

Pend Oreille County

# Board of Commissioners

Karen Skoog  
District #1

Mike Manus  
District #2

Stephen Kiss  
District #3

Rhonda Cary  
Clerk of the Board

Phone: 509-447-4119  
FAX: 509 447-0595

PO Box 5025  
Newport, WA 99156-5025

E-mail: [commissioners@pendoreille.org](mailto:commissioners@pendoreille.org)

May 9, 2016

Gayne Sears, District Ranger  
Colville National Forest  
315 N Warren Avenue  
Newport, WA 99156

Dear Ms. Sears,

The Board of County Commissioners requested a postponement of determination on the LeClerc Creek Grazing Allotment in a letter dated March 24<sup>th</sup> 2016. Since then, we have found additional support for grazing in county policy dated previous to this board, and have formed a committee to complete a Natural Resources Plan.

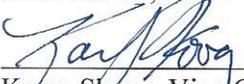
In a letter dated December 15<sup>th</sup> 2015, the Board stated that *the only alternative that would adequately support the feasibility of continued operations is Alternative A*, which is the current alternative. The Board also noted that the permittee has been participating well with the Forest Service by providing comments and solutions. *Citizen Participation and Coordination. Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts. Comp Plan 1.1*

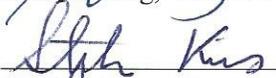
We recently learned that the permittee has suggested an alternative to the Forest Service that would allow his operation to continue in the location his family has grazed for many years. We understand the Forest Service is considering an alternative which would discontinue grazing in that location.

Based on the enclosed historic yet relevant economic impact statement and current Pend Oreille County policy on grazing, the Board of County Commissioners request that the Forest Service continue to work with the permit holder to come to a workable solution.

Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mike Manus, Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Skoog, Vice-Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Stephen Kiss, Member

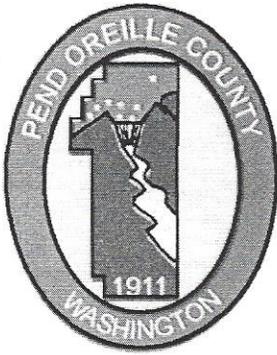
Enclosed:

Letter to Gayne Sears dated March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Letter to Gayne Sears dated December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Pend Oreille County Resolution No. 2015-45

Letter to Laura Jo West dated September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011



*Pend Oreille County*

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March 24, 2016

Gayne Sears, District Ranger  
Colville National Forest  
Newport-Sullivan Lake Ranger District

Ms. Sears:

As a follow up to our meeting on Tuesday, March 22, this letter is being submitted on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners.

We respectfully request you postpone implementing a determination in the matter of the LeClerc Grazing Allotment.

Currently, the Board of County Commissioners is researching previously adopted County policies and establishing a Natural Resources Plan with public input. We strongly encourage you consent to additional time for effective coordination in accordance with 43 USC 1712 [c] [9] and Pend Oreille County resolution 2015-46.

Sincerely,

X   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Skoog  
Vice-Chair

PEND OREILLE COUNTY

RESOLUTION NO. 2015-45

IN THE MATTER OF MAINTAINING & EXPANDING  
GRAZING ON PUBLICLY HELD LANDS

WHEREAS, the Board finds that livestock is and historically has been a vital element of Pend Oreille County's culture and economy; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds that utilization of publicly held lands is and has historically been a vital part of livestock production; and

WHEREAS, this resolution supports the goals of the Growth Management Act as referenced in the Pend Oreille County Comprehensive Plan (Natural Resource Industries) of maintaining and enhancing natural resource based industries, encouraging the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands, and discouraging incompatible uses.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED AND ORDERED that increased availability for grazing of livestock is in the public interest of Pend Oreille County residents and is to be continually sought after;

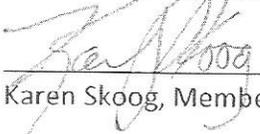
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that reductions in grazing on publicly held lands can only damage the culture and economy of Pend Oreille County and must be avoided.

PASSED this 15<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2015

PEND OREILLE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

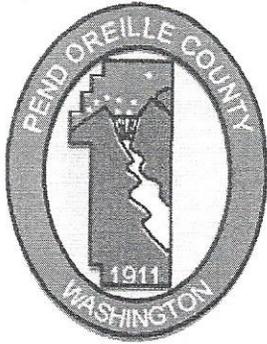
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Stephen Kiss, Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Manus, Vice-Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Skoog, Member

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Rhonda Cary, Clerk of the Board



Pend Oreille County  
*Board of Commissioners*

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December 15, 2015

Gayne Sears, District Ranger  
Colville National Forest  
315 N Warren Avenue  
Newport, WA 99156

Ms. Sears:

RE: LeClerc Grazing Allotment

The Pend Oreille County Board of Commissioners has a duty and obligation to the people we serve to protect the local tax base and the value of private property, promote economic stability, advance the customs, culture and heritage of the county and provide for future generations.

To accomplish these goals we believe it is prudent to work with Federal agencies to harmonize Federal land use plans with the plans which have been implemented in the county by utilizing Coordination. The Board has passed Resolution 2015-45 and Resolution 2015-46, to facilitate Coordination with the Federal Agencies.

Pursuant to 43 USC 1701 (FLPMA), which address the development and revision of land use plans, the agency is directed to coordinate with local government to keep it apprised and give consideration to local plans, resolve inconsistencies between Federal and non-Federal plans, provide meaningful involvement, and make sure the revised plan is consistent with State and local plans. 16 USC 1604 (NFMA) provides for coordination with local governments as does 42 USC 4321 (NEPA).

In response to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement regarding the LeClerc Grazing Allotment, we are addressing inconsistencies between the proposed alternatives, and adopted county policy.

Pend Oreille County has land use policies established in the Comprehensive Plan which was completed after much community input in 2005. Below is a summary of the Customs and Culture which are the foundation for our way of life and traditional resource based economy of the county.

Statement of Values: The customs and culture of Pend Oreille County are woven with the threads of an independent people, who have extracted their livelihoods from the natural resources of the area for the past one hundred years or more. Timber, farming, ranching and mining are lifestyles and livelihoods that are connected to the land. The values include problem solving on a local level and recognize the benefits of open spaces maintained by agriculture and the timber industry. *Comprehensive Plan Statement of Values.*

The Purpose: The purpose of this comprehensive plan is to present the goal and policy statements that will guide future growth and development in Pend Oreille County. Although written according to the requirements of the Washington State Growth Management Act, the goals and policies of this comprehensive plan reflect the customs and culture of Pend Oreille County. With an increasing percentage of the County's residents living in the unincorporated areas of the County, land use planning is increasingly necessary to protect water and air quality, wildlife habitat, and the timber and agricultural resource-based occupations dependent on the open spaces in the County. In order to take responsibility

for the future of our County, the comprehensive plan protects our property rights while directing the writing of ordinances that will help to ensure the use of land for timber production, ranching, farming, and mining. In other words, this comprehensive plan applies to everyone who works and resides in the County. *Comprehensive Plan 1.0 Introduction.*

The Pend Oreille County Board of County Commissioners have identified inconsistencies between our locally crafted Comprehensive Plan and the suggested changes to the LeClerc Creek Grazing Allotment Management Planning Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

The narrow Pend Oreille River Valley naturally limits agriculture land to only about 3%. Cattle producers depend upon a summer range to graze cattle on the 59% of Federal lands so that haying can be done on the river valley pastures where the cattle return to in the winter. This information is supported by Land Ownership information in the Comp Plan figure 2.1 and table 2.5.

The summer grazing allotment system of operation must be protected in order to protect the industry. Natural Resource Industries are a key component of economic development in the County. The Washington State Growth Management Act's goal for Natural Resources is: *"Natural resource industries. Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses."* Comp Plan 3.2

Livestock may affect rural land owners; however the areas around the allotment are open range. The Code of the New Frontier recognizes this is not easy, but it is a known factor. *5.4 Cattle and other herd type animals can be very noisy at times and can create objectionable odors, especially when large numbers are confined on a small area. Ask yourself if you can you handle it.*

The Pend Oreille County Board of County Commissioners recognizes the willingness of the permittee to collaborate and make concessions early on in order to provide a harmonious and cooperative plan that respects both environmental and cultural concerns by adjusting his operations. This is supported by the Comprehensive Plan. *Citizen Participation and Coordination. Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.* Comp Plan 1.1

The Board, based on adopted policy of Pend Oreille County and discussions with the permittee, find the only alternative that would adequately support the feasibility of continued operations is Alternative A.

The Pend Oreille County Board of County Commissioners appreciates the regular communication and meetings with our district ranger. We value this relationship and look forward to coordinating with USFS on this and other plans and projects.

Please see the attached Comprehensive Plan, Code of the New Frontier, Herd District map and Resolutions 2015-45 and 2015-46. Also attached is document titled Allotment Study Requests.

PEND OREILLE COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Stephen Kiss, Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mike Manus, Vice-Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Skoog, Member



*Pend Oreille County*

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## *Board of Commissioners*

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*Diane Wear*  
District #1

*Laura Merrill*  
District #2

*John D. Hankey*  
District #3

*Chris Mylar*  
Clerk of the Board

(509) 447-4119  
FAX: (509) 447-0595

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Newport, WA 99156-5025

E-mail: [commissioners@pendoreille.org](mailto:commissioners@pendoreille.org)

September 26, 2011

Laura Jo West

Colville Forest Supervisor

765 South Main Street

Colville, WA 99114

Re: Comments on the Colville National Forest Plan

Dear Laura Jo,

We, the Commissioners of Pend Oreille County are writing to comment on the economic impact of the Colville National Forest plan on our forest, in our communities and to our citizens.

The National Forest was designated to ensure the prosperity of our nation and has been a sustainable resource supporting entire regions into reaching the American Dream. For our region, this has been depleted and drowned in the bureaucracy of federal processes, including this update to the Colville forest plan. The continued loss of timber harvests, forest products, grazing rights, recreation and travel access, broader wilderness designations and use of the forest for the greater good of our region's economy is of greatest concern.

The economic impact of any one issue can be quantified, but the connection it has with a relating issue or industry, such as road closures that affect hunting, recreation and tourism that also affect citizens' ability to get firewood needed to heat their homes, or grazing restrictions that also affect an entire food supply industry supporting much of our communities is hard to quantify. Add to that the multiplying and indirect factors of these economic impacts to the broader community economy is immeasurable.

We want the economic value of our forest to bring our communities out of this economic crisis and become the sustainable resource it was meant to be. One example of economic benefit would be that expenditures at the Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge totaled \$2.4 million dollars in 2004 and that \$1.9 million of that total was non-resident visitors. The bottom line is that this tri-county area has a poverty rate of 28% and an unemployment rate hovering about 12%. We are struggling to support our basic infrastructure and providing core services. We need a partner in the Colville National Forest to work with and this proposed plan does not seem to offer much hope of that. The amount of Federal Lands in our county is burdensome and not beneficial to our community if little or no tax dollars, impact dollars and forest product dollars are going to be generated from it.

Sincerely,

  
John Hankey, Chair

  
Laura E. Merrill, Vice Chair

  
Diane Wear, Member

Cc;

Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers

Senator Maria Cantwell

Senator Patty Murray

WSAC, Josh Weiss

National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition, Paul Pearce