



File Code: 1950

Date: February 24, 2000

MAR 01 2000

REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Dear Reader:

The Salmon River Ranger District of the Nez Perce National Forest is conducting an environmental review of a proposal to widen the Carey Creek boat ramp on the Main Salmon River east of Riggins Idaho. (T24N, R4E, Section 3).

Background

The Carey Creek boat ramp and launch facility is located on the Salmon River approximately 24 miles east of Riggins, Idaho. It is a single-lane boat ramp and turning loop with an access lane connecting to the adjacent Salmon River Road.

Originally developed with County Waterways funding, the Carey Creek boat ramp is a primary downstream take-out point for private and commercial floatcraft exiting the Wild River portion of Salmon River. The Carey Creek site is also a primary launch point for float parties putting in for single and multiple day trips downriver. In the peak of the summer river season, congestion and delays occur when several large boating parties try to use the single-lane ramp at the same time, with some users driving off of the ramp surfaces to reach their gear at the river. The congestion at Carey Creek diverts some float parties to take out at the primary jet boat launch facilities upstream at Vinegar Creek, adding conflict and congestion at that site as well.

The ramp, turnaround, and access lane are constructed of poured concrete, 4"-6" thick, overlaid on bare river cobble, extending across the gravel bar to the water edge. The access lane and turnaround loop are approximately 16 feet wide. The existing ramp varies from a 16 foot width at the turnaround to 30 feet at the end of the ramp. The ramp and turnaround are partially submerged during high river flows and are gradually exposed as the river recedes, providing direct river access during most average flows. The end of the existing ramp is out of the water and completely exposed during low autumn and winter flows. Drift boats launching from Carey Creek at low flows in the fall period have to travel off the end of the existing ramp to reach the water, due to the lack of adequate ramp length.



Requesting Your Input

I am inviting your comments on this proposal. If you have any concerns or questions, please contact me or the project leader at the address/number listed below. Your comments will be used to identify concerns and significant issues regarding this project.

Comments received in response to this letter, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Please send your comments by March 30, 2000 to be considered in this analysis. Your comments may be addressed to me or Bruce Anderson, project leader, at:

Salmon River Ranger District
HC 01, Box 70
White Bird, ID 83554
(208) 839-2211
(208) 839-2328 (TTY)

Thank you for participating in the management of your public lands.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jack M. Carlson
JACK M. CARLSON
District Ranger

During April and June of 1999, the Forest Service solicited input from the public on how to spend Recreation Fee Demonstration Project receipts. Improvement of the Carey Creek launch facility was identified as an important project by the public and river users. If the ramp is not improved, continued congestion at Carey Creek as well as congestion and use conflicts at Vinegar Creek can be expected.

Proposed Action

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The project proposes to improve the primary floatcraft river access facilities at Carey Creek. The project would widen the existing Carey Creek Boat Ramp and access lane to accommodate dual-lane use and to extend the end of the ramp to provide better river access for launches at low flows. Dual-lane traffic delineations on the boat ramp, traffic flow and parking directional signing would be installed for improved traffic control. Ramp improvement would be accomplished by

- (1) Leveling a strip about 5'-15' wide along each side of the existing ramp and turning loop, 4"-6" below the existing ramp level, forming and pouring approximately 80 cubic yards of concrete
 - ◆ Increase the overall width of the existing concrete ramp to provide two parallel 18'-20' access lanes;
 - ◆ Increase the width of the existing turnaround lane by approximately 15 feet to facilitate easier turning, backing and ramp exit.
- (2) Laying concrete planks to extend the end of the existing ramp approximately 30 feet to provide better launch access at low flows.

Purpose and Need:

The purpose of the project is to provide improved efficiency for floatcraft take-outs and launches at the Carey Creek public river access facility, in order to reduce the congestion and delay that currently occurs on the existing facility.

Implementation

Work to implement this project would be planned for completion during low-flow periods when the river level has receded enough to fully expose the ramp and the entire area is dry.

The Decision to be Made

The decision to be made will be to approve the project as proposed or to approve the project with additional conditions addressing concerns identified during scoping. The limited scope and scale of this proposal as well as the small amount of site disturbance needed to complete the work are not expected to raise issues of significance which would have to be addressed in an Environmental Analysis or Environmental Impact Statement.