activities and any perceived decline of populations known to reside in Furnace Creek (response #180).
- Because the document and technical data display a pronounced bias against public land recreation (response #180).
- Because the document does not address consistency with statutes such as the Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act, Forest Roads and Trails Act, National Forest Management Act, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (response #191).
- Because the document does not discuss consistency with the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (responses #188, 191).

- Because the report does not address the fact that the riparian habitat and road have coexisted for 77 years (response #191).
- Because consistency analysis did not adequately address the impacts of nature as a source of resource damage in the Furnace Creek area. Issues of vegetation removal, soil removal, and erosion at the stream crossings are present with or without OHV activity. Snowmelt and storm runoff are actions that will cause vegetation removal, soil removal, and erosion without the assistance of OHV activity. Historically, the canyon has seen flow conditions that eliminate all vegetation and cause significant erosion damage. (response #180).

Comment 71: The Forest Service should provide better justification of the claim that there is serious resource damage along Furnace Creek as even the consistency report states that there have been only slight to moderate impacts by OHV use along the creek (response #180).

II. Alternatives

Range of Alternatives/Alternative Development

Comment 72: The Forest Service should ensure that an adequate range of alternatives are considered (response #2).

Comment 73: The Forest Service should provide an alternative that utilizes volunteer labor to allow the reopening of the Furnace Creek Road (response #192).

III. Environment Consequences

Forest Health

Comment 74: The Forest Service should analyze the role that the road plays for fire prevention and fuels treatment in the area. Closure of the one access road to the area will be a significant negative impact on firefighting ability in the area and is counter to 36CFR Part 212.5(b)(1) which requires the identification of the minimum road system with consideration for forest health, emergency access, and public access needs (response #180).

Riparian areas/water quality

Comment 75: The Forest Service should consider that any temporary disturbance to riparian areas along Furnace Creek from use is eradicated by nature's annual adjustments from road and winter conditions (response #104).

Comment 76: The EA should consider the overall area when analyzing the proposed alternatives. The vast number of other nearby springs, creeks, riparian areas, and vegetation should be taken into account as they provide more than adequate habitat for native and otherwise important species. The Station Peak and adjacent USGS topographic maps show numerous water sources and riparian areas in the immediate vicinity as well as the entire neighboring region that are not associated with motorized routes of travel or other conflicts (response # 162).

Comment 77: The Forest Service should clarify that Furnace Creek is primarily a ground water stream that does not connect with any other free-flowing water source. The source of surface

water in Furnace Creek is from storms and during snowmelt causing the stream to be intermittent and mostly ephemeral (response #180).

Comment 78: OHV is not a water consumptive activity and does not pose a threat to ground water quality. The major water flows are subterranean in nature with major surface flow during snowmelt or storm run off. Therefore, turbidity caused by OHV activity is limited in time and distance impacted (response #180).

Comment 79: The Forest Service should explain the scientific basis for the width of riparian buffer zones (responses #72, 181).

Comment 80: The Forest Service should consider evidence presented at the public meeting that was contrary to the contention by the Center for Biological Diversity that the habitat and riparian areas around Furnace Creek are disturbed. The evidence at the public meeting showed that that the route is virtually unchanged from past/current RS 2477 right-of-way use (response #104).

Comment 81: The Forest Service should consider the impact on the Furnace Creek riparian areas of removing cattle from the area (response #104).

Comment 82: The Forest Service should analyze how damage to riparian areas, as observed by local residents, is continuing despite the gate across the road (response #180).

Wildlife—analysis

Comment 83: The Forest Service should explain in the EA how habitat is being fragmented by the exiting primitive road and what species are affected (response #162).

Comment 84: The EA should analyze the impacts and extent of damage caused by wild horses and how it compares to the impacts of recreational use (responses #104, 162, 180).

Comment 85: The EA should document the various recreational activities (e.g., off-highway vehicle use, camping) that pose significant threats to any plants or animals that are listed as threatened or endangered because without these threatened or endangered animal or plant species claims of locally limited and ecologically important riparian habitats are highly speculative and based on little or no data (response #180).

Comment 86: The Forest Service should not rebuild the Furnace Creek Road outside the canyon as that would fragment the habitat of the eastern White Mountains, disturbing mule deer and big horn sheep (response #113).

Comment 87: The Forest Service should analyze whether any rare snails are in the Furnace Creek area. A unique snail was found in a nearby canyon, Surprise Canyon (response #76).

Comment 88: The Forest Service should consider the impact of the Furnace Creek Road on Sage Grouse in the Tres Plumas Flat area (response #113).

Comment 89: The Forest Service should consider the impact of the Furnace Creek Road on recovery efforts for the federally threatened Paiute cutthroat trout, particularly since motorcycle use in this area is adding sediment and removing bank stabilization riparian vegetation (response #113).

Recreation

Comment 90: The EA should consider the cumulative effects that the closure of the Furnace Creek Road would have upon recreational access from the eastern side of the White Mountains. At present, there are very few roads that have historically provided access to the eastern slopes of the White Mountains that remain open and passable (responses #162, 179, 180).

Comment 91: The Forest Service should consider that the closing of the Furnace Creek Road is discriminatory to the elderly and handicapped (response #104).

Comment 92: The Forest Service should consider that recreational off-road recreational use along Furnace Creek has loosened the soil and permitted more growth of ambient grasses (response #104).

Social/ Economic

Comment 93: The EA should include an analysis of the economic benefit currently received by local communities in California and Nevada from the Furnace Creek Road and what economic effects could be expected from each alternative if implemented (responses #162, 179).

Comment 94: The EA should consider the importance of the Furnace Creek Road as it relates to local custom, culture, recreation, family activities, economic purposes, and environmental justice for each alternative considered (response# 162, 179).

Comment 95: The Forest Service should analyze the economic impact of closing the Furnace Creek Road (response #104).

Public Meeting Comments

Two public meetings were held: November 6, 2003, in Bishop, California and December 10, 2003, in Dyer, Nevada. The following is a list of speakers offering comment at the meeting along with a summary of their comments (if the commenter also submitted written comments a reference to the response number in the content analysis report is included).

November 6, 2003, Bishop, CA meeting

Reinhard Albrecht — Opposed to closures; green sticker dollars should be used to keep things open, not closed.

Robert Logan — Opposed to closure; use volunteers for maintenance

John Stewart (responses 179/180) — Road inventory concerns: who will be involved and by what process, by what criteria does “it look like a road” and “not passable,” standards are arbitrary, what data will be collected, scientifically supported facts are needed—not emotions to support road closures, look at mitigations for stream crossings.

Lanny J. Lehigh — Opposed to any closures; information the agencies have is incorrect.

Rex Allen — Team up.

Dick Knowles (response 140)— There is an offer of assistance from Esmeralda, Mono, and Inyo counties to help; contractors who will build bridges will volunteer; concerned that this will cause closure of other roads; people have rights just like animals and plants; need the gate to come down to allow us access.

Kevin Kirkeby — Furnace creek, although in Mono County has users from Esmeralda County who have strong links to this area, economic and cultural interests; desire is for collaborative win-win.

Linda Arcularius (response 2) — Need for information and understanding of processes for decision-making; field trip did not allow time for people to comment; need to hear from people who have lived their lives in the area (elders have much to offer us); people with disabilities and the elderly need protection of their rights, just as do our future generations; we need to open our hearts and minds to meet their needs; voices of locals, elderly and those who use the area are not being heard; public business is not being done in an open way; communication network with locals needs work; need more formal channels of communication with local communities; need to make this happen; reasonable access with appropriate mitigation is possible; we are at a cross roads and solutions are needed that serve the greater good.

Steve Toomey — This is just the start of this process; mitigation is available to us let’s use it.

Paul MacFarland (response 113) — Since 1982 not defined as a system road; should not have a road in a flood plain that will just wash out again; must accept a balance.

Ron Schiller (response 162) — How many times do we have to go through this?; there is a continual loss of opportunity; roads in the Whites no longer visible that used to be; Pauite

cutthroat trout follow boundaries of semi-primitive map from Land Resource Management Plan. BLM – South Park Canyon photos are an example of what can be done with volunteers (these same people have made commitments to work on Furnace Creek); information about the washout indicates that it was done by dynamite by F.S. employees; “Where Possible” means flexible protection of family tradition and culture by keeping this open; Roger Mitchell 1969 documents the road was there and passable; will the BLM and FS do a joint process?; who should comments be sent to – clarify this; clarify the process – BLM too.

Mike Foote — Opposed to closure of Furnace and others.

Larry Thompson (response 191) — Issue of arbitrary and capricious nature of this; interstate commerce needs to be addressed.

Bill Kirby (response 104) — Esmeralda County opposes this closure; the area has been in use over 130 years; closure will affect economy of Fish Lake Valley; motorized recreation is the fastest growing form of recreation in this area; saw no damage to Furnace Creek; it all repairs itself.

Fred Baer — Same issue as dead tree removal at Big Bear.

Dave Matovich – Road closure hinges on what BLM does with their closure – FS cannot act unless BLM opens their part.

Lefty Irwin — What is process to submit alternative to a NEPA process?; Modoc in Framework. Come to Board of Supervisors to let them know before decisions are made, road closures too.

Randy Williams — We’re all future generations – what are we saving for them; for us the land has great ability to heal itself and it has shown us this year after year; Fish Lake Valley has only 6 roads that go up canyons in the 40 miles of the White Mountains; this area really means a lot to the people of Fish Lake Valley and people of Bishop; climbing apparatus in gorge is ugly, but who is trying to stop it?; we should not try to close off each other’s recreation; don’t close off all to wilderness, we need access; we want to maintain what we’ve got.

Steve White (response 197) — OHV use can be a very intensive use of land; all factors need to be taken into consideration — balance and responsible use; closing off-road to vehicular use does not mean the land is closed off.

John Stewart — Access to land should be preserved for fire prevention.

Bill Wright (response 207) — What happened to \$15,000 and \$5,000 – was it used on Furnace Creek – is this a misappropriation of funds – did the dollars go to the ground? (Side comment: check with State Auditor in Sacramento – Clark Woy – grants administrator)

Ron Schiller — November 1996 Interagency Access Strategy called for annual meetings and disclosure of proposals and plans; this has not happened.

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John Stewart —more monitoring should be done (as mandated by the Healthy Forest Initiative); closure should not be based on the 2001 SNFPA ROD as there was a new ROD released in January 2003; wild horse impacts should be addressed; land will heal itself

Joe Andrews —environmental groups are not willing to compromise; RS-2477 right-of-way should be respected

Larry Langston —environmental groups not willing to compromise

Larry Thompson —riparian areas and vehicles have coexisted for 77 years with little impact, Healthy Forests Restoration Act should be considered

Kevin Kirkeby — Furnace creek, although in Mono County has users from Esmerelda County who have strong links to this area, economic and cultural interests. Desire is for collaborative win-win.

David A. Matthews —area should be kept open for future generations to enjoy

Ron Schiller —inventory is occurring in a vacuum; how many times is this issue going to come up; there is a way to keep the road open in an environmentally sound manner

Art Johnson —wild horses are causing significant impacts

Irene Livermore —agencies should better manage the land

George Robertson —same comments as previous speaker

Wayne Montgomery —some older people need motorized vehicles to access the area; the Bush Administration is encouraging public agencies to work with local communities on RS-2477 claims

Linda Deymonez — road closure will hurt economy of Fish Lake Valley; continued access to public lands should be allowed

Norman Williams (response 55) — agrees with other speakers

Richard Tremaine —road allows handicapped and elderly citizens closer access to the canyon

Leland Wallace (response 58) —road should not be closed as there is a long history of its use; canyon will repair itself;

Louis Fritts — road should be left open

Dirk Pearson — Furnace Creek Road closure is illegal; agency can not stop people from using RS-2477 right-of-way; agency should comply with Treaty of Ruby Valley; value of property will be reduced if the road is closed

Ed Ylst —road should not be closed; RS-2477 right-of-way should be respected; agency should comply with Treaty of Ruby Valley

Sophia Ann Merk —monitoring reports should be made available to the public; RS-2477 rights should be respected

Kenneth Polman — there may be too many horses up the Furnace Creek Canyon; RS-2477 rights should be respected

Ken Aldrich — Be careful driving home

Bill Kirby — Esmerelda County opposes this closure; the area has been in use over 130 years; closure will affect economy of Fish Lake Valley; motorized recreation is the fastest growing form of recreation in this area; saw no damage to Furnace Creek, it all repairs itself.