

Appendix E: Comments received from release of the March 2012 EA

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
1.	03/16/12 email	please fix the road, so everyone can enjoy it, I own 5 acres 9 miles up road #26.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
2.	03/17/12 email	We would like to go on record to push for the opening of the entire Suiattle River road. We are long time hikers and have utilized this area often for recreation for the last 60 years, as we age we are finding less opportunities to recreate in areas we have always used. We feel we are being discriminated against by not being allowed access to this and other road closures. This is just too beautiful an area not to be available to all citizens.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
3.	03/17/12 email	Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the Suiattle Road Project environmental assessment. As someone who often recreates in the Suiattle River basin, this project is of great interest to me. I appreciate and support the development of alternative C, which would repair FSR #26 to its junction with #2680, thus reestablishing motorized access to the Huckleberry Mountain trailhead, Buck Creek campground, Green Mountain trailhead, Suiattle guard station, and Green Mountain pasture, while providing new non-motorized recreational opportunities beyond the #2680 junction and simultaneously avoiding detrimental impacts to Downey Creek's unique chinook spawning habitat. Alternative C is a logical and moderate compromise to the FSR #26 conundrum, and I strongly believe it should be selected and implemented. The road prism above and east of the #2680 junction is a prime candidate for road-to-trail conversion, which I understand would be a separate project for the Forest Service to pursue following completion of FHWA's current project. As mentioned in my scoping comments, the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest has few opportunities for non-motorized recreation in low-elevation bottomland. One must travel to the west end of the Olympic Peninsula for such an experience. Freeing the final stretch of #26 from motors and subsequently converting it to trail would meet this need on the MBSNF; and the Sulphur Creek campground would make for both an enjoyable walk-in site and ideal destination for families and novice backpackers. The Suiattle River within Glacier Peak Wilderness is already a significant time commitment for those wishing to reach the	C	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>high country, and the new mileage to be traveled from the closure point at #2680 would constitute only two additional hours (one way) of walking or 45 minutes by bicycle, at most. At the same time, the addition of high-quality bottomland would add diversity and interest to a backcountry excursion, not to mention a longer snow-free season. As lovely as the Suiattle River is above Sulphur Creek, it is mostly canyon-esque there, with nothing to compare with the flats between Downey and Sulphur creeks. Moreover, alternative C would avoid what is likely to be highly damaging and absurdly short-term road fixes in the vicinity of Downey Creek. Site #6, in particular, where the road would be carved farther into an unstable slope, would almost certainly wash out again in the near future (repeatedly at that), with potentially devastating consequences to Downey Creek's ESA-listed chinook population and its spawning habitat. The issue here is one of cumulative impacts, via the long series of maintenance activities that would be required to keep the road perched on this slope and the habitat degradation therein, versus allowing the current erosion there to run its course, stabilize, and revegetate. I urge FHWA to resist the temptation to push the #26 road through past Downey Creek. By focusing instead on repairing the road west of its junction with #2680, and recognizing the minimal inconvenience of hiking/biking beyond that junction to reach the old Suiattle trailhead (balanced by the recreational benefits I've described above), the vulnerable chinook population here will benefit as well. As for providing adequate parking if alternative C is selected, I encourage the agencies to contemplate a parallel parking arrangement for visitors without stock, comparable to the design at Mount Rainier National Park on the Mowich Lake road, which was closed and converted to trail some distance from the lake a few years ago. For stock users and their trailers, consideration could be given to a new staging facility in the vicinity of Green Mountain Pasture, with a new trail segment constructed parallel to #26 to connect the staging area with the closure point at #2680. Thanks again for taking my concerns and perspective into account. Alternative C really is the best of all options and an ideal middle ground, with something for everyone, while also respecting the sensitive salmon habitat at Downey Creek.</p>		

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4.	03/17/12 email	I am happy to see that work will begin on the Suiattle River road soon. It has been a great loss to the local area to not have access to all the recreational opportunities that it contains. I strongly encourage Alternative B, to reinstate full access to the Wilderness and National Forest all the way to the end of the road. It would be so disheartening to lose more opportunities to get out into the mountains in this area. If people cannot personally experience the effect of the natural world on their own spirit then they will fail to value it. When they fail to value it, it will be in greater danger than concentrated use may cause. Please choose Alternative B. "When health is absent, wisdom cannot reveal itself, art cannot manifest, strength cannot fight, wealth becomes useless, and intelligence cannot be applied."	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
5.	03/18/12 email	I've reviewed the EA and am providing public comment. I recommend No Action based on my personal use of the existing road, which is perfectly navigable for hikers, bikers, and others to access the western side of Glacier Peak. Rerouting the road will damage existing forest without guarantees that we won't be back in this same place (washed out road) 10 years in the future.	A	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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6.	03/19/12 email	<p>My main question is: Question 1: What is the purpose of the current public review process for the project? Question 2: Follow up questions: Is it to select from the list of possible alternatives that were reviewed in the EA? Question 3: Is it just to comment on the proposed project to repair the Suiattle River Road? Question 4: Is it to review the entire EA and point out any errors or emissions in the document? Is it to allow the public to “vote” on what they think should happen on the Suiattle River Road? Question 5: That is if a whole bunch of folks say that they do not want the road repaired, then the road will not be opened? Question 6: Will the EA be revised and reissued with another review/comment period if errors or emissions are found in the EA? Question 7: Could the EA selected alternative of repairing the Suiattle River Road be changed to a no action option (road not repaired) as a result of public comments?</p> <p>Editor notes: The ‘Question’ with a number was added to the text to make it easy for the reader to crosswalk the Question with the Answer. Answer 6 changed after the receipt of numerous comments.</p>		<p>Responded in email 3-21-2012; Answer 1: Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), federal agencies seek public comments in order to improve public decision-making. The purpose of the current public review process is to inform the public about the proposed project and enable the public to provide whatever comments they want the agency to consider in making a decision about this proposed project. Follow up questions: Answer 2: The public review process provides the public with an opportunity to comment on the alternatives set forth in the document. Ultimately, the Federal decision maker will select an alternative. Answer 3: No, the purpose is both to provide information and to provide an opportunity for the public to comment. Answer 4: Part of the purpose of the public review process is to provide an opportunity for the public to review the EA and provide comments, including pointing out any errors or omissions that the public may believe exists with respect to the EA. Answer 5: The public is certainly encouraged to let the agency know what they think should happen on the Suiattle River Road. While the decision to open the road is not dependent on any one factor, including comments from the public, the deciding official will take into consideration all of the factors, including public comments, in making the final decision. Answer 6: The sufficiency of the EA will be evaluated after the review and comment period. There are no current plans for another review/comment period. Answer 7: The decision maker will take into consideration all of the information provided in the EA and public comments when making a final determination.</p>

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7.	03/19/12 email	restore the road! I am adding my comments to the 90% of responders who would like to see the entire road rebuilt. Access to the back country is limited at best, and for hikers and backpackers, these trailheads are essential to give us a gateway to the Glacier Peak area, and the PCT. My husband and I have hiked all of the PCT in Washington, and the Glacier Peak area is one of our favorites. We would like to be able to return there, but ten miles of hiking an abandoned road sounds dismal. I understand the environmental costs, but getting people into the back country is how we keep it. When there are no users, there are also very few voters who are willing to see their taxes spent preserving these areas. The secret to keeping them for the future is to allow as many people as possible to experience the wonder of the wild country. Please adopt Alternative B and restore access to all the trailheads.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
8.	03/19/12 email	I've reviewed the Suiattle River Road Environmental Assessment. First and foremost, I would like to see the road repaired so that cars can access the area as they did before the floods. Of the choices, I think Alternative B makes the most sense, as I think it will best benefit both users of the area and the environment of the region.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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9.	03/20/12 email	I am writing to voice my support for the Suiattle River road reconstruction for motorized vehicle access for its full length as outlined in the EA. I have used the road in the past for day hikes, trail backpack trips, and cross country backpack trips. I have taken both domestic and international visitors hiking on the trails accessed from the Downey and Sulphur Creek areas, and all were impressed. I have used the road both in its intact state, when it was closed at Downey Creek, and hiking the full length of the closed road at the end of a recent trip on the Ptarmigan Traverse. I appreciate that some feel that keeping the road closed will enhance the wilderness character of the area, but I strongly disagree. I can say from first hand experience that even from the end of the road, there are wild trails and cross-country routes that one can travel for weeks if one so desires. Hiking a road, road bed, or road-converted-to-trail for a day before beginning the wild parts of a trip not only does not add to the wilderness character, but in fact detracts from it. Moreover, the Suiattle River road is remarkable in the spectacular scenery that it offers to all users, from those who never leave their car to those who undertake multi-day wilderness trips, and everything in between. I currently live abroad, but hiking and camping in the areas accessed by the Suiattle River road are some of the things that keep me planning vacation trips back to Washington State. Thank you for all your hard work in advancing the progress of the road's re-opening.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
10.	03/20/12 email	This project definitely needs to be completed. We are losing more and more of our recreational assets. As our population ages we need more access for vehicles so that older people may also enjoy the beauty of our state. We need access for the fire fighting manpower and equipment. Private landowners are also entitle to the use of their land. The cost of printing and distributing this document most likely exceeded the cost of repairing the road. Where has common sense gone?	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
11.	03/21/12 email	I've reviewed the Suiattle River Road Environmental Assessment. I would like to be able to drive into that area again to hike. Of the choices, I liked Alternative B - Repair Road 26 at all eight sites, with relocations away from the river, and rehabilitation of abandoned sections of Road 26, the best. I believe this alternative will benefit users of the area and be safe for the environment. I will not be able to make the March 29, 2012 meeting but hope I may still voice my opinion via this email.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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12.	03/22/12 email with a CC to jonathan@wta.org and a link to an online newspaper article	<p>I'm writing to comment on the environmental assessment for the rebuilding of the Suiattle River Road. Before the road washed out I hiked Green Mountain several times and participated on a Washington Trails Association work party there. I am in support of reopening the trail to the Green Mountain trailhead, option C. The Suiattle River Road provides a unique access point to the deep wilderness, allowing hikes not only of Green Mountain but also backpacking beyond. I reference this Joel Connelly opinion piece in SeattlePI.com: http://www.seattlepi.com/local/connelly/article/Connelly-Thanks-for-saving-Washington-s-wild-1368131.php In large part, people will support conservation measures for areas they can access and view for themselves. It's critical with our growing population and growing interest in outdoor recreation that we give people access to these areas to enjoy for a day hike, not just a five-day backpack. I believe that motorized access for non-motorized usage like hiking is compatible with and helps support the preservation of our wilderness areas. Newspaper article: from www.seattlepi.com/local/connelly/article/Connelly-Thanks-for-saving-Washington-s-wild-1368131.php on 04/18/12: Connelly: Thanks for saving Washington's wild places -- now stay out By Joel Connelly, seattlepi.com staff Published 09:59 p.m., Sunday, May 8, 2011 Washington passed a watershed moment in conservation when the upper Suiattle River valley in Snohomish County, its ancient forests circling 10,536-foot Glacier Peak, was put into wilderness by Congress. Fifty years later, radical green groups are delivering the public a message via lawsuit: Thanks for saving the Suiattle. Now, stay out. The Western Environmental Law Center has filed a federal lawsuit seeking to halt rebuilding of the Suiattle River Road, which provides access to trailheads and campgrounds in this grand mountain valley. The same "public interest" law firm, acting for a Montana-based outfit called Wilderness Watch, wants a federal court to order destruction of a newly rebuilt lookout atop Green Mountain, a hike off the Suiattle River enjoyed by thousands of people each summer. Several venerable conservation groups, which once publicized wild places, now work on a broad scale to block or keep closed routes giving access to our scenic backcountry. Big late fall storms in 2003 and 2007 washed out chunks of roads. Lawyers are now trying to hamstring repairs. "In violation of the law, Federal Highways failed to analyze the environmental effects of reconstructing the</p>	C	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>Suiattle River Road on ancient forests, protected species -- such as salmon, spotted owls and marbled murrelets -- and a whole host of important ecological values,” said Susan Jane Brown of the Western Environmental Law Center. Huh? The upper Suiattle would today be miles of clearcuts were it not for trail access provided by that road, and public support in days when the timber industry and conservationists fought over the valley. The river would run the color of the Chocolate Glacier on Glacier Peak. As a kid at Fairhaven Jr. High in Bellingham, I heard the U.S. Forest Service unveil its infamous “octopus” plan for a Glacier Peak Wilderness Area. The map showed tentacles extending out over rocky, icy ridges, while far below forested valleys were earmarked for the loggers. The audience wouldn’t have it.</p> <p>The Sierra Club published a wonderful book -- “The North Cascades: Forgotten Parkland” -- and The Mountaineers put out their first “100 Hikes” book -- in hopes of luring visitors up the Suiattle River road, where they could hike up Green Mountain or enjoy a long, long horseback or backpack trip up to Image Lake. What gives nowadays? The North Cascades Conservation Council (N3C) fought to save the Suiattle. Now, along with the Pilchuck Audubon Society, it is going to court seeking to block road reconstruction. Three points on why this is folly and hypocrisy: --Wild places need defenders, advocates, friends and “constituents” , as former Gov. Dan Evans never ceases to say. Evans was introduced to the wilderness as a Boy Scout at Camp Parsons on the Olympic Peninsula. Years later, he would lead his three sons over 7,780-foot Aasgard Pass in a storm into the Cascades’ fabled Enchantment Lakes. Evans gave an account of that hike to President Ford in the Oval Office, persuading Ford to sign Alpine Lakes Wilderness legislation. -- Cutting off access means that “crown jewels” of Washington can be enjoyed only by those with days of leisure time. Famed climber Jim Wickwire argues passionately for reopening the upper Stehekin River Road in the North Cascades National Park. The N3C, Sierra Club and National Park Service want to keep it closed. Listen to Wickwire: Keeping the upper 11 miles of road closed “means that families with young children or seniors now have significantly diminished opportunities to take shorter day hikes . . . It means only the most hardy can journey to this area of the Cascades.” --Conservation groups, notably N3C, are now pushing to expand the North Cascades National Park, including beauty spots left out when it</p>		

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		was created in 1968. They want to expand the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, and create new wilderness in the Columbia Highlands of northeast Washington. How can they make a case for protecting places while at the same time seeking to keep people out of parks and wilderness already protected? Congress needs to lay down reality. If the North Cascades National Park is to grow, conservation groups must get behind legislation to move the Stehekin road away from the river and relocate on the route of an old wagon route built a century ago. If Washington is to get more wilderness, legal stings like the Green Mountain lookout suit, and litigation to halt road reconstruction in the Suiattle, must be abandoned -- right now. As a kid, my parents used the Suiattle and Stehekin Roads -- and the Dosewallips Road in the Olympics - - to get my legs out on trails and introduce me to the wonders of wild Washington. Hence, here's agreeing with a recent Tracy Warner editorial from the Wenatchee World: "Cutting off the most glorious vistas on the continent to families, to those with physical burdens, who lack funds and idle time, to all but the elite, will harm the cause of conservation inevitably."		
13.	03/22/12 email	I urge adoption of Alternative B to repair Suiattle Road 26 to its terminus to allow access for all to this historic river valley. Alternative B will allow future generations to enjoy and learn about Wilderness, while still addressing environmental and tribal concerns.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
14.	03/23/12 email	Hi I would like to encourage you to choose option B to open the Suiattle river road to the end. I have camped and hiked out of that area many times in the past and hope to do so again.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
15.	03/23/12 email	Regarding road repair past Mile marker 12 It appears you are considering 3 options: Option A would keep the road closed to vehicle traffic; Option B would repair the road to its end at milepost 23.0; Option C would repair the road to milepost 20.2, the turn-off to FR 2680 and the Green Mountain trailhead. My preference is for Option A. My family comes out here regularly during the summer. It's an easy hike into Buck Creek, and a great pleasure to not contend with cars and the related noise and impact they bring to the area. A bit of extra walking is well worth it. Certainly there are other roads that take a higher priority for repair dollars.	A	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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16.	03/23/12 email	Please leave the road closed at current location, mile 12. The old road makes a great easy all season hiking and bicycle trail, as well as extremely rare low elevation secure wildlife habitat. It seems pretty clear that with climate change and increasingly volatile weather patterns, in conjunction with budget constraints, the NFS road inventory is unsustainable and must be reduced. Road 26 is a good place to start.	A	Thank you, your comment is noted.
17.	03/24/12 email	Please repair the road and let us enjoy that beautiful area	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
18.	03/24/12 email	I recommend that the road be rebuilt. I have driven up that road a number of times when I back-packed into the wilderness area to climb Glacier Peak. I would use it again if it were repaired. I understand the concern that the Audubon Society has had, not wanting to disturb the forest for the sake of the wildlife, but I think in this case, that, if carefully rebuilt, the road would increase the number of people who could appreciate the area it gives access to. In general, I would not recommend a road be built into a roadless area, but in this case, a road has already been into the area. On behalf of tree-lovers, bird-lovers and mountain-lovers, I recommend that the road be reestablished.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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19.	03/25/12 email	I vote for option A at this time, keeping the road closed to vehicles. I think that this road keeps washing out. I do appreciate those cutting trail and working year after year to keep access but feel no need for it to be open full time to rvs and cars. Only emergency jeep type vehicles should be allowed on this road. (I agree that trying to stabilize the road would be damaging to the salmon that roam here and unfortunately will be washed out again anyway.) I am for this to be a car-free zone, as it has been due to the closure.. open for horses, bicycles and hikers w/pack animals. It would be nice if you widened parking areas at the closure area. The tragic loss of the road has since morphed into a ecotopia of wilderness opportunity. I feel a generation has now been so fortunate to enjoy this area and see mother nature at it's full power of destruction as there has been several changes to not only the river but the surrounding creeks which are still naturally cutting into to this landscape after every winter. It has been fascinating to me over the past 5 years to see this change out here and then to watch those who love this area as I do.. hike or ride bicycles up green mountain and a guy w/pack animals walk to the pasture with his goats to camp. Many people still enjoy this area with it closed to cars and we are all better for it. It is rare and rewarding to have a hike and bike wilderness area that makes you EARN it to see those Mt. views! Many feel the same and we visit here due to this amazing wilderness experience.	A	Thank you, your comment is noted.
20.	03/25/12 email	I would like to have the road repaired to the end. I have missed the access to some wonder hikes. I would volunteer to help.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
21.	03/25/12 email	I support option B, i.e. complete the road to the END. I've worked for the USFS in fire control and trail repair in the early 1960's. In the 1970's I worked for Robert Norton, Trail Engineer for the Baker Snoqualmie Forest. Robert used me as a trail maintenance contract inspector. I do believe in hiking and hiking long distances; however, at 81, I would truly like to camp again at Sulphur Creek Campground. My legs sort of set the schedule. I'm certain that there are many like me.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
22.	03/25/12 email	Please Open Please Re-open Suiattle river road. I love hiking in the area and to be able to access that area with out hiking all the way around.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
23.	03/26/12 email	Please keep road closed to all vehicular traffic. Turn to trail.	A	Thank you, your comment is noted.

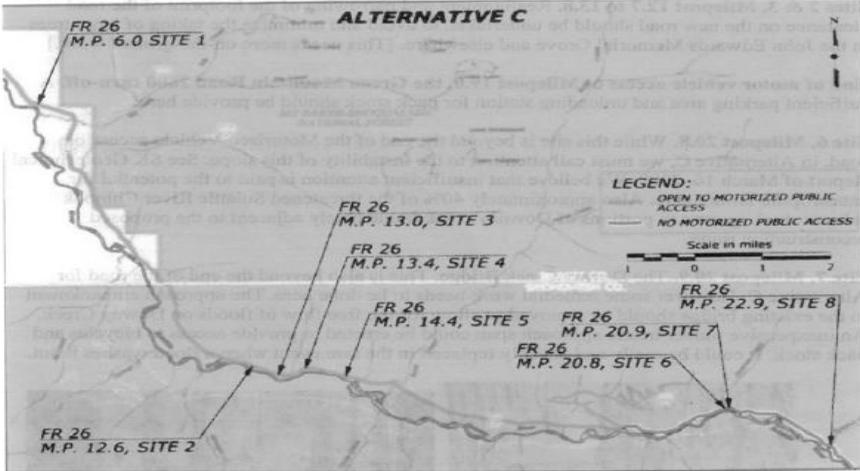
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24.	03/26/12 email	Subject: Support for re-opening Suiattle river road As a long-time cascade hiker and climber, I strongly support re-opening the Suiattle River Road. My preference would be to open it to it's end, although clearly, option C would be a great improvement. This road provides access to a vast area of prime outdoor recreation, and is a public asset that has been neglected for far too long.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
25.	03/28/12 email	I am glad to see this finally going forward once again, it's about time after 10 years mostly removed from the Suiattle River, campgrounds, trailhead access to the Glacier Peak Wilderness Area and Mt. Baker-Snoq. Nat'l Forests. Further, I would say that those who wanted this area shut down to vehicle access clearly had only their own self interests at heart, rather than the multitude of the users or the vast citizens of who partake in recreating this area. I am of firm support and have been to reopen this road to its end, thus utilizing all of the recreational campgrounds and trailheads along the Suaittle River as a full vehicle access.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
26.	03/28/12 email	For years I have been wanting to access this area but have been unable due to the closure of this road. I have also been in favor of opening the Stehekin River road...which washed out in 2003 and has been "open" only to those physically able of completing their journey on foot. Basically the same applies to the Suiattle River road. This has been a real sensitive issue to me because access to the wilderness area should be open to everybody and not just to those who are physically fit. Many hikers seem to think the wilderness area should be reserved for their use and nobody else. The elderly and physically-limited folks are presently denied this opportunity and need a second chance to visit these areas before they pass on. When I lived in Spokane the local chapter of the Washington Pilots Association transported these folks into the remote areas of central Idaho. There is no reason to deny these people the wilderness experience. I would appreciate any updates you may have on the progress of this road's rehabilitation and a target date for reopening. Thanks.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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27.	03/29/12 Public Mtg at the Everett Firefighter Assoc.	The Suiattle River Road accesses some of the most classic areas of the wild Cascade range. These areas have been open for many decades due to this road.		Thank you, your comment is noted.
28.	03/29/12 Public Mtg at the Everett Firefighter Assoc.	Alternative C is a good compromise, so long as you edit it to take fewer old-growth trees. Please reduce the width of the clearing corridor. I have trekked the Ptarmigan Traverse twice, and it is not a problem to walk 1.8 miles on the road (which is nice forest along the river) to the green Mtn. Jct. I also biked the road to the end and it is a great bike ride. Also, use a retaining wall at MP. 12.6 to reconstruct the road where it is, which will save 1.2 acres of old growth.	C	Thank you, your comment is noted.
29.	03/29/12 Public Mtg at the Everett Firefighter Assoc.	I would like to see ALT. C (stopping at Green Mtn. lookout). Reasons: funding, maintenance issues – trail maintenance is cheaper than maintaining roads. The additional 3.9 miles is a wonderful hike, bike ride, horse ride. Closing off the 3.9 miles will help curtail the spreading of noxious weeds, poaching. Downey Cr. Bridge is close to the river channel & in a flood plain which leads to a future flood event with global warming. Long Term: Price of gas will have users thinking twice about staying in the car vs. getting out and walking, hiking.	C	Thank you, your comment is noted.
30.	03/29/12 Public Mtg at the Everett Firefighter Assoc.	I feel it necessary for the FHWA and the USFS fully justify the expense of any/all road and bridge repair along the Suiattle in light of governmental deficits and global warming models the project more frequent and fiercer storms.		Thank you, your comment is noted.

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31.	03/29/12 Public Mtg at the Everett Firefighter Assoc.	I want to commend you for the quality of the EIS. I believe it supports the conclusion that Alternative B is the preferred alternative. It preserves access to several of the finest low-elevation old-growth hikes (Downey Creek, Suiattle River, Sulphur Creek) as well as the superb views and high meadows of Green Mountain. Low-elevation old-growth hiker access is especially valuable, with the closure of (most of) White Chuck Road, Carbon River Road, etc. It does so with either positive or minimally negative environmental impact with respect to no action (alternative A). The future of wilderness preservation depends on the public support gained by public familiarity with its value, which requires reasonable public access to the sort of wilderness-edge gems which the Suiattle Road provides.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
32.	03/29/12 Public Mtg at the Everett Firefighter Assoc.	I would prefer the proposed action, where the road is re-routed, and the bridge is extended. I would like the road opened and fully operational to the Suiattle River trailhead.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
33.	03/29/12 Public Mtg at the Everett Firefighter Assoc.	I am in favor of alternative B as presented tonight. To close or shorten access is not consistent with USFS own "forest Plan." History of rd 26 has always been recreational based. Keeping this portion road closed will continue to adversely effect the small communities in the area, as well as traditional tribal users.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
34.	03/29/12 Public Mtg at the Everett Firefighter Assoc.	My preferred alternative is restoration of FULL access of the road (Alternative B.) A full or partial closure of the road has a direct impact on access to a wide range of users not limited to hikers, climbers, kayakers, horse people etc. We have an obligation to be good stewards of our lands. This is encouraged, promoted and increased by making people stakeholders. If access is reduced or eliminated these users will be more likely to not object to future development because their stake in the land is taken away. Restore full access. No questions. No further delays.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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35.	03/29/12 Public Mtg at the Everett Firefighter Assoc.	Please heavily consider in favor of Alternative “B,” complete restoration of the Suiattle River Road. This road provides access into one of the remotest wilderness areas in Washington State. It is truly one of the most beautiful regions in the U.S., & worthy to be experienced by all who wish, regardless of physical abilities. As it currently stands, access is only available to the heartiest of outdoor athletes. This wilderness area is also an important part of our heritage.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
36.	03/29/12 Public Mtg at the Everett Firefighter Assoc.	As Director of Operations for the PNNST I strongly support “Alternative B” on the Suiattle River Rd. I’m also a member of the PCTA and Backcountry Horsemen and this is the main access to the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. I strongly urge you to consider the “B Alternative.”	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
37.	03/29/12 Public Mtg at the Everett Firefighter Assoc.	I appreciate your efforts to inform the citizenry. This meeting was extremely helpful and informative. I would like to see the road closed permanently where it ends now. Providing parking would be necessary to accommodate visitors. The wilderness is still there, just more difficult to access. I understand this would make it harder to access the area for myself also. The Glacier Peak Wilderness is a national treasure. I would like it to remain as it is with the current access.	A	Thank you, your comment is noted.
38.	03/29/12 Public Mtg at the Everett Firefighter Assoc.	I would like to see the Suiattle Road repaired & rerouted all the way to the original trailhead. There are so many user groups that would access this road, it is a good use of limited resources. (Lots of bang for the buck!) The renewed access to the river, forest & Glacier Peak Wilderness would also help spread out and reduce the human impact in other overused areas off the Mtn. Loop Highway. Fixing the road would be good for the economy of Darrington also. I have some fond memories of camping & backpacking along the Suiattle, and though my backpacking days are over, I would still like to hike back in there. I’m totally in favor of alternative B.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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39.	03/29/12 Public Mtg at the Everett Firefighter Assoc.	I appreciate the opportunity to comment. Alternative B would be my choice of the options offered. It restores access to the parking area with its amenities; it keeps the Sulphur Creek campground available for use; it allowed access to all trailheads. As a horseback rider (and sometimes hiker) I am concerned that Alt. C would add 4 or so miles more to the trip in; it would mean hikers and riders would be contending with traffic the last part of the road beyond the parking area = DANGEROUS! So Alt. B seems the way to go.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
40.	03/29/12 Public Mtg at the Everett Firefighter Assoc.	The Suiattle River Road is very important and is still felt by many as a tragic loss. It has several trailheads to both day hike & backpacking as well as access to the PCT. Back Creek & Sulphur Creek are very popular campgrounds offering affordable family vacations & personal retreats. People need access to back country & wilderness to slow down lower stress and become healthier, happier people & Suiattle River Road has all of this to offer. I feel very strongly that this road be reopened to the public.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
41.	03/29/12 Public Mtg at the Everett Firefighter Assoc.	I support Alternative B – repair entire Rd. If this road disappears, it’s only 1 washout away from zero access to the w. side of Glacier Peak Wilderness. Access will soon be gone – forever – if decisions to repair are denied.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
42.	03/29/12 Public Mtg at the Everett Firefighter Assoc.	As President of Darrington Area Business Association, Inc. (non-profit) I am in favor of access to the most places for the most people. Darrington needs tourism desperately. Local jobs have been in a steady decline for decades. Access means people and people mean money/jobs. Having been out the Suiattle as far as Sulfer Creek, I know how much this area has to offer the public and certainly want to see access return to its former levels. From the maps it appears that Alternative B is best for access.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
43.	03/29/12 Public Mtg at the Everett Firefighter	Fact Sheet for NCCC and the Suiattle River Road Environmental Assessment. In 2010 the Western Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Mount Baker Snoqualmie National Forest (MBS) attempted to undertake a significant, 5 million dollar, project to repair and reroute Forest Service Road 26, the Suiattle River Road, around eight flood damaged sites. The FHWA & MBS issued a	Modified C	See response to comment numbers 370, 376, 388, 398 and Appendix G and F.

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	Assoc.	<p>Categorical Exclusion (CE) of non-significance for this work based on out-of-date EA's that didn't cover all of the damaged sites. The North Cascades Conservation Council (NCCC) and others challenged this approach as inadequate by filing suit. This stopped on-going work in the summer of 2011. The suit was ruled moot by the court when the FHWA & MBS agreed to follow the law and prepare this Environmental Assessment (EA). Comment 1a: The NCCC supports Alternative C, with modifications, rerouting and reopening for motor vehicle traffic FS Road 26 to the intersection with FS Road 2680, the Green Mountain Road.</p>  <p>Alternative C will re-open the Suiattle Road to motor vehicles as far as the turnoff to Green Mountain, at MP 19 and permanently close the last 3.9 miles of road. Motorized access to the popular Green Mtn. trailhead and to the Huckleberry Mtn. trailhead would be restored. Motorized access to the popular Buck Creek campground would be restored. The Downey creek trailhead, terminus of the Ptarmigan traverse, will be reached by a 1.8-mi walk through the floodplain along the closed road. Closure at MP 19 would avoid expensive and damaging road rebuilding in the vicinity of Downey Creek. Closure at MP 19 would preserve some portion of the Suiattle floodplain in a non- motorized condition, for quiet recreation. The 1.8 miles between the Green Mountain turnoff and the Downey Creek Bridge is</p>		<p>Response 1a: The proposed modification of Alternative C includes portions of alternatives considered and not further developed. See EA page 27 under Alternative considered but not analyzed in detail.</p> <p>This modification of Alternative C includes portions of alternatives considered and not further developed.</p> <p>MP 12.6 - The geotechnical investigation for this section found that the depth to bedrock is quite variable, and it (bedrock) wasn't encountered in many of the test pits. Where bedrock was exposed (Station 106+25) it is 28' down from the road surface, which is actually below OHW, so it would not be feasible to "base a retaining wall on bedrock above OHW." Therefore, it was decided that a shift in alignment was a more reasonable solution here.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal realignment at MP 12.7 to 13.8 would not move the road out of the active river floodplain. Pages A-1 to A-5 of the EA Appendix A provide a Suiattle Road History which includes historic flood damage sites. MP12.8 to MP 13.4 has suffered channel and road encroachment from flood waters in 1980, 1990, 1996 and 2006 ERFO events. The EA on pages 51 to 54 provides assessment of risk of future washouts. This modified Alternative C would retain Road 26 between MP 12.9 and MP 13.4 within road locations which are adjacent to the active channel of the Suiattle River and identified at risk for washouts. This alternative would impact additional wetland area and

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		<p>close to the active river channel and at high risk of future washouts. Conversion to a walking route would obviate future repairs. NCCC will propose the following modifications at the specific sites. Site 2, Milepost 12.6, We believe that with creative engineering, a retaining wall can be based on bedrock above Ordinary High Water (OHW) that will allow reconstruction of the road on the original alignment. By basing the retaining wall on bedrock above OHW the restraints imposed by the <i>Wild and Scenic River</i> status of the Suiattle River can be avoided. Rebuilding the road on the existing alignment will save 1.2 acres of old growth forest and eliminate a steep, unsafe, hump in the design of the rerouted road. Sites 2 & 3, Milepost 12.7 to 13.8. Realignment and narrowing of the footprint of the road clearance on the new road should be undertaken to avoid and minimize the taking of large trees in the John Edwards Memorial Grove and elsewhere. [This needs more on-the-ground work.] End of motor vehicle access at Milepost 19.0, the Green Mountain Road 2680 turn-off. A sufficient parking area and unloading station for pack stock should be provide here. Comment 1b: Site 6, Milepost 20.8. While this site is beyond the end of the Motorized Vehicle accessible road, in Alternative C, we must call attention to the instability of this slope. See SK Geotechnical Report of March 16, 2009. We believe that insufficient attention is paid to the potential for catastrophic failure here. Comment 2 Also approximately 40% of the threatened Suiattle River Chinook salmon stock spawns in portions of Downey creek immediately adjacent to the proposed reconstruction route. Site 7, Milepost 20.9. The Downy Creek Bridge. This is also beyond the end of the road for Alternative C. However some remedial work needs to be done here. Comment 3 The approach embankment to the existing bridge should be removed to allow for the free flow of floods on Downy Creek. An inexpensive timber trestle approach span could be erected to provide access to bicycles and pack stock. It could be easily and cheaply replaced in the rare event when a flood washes it out.</p>		<p>would not provide any wetland enhancement with the removal of the current road from an active floodplain</p> <p>Response 1b: The report from SK Geotechnical Services provided an early opinion based on visual assessments (March 2009). Due to the stability concerns raised by this report, the USFS preformed additional site reviews, and measurements and contracted for drilling equipment to bore core samples at the MP 20.8 site (Dec., 2009). Based on the new information, the final slope assessment (USDA Forest Service, 2011) was that the proposed shift into the hillside was a reasonable alternative to maintain access and to limit disturbance to fish or habitat. See the EA pages 77 to 82 for fisheries effects, and pages 11 to 112 for soils, channel dynamics and water quality effects</p> <p>Response 2 There are various estimates of the percent of Suiattle Chinook salmon stock spawning in the Downey Creek tributary system that are part of unpublished data from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife spawning surveys. During 2003 to 2009, surveys results reported 22%-51% of Chinook salmon spawning in the Suiattle River drainage occurring in Downey Creek. The location of the spawning activity is heavily dependent on the channel configuration at the mouth of Downey Creek. When the mainstem of the Suiattle River is on the west side of the valley bottom (river left) more area is available in Downey Creek for spawning and more Chinook salmon use the area just downstream of the Downey Creek bridge; conversely when the mainstem Suiattle is on the east side of the valley bottom, less habitat is available below the Downey Creek bridge and more Chinook use areas upstream of the bridge. The project was designed with input from WDFW biologists and contains specific design features to lower the impact of proposed repairs. Information on Chinook salmon is summarized in the EA and A-EA; page 71 of the EA lists the creek systems supporting Chinook salmon in the Suiattle River drainage and recognizes the importance of the Downey Creek confluence to spawning Chinook salmon.</p>

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		 <p>Measuring the old growth trees in the John Edwards Memorial Grove on the bypass reroute.</p>		<p>Response 3 The removal of the Downey Creek approach embankment to the existing bridge is proposed in Alternative B. The replacement of this approach in modified Alternative C with a wood trestle stock bridge would raise the following concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The expense of replacement bridges is not to be taken lightly. Even USFS simple stock bridges with shallow foundations have cost about \$1,500 a lineal foot to construct, so a 210 foot stock bridge would be about \$300,000 to construct. A “timber trestle approach” would be less expensive due to shorter bridge spans from the frequent supports, but it would still be a considerable cost. <li>• If the stock bridge had deep foundations in the active overflow channel to provide a reasonable degree of permanent stability and scour protection, cost would increase. The bridge superstructure would also need to be a strong enough to withstand trees falling on it and possible lateral impacts from debris passage. A stock bridge with deep foundations and stronger superstructure would cost on the order of about \$400,000 total. <li>• In the event of a total washout, the replacement cost may not be readily available in today’s economic climate. Even if funding could be obtained, there is the inconvenience of lost access with the loss of the bridge, and the time and resources it takes to plan and replace a bridge in the “rare event when a flood washes it out”.

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44.	03/29/12 Public Mtg at the Everett Firefighter Assoc.	Several roads in the Darrington Ranger district providing access to wilderness and outdoor activities have been closed in the past decade. With the decrease in access and the availability I have seen a drop in (participation of) outdoor activities and interest by the youth of our community in Darrington. This road closure has been detrimental to the culture and health of the community. I support Option B, it is the best option to continue the historical use of this road to support horse riders, hikers fisher men/women, hunters, boaters, photographers and others that contribute to the culture of the area. Thank you for your consideration.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
45.	03/29/12 email	My father established a love for Sulphur Creek Campground in the 1970's and shared that with us kids. We watched it change over the years with plenty of help from Mother Nature mostly. It was a base camp for many hikes; Box Mountain Lakes, Rivord lake, Twin Lakes and many other beautiful vistas including Green Mountain at the fire lookout. Through the 1990's dad continued to create a campsite that brought recreation and joy to many of his family and friends. Dad passed on this January closing a maWr chapter in our lives. Well, we're hooked on those memories and really want to return - and not just on a Mountain Bike. Sure, we've found other places to camp, most notably on the Mountain Loop Highway at places like Bedal. But access to the Glacier Peak Wilderness is something very special. Please accept my vote for Option B: repair the road to its end at milepost 23.0 so that continuing generations of kids can follow their parents paths into this special wilderness area.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
46.	03/29/12 Public Mtg at the Everett Firefighter Assoc.	The road needs to be re-opened most of the way but it doesn't make sense to open it all the way to Sulfur Creek – the last few miles from Green Mtn to Sulfur would make a nice road-to-trail conversion, like in Rainer (west side road) and Olympic Parks (Oly Hot Springs) or much closer the White Chuck Road.	C	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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47.	03/29/12 Public Mtg at the Everett Firefighter Assoc.	Go for Plan (B). It has been long enough.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
48.	03/30/12 email	Please repair the road! I am writing to let my family's voice be heard about the Suiattle River Rd. Alternative B, would be our preferred proposal, allowing full access to the backcountry.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
49.	03/31/12 email	Repairing Suiattle River Rd Please accept this email as SUPPORT for repairing the Suiattle River Rd to the end.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
50.	03/31/12 email, also sent in snail mail form	The Suiattle Road with its access to multiple trailheads is a precious resource. It should be repaired to its end at Sulfur Creek, and by raising the roadbed higher above the river and restoring the floodplain, there will be less likelihood of future flooding, a bonus for all its users. I am particularly eager to restore access to the Green Mountain Road No. 2680. That trailhead is a key to a wondrous trail for family hiking, the Green Mountain Trail, and one of my favorites in my book "Best Hikes for Kids in Western Washington." Huckleberry Mountain and the Buck Creek Campground are also accessed from the Suiattle Road, and should remain available for hikers and campers. I believe the road repair and restoration should continue beyond Downey Creek, with its terminus exit trail from the Ptarmigan Traverse, to Sulfur Creek, which offers access to the Pacific Crest Trail and the Milk Creek climbers' route up Glacier Peak. Yes, hikers and climbers can walk those extra miles, I admit, but they add distance to already lengthy hikes and climbs. Through-hikers on the PCT need a shorter, not a longer access for food drop-offs. I hope you will restore the complete Suiattle River Road as those of us who know its treasures remember it.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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51.	04/01/12 email	Suiattle River Road Environmental Assessment/alternative B please I am a stock user with the Back Country Horsemen of Washington. We maintain trails throughout the state with pack and saddle stock support. We cannot sustain this effort without road access to the trailheads along with having suitable parking areas for trailer towing vehicles. This means room to turn around and park trucks and horse trailers. <u>Trails we maintain, and important access routes include:</u> Stock use on the Pacific Crest Trail and on connecting trails accessed from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 which provides the only way to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. In addition to working and recreational access, this route was used for Search and Rescue operations. It is not sufficient to restore use for truck/trail combinations simply to the Green Mountain access trail (Alternative C). We need full restored access (Alternative B) which includes fixing the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and approaches. Restoration of access for agency and volunteer maintenance of the trail systems must be given a top priority if we are to continue providing opportunities in the back country for the current and future generations of users. The Back Country Horsemen of Washington endorse Alternative B as the only acceptable proposed Alternative for pack and saddle stock users. Thank you for helping us to keep trails open for recreational use by following Alternative B restoration plan.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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52.	04/01/12 email	BCHW endorses Alternative B I am a stock user with the Peninsula Chapter of the Back Country Horsemen of Washington. As I am sure you are aware, BCHW is very heavily involved with maintaining trails throughout the state with our horses and pack animals. Without road access to the trailheads and suitable parking areas for our trailers we cannot hope to sustain this effort and many miles of hiking, riding and biking trails will suffer as a result. In addition, stock use on the Pacific Crest Trail and on connecting trails accessed from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 provides the only way to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. This route is also vital for Search and Rescue operations as well. Unfortunately it is not sufficient to restore use for truck/trail combinations simply to the Green Mountain access trail (Alternative C). We need fully restored access (Alternative B) which includes fixing the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and approaches. Restoration of access to this area in order to facilitate agency and volunteer maintenance of the trail systems must be given a top priority if we are to continue providing opportunities in the back country for the current and future generations of users. I support the Back Country Horsemen of Washington in endorsing Alternative B as the only acceptable proposed Alternative for pack and saddle stock users.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
53.	04/01/12 email	I support plan B. Over the years we are seeing the loss of recreation areas for several reasons, environmental concerns, forest fires, trail closures because of no maintenance and so on. I'm sure this is not news to you. As our population ages, it becomes more and more difficult for people to access remote or semi-remote areas either on foot, horseback or sometimes on a motorized vehicle. Roads, trails, bridges and other means of access to public lands need to continue to be maintained or restored/repared or even moved to allow what has typically been historically available to the public.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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54.	04/02/12 email	My wife and I use our horses on the trails of the Cascade mountains of Washington state to experience and enjoy the beautiful scenery and amazing wildlife native to our great outdoors. As much as we love the nearly solitary environment, we also believe that more people should have the opportunity to soak up this experience. As members of the Back Country Horsemen of Washington (BCHW), we also use our horses to help maintain some of the trail system that allows this access for us and others, packing tools, materials, and crew members into remote areas for maintenance and repairs. Many hundreds of miles of trails are maintained annually by BCHW members statewide, all as a volunteer effort. Access to the Pacific Crest Trail is mandatory to maintain this and other feeder trail systems. An example of this is the Suiattle River Road, FR 26, which provides the only way to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness, as well as Search and Rescue operations. Any option that does not include full access to the trailhead and parking areas for stock users and their vehicles is not acceptable and will result in a severe degradation of the trail system that we all use and enjoy. This must be a TOP PRIORITY! The Back Country Horsemen of Washington endorse ALTERNATIVE B as the ONLY ACCEPTABLE PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE FOR PACK AND SADDLE STOCK USERS.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
55.	04/02/12 email	It is very important that this road be maintain. This helps bring in supplies to maintain trails. Without this road recreation activity for Backpackers and Horseback riders will cease. Also the trailhead parking should be increased for horse trailers and cars. Please give this project high priority inasmuch as it was approved to move ahead before legal issue were brought up that have little to do with road repair.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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56.	04/02/12 email	I urge you to support Alternative B, full restored access. I am a member of Back Country Horsemen of Washington. I use horses and mules to both recreate and to volunteer my time working on USFS lands all over the state. In order to use our beautiful public lands, I and the many other stock users need adequate roads, trailheads and bridges. We want to be able to do volunteer maintenance using stock support, much of it by partnering with other organizations we work with. But we need a good road and parking to get to the Suiattle Trail #784 and the Pacific Crest Trail and the Glacier Peak Wilderness. Please help keep it accessible for more of the nature loving public, including stock users, by choosing Alternative B.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
57.	04/02/12 email	Major Roads to the Trailheads This is very important mainly for the Pacific Crest Trail and Stock users. They maintain the trails.		Thank you, your comment is noted.
58.	04/02/12 email	Alternative B support note I am writing to add my support to alternative B for reopening the Suiattle River road. I belong to the Back Country Horsemen of Washington. I volunteer a lot of time and my stock to maintaining trails open and safe for all to enjoy. That road is key to my accessing and servicing the PCT and its feeder trails. Please select Alt B as the preferred alternative.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
59.	04/03/12 email	I just want to express my support toward rebuilding the Suiattle River Road. I'm a 43 year old hiker that grew up in the Seattle area, and I've hiked in the Suiattle River Road area (especially at Green Mountain) many times. It's a lovely area and it would be such a shame to keep it inaccessible by keeping the road closed. Thank you.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
60.	04/03/12 email	I fully support Option B which would repair the Suiattle River Road to its end at milepost 23.0. The Suiattle River Road is crucial for access to a large portion of the Glacier Peaks Wilderness Area. As a hiker, climber, and conservationist it is my firm belief that opening the road can be done without adversely impacting the environment. In fact, opening the road to outdoor enthusiasts will help ensure that the area has the necessary support to survive for years to come. Please support repairing the Suiattle River Road to its end at milepost 23.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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61.	04/03/12 email	I am totally in favor of reopening the Suiattle River road to public access. I use this are for my recreational activities such as hiking, fishing, hunting, and fish stocking of lakes. It is my opinion that this road should be reopened to public access. This is a wonderful area that should not be shut off to a limited portion of the public. Most in my group of Trailblazers and Hi-Lakers are 100% in favor of the reopening. I want to thank you for allowing the opportunity to comment on this proposal and look forward to the reopening. Thanks,	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
62.	04/03/12 email	Suiattle River Road FR 26. Green Mtn. Trail, Downey Creek & Sulphur Creek Bridges 1. I am a stock user with the Back Country Horsemen of Washington. We maintain trails throughout the state with pack and saddle stock support. We cannot sustain this effort without road access to the trailheads along with having suitable parking areas for trailer towing vehicles. 2. Stock use on the Pacific Crest Trail and on connecting trails accessed from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 provides the only way to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. In addition to working and recreational access, this route was used for Search and Rescue operations. 3. It is not sufficient to restore use for truck/trail combinations simply to the Green Mountain access trail (Alternative C). We need full restored access (Alternative B) which includes fixing the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and approaches. 4. Restoration of access for agency and volunteer maintenance of the trail systems must be given a top priority if we are to continue providing opportunities in the back country for the current and future generations of users. 5. The Back Country Horsemen of Washington endorse Alternative B as the only acceptable proposed Alternative for pack and saddle stock users.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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63.	04/03/12 email	Suiattle River Road Alternative B please We need full restored access (Alternative B) for the following reasons. Stock use on the Pacific Crest Trail and on connecting trails accessed from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 provides the only way to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. In addition to working and recreational access, this route was used for Search and Rescue operations. Access for agency and volunteer maintenance of the trail systems must be given a top priority if we are to continue providing opportunities in the back country for the current and future generations of users. We cannot sustain this effort without road access to the trailheads along with having suitable parking areas for trailer towing vehicles. It is not sufficient to restore use for truck/trailer combinations simply to the Green Mountain access trail (Alternative C). The Back Country Horsemen of Washington endorse Alternative B as the only acceptable proposed alternative.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
64.	04/03/12 email	Suiattle River Road EIS Comments: 1. I am a trail user and trails access requires roads to the trailheads be maintained along with having suitable parking areas for trailer towing vehicles for people like the Backcountry Horsemen who maintain a majority of Forest Service Trails. I don't see the Sierra Club members doing trail restoration work out in the field but they sure seem willing to deny access to the majority of trail users in order to return Forest Service lands into wilderness areas. 2. Stock use on the Pacific Crest Trail and on connecting trails accessed from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 provides the only way to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. In addition to working and recreational access, this route was used for Search and Rescue operations. 3. It is not sufficient to restore use for truck/trail combinations simply to the Green Mountain access trail (Alternative C). We need full restored access (Alternative B) which includes fixing the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and approaches. 4. Restoration of access for agency and volunteer maintenance of the trail systems must be given a top priority if we are to continue providing opportunities in the back country for the current and future generations of users. 5. I endorse Alternative B as the only acceptable proposed Alternative for hikers and multiple recreation user groups.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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65.	04/03/12 email	As members of the Backcountry Horse Association of Wa, we believe in volunteer work to support our trails. As horsemen we can not help with on going trail needs if we can not access the trailheads. Please add our support to Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road Project. Road access is vital to our on going contributions and recreational use.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
66.	04/03/12 email	We are stock users with the Back Country Horsemen of Washington. Our organization maintains multi-user (including Search and Rescue) trails throughout the state with pack and saddle stock support. We cannot sustain this effort without road access to the trailheads, along with suitable parking areas for trailer towing vehicles. Stock use on the Pacific Crest Trail and on connecting trails accessed from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 provides the only way to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. We need fully restored access (Alternative B) which includes fixing the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and approaches. Bringing our children into the backcountry is an invaluable tool for sharing our heritage and riding there is salve for our souls. Restoration of access for agency and volunteer maintenance of the trail systems must be given a top priority if we are to continue providing this opportunity for the current and future generations of users.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
67.	04/04/12 email	As a stock user with Back Country Horsemen of Washington it is important to maintain road access to the trailheads with suitable parking if we are to continue to work maintaining trails. This is a important access for the PCT in this area and stock is often the only was to get materials and supplies to the trail. Alternative B is the only option that makes sense to me.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
68.	04/04/12 email	Suiattle River Road reopen I'm happy to read that the Suiattle river road will be reopened. I have used that road several times to access the trail heads at it's end including the PCT. That is some of the most beautiful hiking in the cascades in my opinion and it will be great to be able to get up there again. Please carry through with that project so we can enjoy it up there once again.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
69.	04/04/12 email	Having read the EA, I would like to state my support for Alternative B. Whilst Alternative C could be acceptable, Alternative A is clearly unacceptable. As you	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>note the Suiattle Road has been in existence for decades, and provides the primary access to a large part of the Glacier Peak Wilderness. As we age (something the entire population of the country is doing) it becomes harder & harder for those of us getting on in years to access the wilderness. The road needs to be restored. As younger folk find the wilderness, a lack of access to one of the most beautiful & remote areas of the state of Washington is a shame. It also puts more of a strain on other areas of wilderness, making the experience there less wild. Many Washington residents hike the Cascade Crest trail is segments to make it do-able. Without the access the Suiattle Road provides this has become much harder. First Nations peoples were the original blazers of trails in the area. To shut the road down & block them from acceptable access to tribal areas is incorrect. The areas around the road, specifically Darrington, have been hard hit by the collapse of the timber industry. The community has been trying to redirect itself to become an outdoor recreation hub. Without the road being rebuilt that will doom the change to failure. Re-opening the road will make it *more* likely wilderness will be respected & saved by re-gaining access to the incredible land that the Suiattle Road serves. Conversely, the few who are for Alternative A are operating under the false belief that total lack of access is the only way to manage wilderness areas. I look forward to backpacking the Glacier Peak Wilderness in two years' time without a 4-5 hour drive from Seattle to the trailhead at Trinity. It is one of my favorite places in the world and losing access for ten years has been very sad. Please choose Alternative B. Thanks,</p>		
70.	04/04/12 email	<p>I suggest Option B- restoring the road for access to the original end of the road. Miners Ridge through to the PCT are an area of incredible beauty that I have hiked on many occasions and sincerely mourn the loss of access. Even adding 6 miles of walk (option C) is enough to be a significant problem for access to this area. I feel very strongly about conserving this area, while still allowing humans to get to it without an unnecessarily difficult journey. Please, restore road 26 to her original glory.</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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71.	04/04/12 letter	I have listed below some of the important things that not fixing this road will hurt. I also wanted to add that I am 59 yrs old and my family has been trail riding and working on trails since my kids were 6 and 12. They learn the value of working with their hands to restore and build trails which has helped them grow up and be responsible people and adults. They are now 30 and 36. They are taking their kids my grandchildren and teaching them the same values about working . So yes we need to save the trail heads so we can get in with our stock and teach our kids how to be responsible adults and not expect to get paid for it. I am a with the Back Country Horsemen of Washington. We maintain trails throughout the state with pack and saddle stock support. We cannot sustain this effort without road access to the trailheads along with having suitable parking areas for trailer towing vehicles. Stock use on the Pacific Crest Trail and on connecting trails accessed from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 provides the only way to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. In addition to working and recreational access, this route was used for Search and Rescue operations. It is not sufficient to restore use for truck/trail combinations simply to the Green Mountain access trail (Alternative C). We need full restored access (Alternative B) which includes fixing the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and approaches. Restoration of access for agency and volunteer maintenance of the trail systems must be given a top priority if we are to continue providing opportunities in the back country for the current and future generations of users. The Back Country Horsemen of Washington endorse Alternative B as the only acceptable proposed Alternative for pack and saddle stock users.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
72.	04/12/12 letter	I'm writing in regard to the Suiattle River Road situation. Normally I would support the closure of washed out roads for conversion to non-motorized trails. We have many examples of trails that were once roads, including the first mile of the Suiattle Trail. But there are several reasons why I think the proper choice would be Option C – reopening the road to MP 20.2. I've walked the closed road several times and a good part of it, especially from MP 16-19 lacks any scenic appeal. Also, it is simply too far, adding 1-2 days to any trip up the valley, which closes off the area to those who only have a day or a weekend. And the current closure leaves over 12 miles of road walking to the Green Mtn. Trail, a once popular dayhike. For these reasons some repairs should be made, but I don't think the entire road needs to be reopened. It's sufficient to be able to drive to Green Mtn. and Downey Ck. while leaving the last couple of miles closed.	C	Thank you, your comment is noted.
73.	04/04/12 email	Regarding the proposed repairs to the Suiattle River Road, I would like to go on record as supporting Alternative B. I understand that this option includes repair of all eight damage sites and restores vehicle access to the terminus of the Suiattle Road allowing full Tribal, private, and public access to the sites and areas previously served by the road as envisioned by the planned and intended use of the Suiattle Roads according to the Forest Plan. As more and more primary and spur Forest Service roads are closed, there are fewer opportunities to enjoy the forest whether driving (for those that are unable to hike or bike tens of miles) or hiking (for us day hikers who are unable to hike miles and miles up a closed road before even reaching the trailhead). I fully support re-opening the Suiattle River Road, as outlined in Alternative B, to re-open access to the west side of Glacier Peak watershed and all the trails that are accessed from Road 26.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
74.	04/05/12 email	Please open the road... I am a lover of wilderness. I am not in favor of opening new roads into previously roadless areas, but this is not the case with the Suiattle River Road. I also firmly believe that in order to preserve wilderness we must maintain the ability to experience wilderness, and the Suiattle River Road has helped provide this experience for decades prior to the floods. I personally have never hiked from a trailhead accessed from this road. I would like to think that someday I will be able - along with my young son - to hike up Green Mountain, or access the Glacier Peak Wilderness from this road. The preservation of wilderness is dependent upon the younger generations being able to understand what immense value there is in such places as are accessed from the Suiattle River Road. Please restore the road.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
75.	04/05/12 email	Extend the road all the way to MP23 The Lime Ridge area was always one of our families' favorite backwoods areas. We haven't been there since 2003 due to the extensive hike in without the Suiattle River Road. Please extent the road all the way out to MP23.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
76.	04/05/12 email	Yes, I want the Suiattle river road opened all the way to the end. I have been enjoying the hike up Downy creek since the late 70,s. I am 53 years old. I still go up there maybe once a year. I have to mountain bike and then hike up Downey Creek so it is not a day trip any more. Every year I talked to the ranger station and ask about the road and I was hopeful that last year they said that they were going to repair it?? I have been driving up there about every three months and was disappointed to not see any action on the road now I no why.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
77.	04/05/12 email	We've had a cabin on the Sauk River since 1973 and actually had hiked up to Green Mountain Lookout in July of 2003, right before the first wash out of the road happened. It would be a crying shame to never open this road all the way to the end again. Access is important for this generation and future generations. Bicycles are great to get people to the end of the road if they are able to ride a bike but many don't, us included. We'd like the chance to hike to Image Lake via this route and other hikes in the area. Please reroute and open the Suiattle River Road to the end.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
78.	04/05/12 email	1. I am a stock user with the Back Country Horsemen of Washington. We maintain trails throughout the state with pack and saddle stock support. We cannot sustain this effort without road access to the trailheads along with having suitable parking areas for trailer towing vehicles. 2. Stock use on the Pacific Crest Trail and on connecting trails accessed from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 provides the only way to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. In addition to working and recreational access, this route was used for Search and Rescue operations. 3. It is not sufficient to restore use for truck/trail combinations simply to the Green Mountain access trail (Alternative C). We need full restored access (Alternative B) which includes fixing the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and approaches. 4. Restoration of access for agency and volunteer maintenance of the trail systems must be given a top priority if we are to continue providing opportunities in the back country for the current and future generations of users. 5. The Back Country Horsemen of Washington endorse Alternative B as the only acceptable proposed Alternative for pack and saddle stock users.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
79.	04/05/12 email	As a very frequent user of the trails in the Darrington District I am glad to see that some progress is being made on restoring vehicle access to the Suiattle River road and trailheads. It is a project that has been stalled for way too long by a handful of radicals. Virtually every hiker that we meet on the trails in the district is in favor of fixing the road all the way to the terminus as described in Alternative B in the Suiattle River Road Environmental Assessment. I have to agree that Alternative B is the best long term fix for the road and hope that work can begin as soon as possible. The hills are calling me. I also think that the comment that was made about the results of the comments from the Darrington Open House on Sept. 15, 2011 being skewed is absurd. If you are really interested in what is going on in the District you don't mind travelling a ways to an open house. I live about an hour away and did not find it to be a burden or inconvenience. At the open house I spoke with people from Seattle, Bellingham, Everett, Arlington, Stanwood as well as Darrington.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
80.	04/05/12 email	I am a user with the Back Country Horsemen of Washington. We maintain trails throughout the state with pack and saddle stock support. We cannot sustain this effort without road access to the trailheads along with having suitable parking areas for trailer towing vehicles. Stock use on the Pacific Crest Trail and on connecting trails accessed from Suiattle River Road FR 26 provides the only way to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. In addition to working and recreational access, this route was used for Search and Rescue operations. It is not sufficient to restore use for truck/trailer combinations simply to the Green Mountain access trail (Alternative C). We need full restored access (Alternative B) which includes fixing the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and approaches. Restoration of access for agency and volunteer maintenance of the trail system must be given a top priority if we are to continue providing opportunities in the back country for the current and future generations of users. The Back Country Horsemen of Washington endorse Alternative B as the only acceptable proposed Alternative for pack and saddle stock users.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
81.	04/06/12 letter	This letter expresses our strong support for Alternative B in the Suiattle River Road Environmental Assessment that includes fixing the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and approaches. As a chapter of the Back Country Horseman of Washington, we, along with other chapters, help to maintain trails throughout the state with pack and saddle stock support. Federal and state agencies depend on volunteer support to maintain trails. We cannot provide this service without road access to trailheads that include adequate parking for trailer towing vehicles. Alternatives A and C do not provide the required parking and access for trailer towing vehicles. The Pacific Crest Trail and connecting trails accessed from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 provide the only means to bring in supplies and materials to volunteer and agency crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. This route also provides access to Search and Rescue operations. In order to maintain public support for wilderness areas, the public must be able to access them and contribute to their maintenance in a constructive and safe manner in order to experience their pristine beauty and value. If wilderness areas become an abstract concept and inaccessible to future generations, public support for maintaining them will decline. Restoration of	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		access for agency and volunteer maintenance of the trail systems must be given a top priority to continue providing wilderness experiences for current and future generations.		
82.	04/06/12 email	As a long time resident in the Darrington area and an active member on various committees that sees firsthand the impact of visitors to our outlying areas and forests I feel it is vital that we support Plan B to maintain as much roadway as possible on the Suiattle River Road.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
83.	04/06/12 email	I am in support of alternative B – <u>Full Restoration of Suiattle road access</u> for the Suiattle River Road. I am in support of this alternative because: Previously access to the Suiattle River trail #784 was by car. From the current road closure to the Suiattle River trailhead is now about an 11 mile hike. This additional distance effectively excludes many people from accessing the western side of the Glacier Peak Wilderness, either because of physical limitations or time. I hiked in the Suiattle trail – Miners Ridge area before the road closure. I did not hike in the area during the road closure until last year. Then I did a 3 day pack trip up the road. I was only able to go a short way up the Suiattle trail before time constraints forced me to turn around. The lower Suiattle trail goes through some beautiful true old growth forest which should again be accessible to most people as it was in the past. The hike up the Suiattle road was a long slog. Access from this area to the PCT is now significantly more difficult. The road provides access to many other areas besides the Suiattle trail. Many people are effectively excluded from these areas due to the current road closure. Driving access to campgrounds such as Buck Creek and Sulphur Creek is no longer possible. Suiattle Road is historical a high use, multi user road to some of the most beautiful country in the Glacier Peak area. In the past users were not just hikers but included many other users.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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84.	04/06/12 email	Please add my vote to repairing and reopening the Suiattle River Road. In my opinion it should be opened to the end (option B) but at least to the Green Mountain Road (option C). I have hiked in the area many times prior to the road closing and know how beautiful this area is. The Suiattle River Road has provided access to many great day hike accessible wilderness destinations and multi day hikes. Unless the road is repaired and opened to the public , access is limited at best. For example, without access to a bike, the 8 to 10 miles just to the Green Mountain Road makes hikes in the area beyond the range of most hikers, especially day hikers.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
85.	04/06/12 email	Suiattle river road FR 26 in Mt. Baker Snoqualmie NF trail # 784 I am a member of the back country horsemen of WA, who maintain trails (for both hikers and horsemen) throughout WA. Access to this trail is needed for both trail repair and access to the PCT (a national heritage) and adequate parking for horse trailers is needed. I personally hiked the PCT 13 years before it was actually completed (1800 miles of it) and it would make me very sad if access for horsemen and hikers was restricted due to lack of road repairs- we are certainly paying for this right through a heavy tax burden; vehicle license fees and now, the new discover pass. I support alternative B in this proposal. I am also a keen environmentalist, ex-wildlife biologist as well as rider and hiker and know from experience these are compatible uses.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
86.	04/08/12 email	I'll keep my comment short. I have grown wary of the delays in reconstructing this road created by a small but vocal minority. I fully support alternative B.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
87.	04/08/12 letter	The Back Country Horsemen of Washington (BCHW) represents the interests of saddle and pack stock users throughout Washington State. Our volunteers provide pack and ground support to the different land agencies in our state including those that service the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT). The iconic PCT is the backbone horse and hiker trail system in the west from Mexico to Canada, and its prominence in Washington State makes it an outstanding available resource to our membership. Maintaining the PCT and its access trails, such as the Suiattle River Trail and the Milk Creek Trail, is no small feat when the weather is cooperative. However due to a decade of difficult weather including the storms of 2003 and 2006/2007, trails are failing, bridges are collapsing, and infrastructure is being washed away. Much of	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>this is occurring within designated wilderness where access itself is a problem and for the most part, motorized tool and mechanized transport are not allowed. At a time when trail maintenance funding is most needed, the economic stressors on our nation have not resulted in relief to public lands agencies' trail and road maintenance budgets. Volunteerism can help, but it can only do so much in addressing backlog maintenance. This is particularly true since volunteer project work still needs agency approval, and this approval is often held up in layers of process or lack of funding. Add to this the failure of the road system. Clearly, maintenance and use of our public land trails system requires that staff, volunteers, and users must be able to get to the trails. With the loss of the White Chuck Road, access to the PCT west of the North Cascades depends upon the Suiattle River Road and the connecting trails in the Suiattle River corridor. This critical road has itself been closed as a result of damage from the abovementioned storms. As with any washed out section of road, this road should have been repaired many years ago. And yet now it is 2012, and we are back to evaluating whether the road should be repaired and what kind of repair should be done. Our public lands trail system serves all Americans, not just those that are young, affluent, non-disabled, and willing to spend days walking just to get to the campgrounds and trailheads that existed before the roads were damaged. Furthermore, these individuals are typically users who just expect that the trails and trail infrastructure will be there and functioning as if by some sort of miracle. Volunteers as well as the agency work force know that to keep trails operational, it is necessary to get to them with supplies, materials, labor, and tools. This work requires access as well as suitable parking for stock towing vehicles. With the Suiattle River Road, this can only occur by restoring the road to its former full length, including returning traffic over Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek. We cannot perform any "miracles" if we can't find a place to park!! Back Country Horsemen of Washington strongly supports Alternative B as the only suitable alternative offered in the Environmental Assessment for the Suiattle Road repair. All eight failed sections need to be repaired including the relocation segments. We encourage that this work occurs as soon as possible without additional unnecessary delays, since failed action and lack of maintenance can lead to additional erosion based damage to the road exasperating</p>		

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		the current situation.		
88.	04/08/12 email	As thirty two year land owners in the Suiattle river road we support alternative B which would restore vehicle access to the terminus of forest service road 26. Prior to the flood events this road was open for access to tribal lands, wilderness trails and camp grounds. This river valley is part of the economy of towns such as Darrington and Rockport and with difficult economic times the money spent by visitors to this area will help these areas. These repairs will provide access to camping and hiking for a broad spectrum of people, not just those with the ability to hike long distances. As we all know, there are always risks of future washouts along any river system, but the alternative of a future generation not being able to appreciate the beauty of the Suiattle river valley deems worthy of a few moderate risks.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
89.	04/09/12 email	Suiattle River Road, Plan B Support As a member of BCHW and an active trail maintenance volunteer; I fully support restoring access for maintenance of this trail system. This is a top priority if we are going to provide access opportunities to the back country for current and future users. Thank you for your consideration!	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
90.	04/09/12 email with attached PDF	Please accept the attached comments as the official comments of the Back Country Horsemen of Washington with regards to the Suiattle River Road EA. The Back Country Horsemen of Washington (BCHW) represents the interests of saddle and pack stock users throughout Washington State. Our volunteers provide pack and ground support to the different land agencies in our state including those that service the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT). The iconic PCT is the backbone horse and hiker trail system in the west from Mexico to Canada, and its prominence in Washington State makes it an outstanding available resource to our membership. Maintaining the PCT and its access trails, such as the Suiattle River Trail and the Milk Creek Trail, is no small feat when the weather is cooperative. However due to a decade of difficult weather including the storms of 2003 and 2006/2007, trails are failing, bridges are collapsing, and infrastructure is being washed away. Much of this is occurring within designated wilderness where access itself is a problem and for the most part, motorized tool and mechanized transport are not allowed. At a time when trail maintenance funding is most needed, the economic stressors on our nation have not resulted in relief to public lands agencies' trail and road	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>maintenance budgets. Volunteerism can help, but it can only do so much in addressing backlog maintenance. This is particularly true since volunteer project work still needs agency approval, and this approval is often held up in layers of process or lack of funding. Add to this the failure of the road system. Clearly, maintenance and use of our public land trails system requires that staff, volunteers, and users must be able to get to the trails. With the loss of the White Chuck Road, access to the PCT west of the North Cascades depends upon the Suiattle River Road and the connecting trails in the Suiattle River corridor. This critical road has itself been closed as a result of damage from the abovementioned storms. As with any washed out section of road, this road should have been repaired many years ago. And yet now it is 2012, and we are back to evaluating whether the road should be repaired and what kind of repair should be done. Our public lands trail system serves all Americans, not just those that are young, affluent, non-disabled, and willing to spend days walking just to get to the campgrounds and trailheads that existed before the roads were damaged. Furthermore, these individuals are typically users who just expect that the trails and trail infrastructure will be there and functioning as if by some sort of miracle. Volunteers as well as the agency work force know that to keep trails operational, it is necessary to get to them with supplies, materials, labor, and tools. This work requires access as well as suitable parking for stock towing vehicles. With the Suiattle River Road, this can only occur by restoring the road to its former full length, including returning traffic over Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek. We cannot perform any “miracles” if we can’t find a place to park!! Back Country Horsemen of Washington strongly supports Alternative B as the only suitable alternative offered in the Environmental Assessment for the Suiattle Road repair. All eight failed sections need to be repaired including the relocation segments. We encourage that this work occurs as soon as possible without additional unnecessary delays, since failed action and lack of maintenance can lead to additional erosion based damage to the road exasperating the current situation.</p>		

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91.	04/10/12 letter (per postmark)	I am a member of the Back Country Horsemen of Washington. BCHW has maintained trails throughout the state. We have used pack and saddle stock to do this. We cannot sustain this effort without road access to the trailheads. We need to have suitable parking areas for trailer towing vehicles. Stock use on the Pacific Crest Trail and on connecting trails accessed from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 provides the only way to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. In addition to working and recreational access, this route was used for Search and Rescue operations. It is not sufficient to restore use for truck/trail combinations simply to the Green Mountain access trail (Alternative C). We need full restored access (Alternative B) which includes fixing the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and approaches. Restoration of access for agency and volunteer maintenance of the trail systems must be given a top priority if we are to continue providing opportunities in the back country for the current and future generations of users. The Back Country Horsemen of Washington endorse Alternative Bas the only acceptable proposed Alternative for pack and saddle stock users.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
92.	04/10/12 email & attached MSWord document	I wish to submit comments to the subject EA in favor of “Alternative B”. The lost of the vehicle access has limited my use, as well as many others of this great area and it’s time to restore access ASAP to the original Suiattle River TH. I am getting older and can’t do the trips I once did as a day trip especially with this extra road walk. The road is going on a decade since it was drivable all the way to the end. I miss day hiking to Green Mtn, Downey, and Sulphur Mtn. The activist’s that want everything to go to Wilderness are not reasonable. This puts pressures on what remaining resources are available and less enjoyable for all. It’s time to open the road to the original Suiattle TH. I would like see every effort be made to start construction in the Fall of 2012. Most Fall’s weather is pretty good and progress can be made. I would like the sites worked in sequence. As they are safe for travel, they be opened for public use. The idea to keep the whole road closed until all work is completed is not serving the public. I have seen roads stay closed for months until a contractor touches up things that pose no public safety issue and very limited affect on the contractor to deal with the public in the area. I think the extension to the Downey creek bridge is complete overkill. The fisheries folks are	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>not reasonable. They are getting there way 100% of the time and loving it. It's time that common sense be applied. The current soft fill material has lasted since the Oct 2003 flood event. With armoring and large culverts would be good solution. But to insists that one grain of silt in the river is too much is not reasonable especially in the Suiattle River. I suggest a temporary ramp be built that bridges the current approach to the Downey Cr bridge (the one at the bridge today is almost car ready). Then a final reasonable solution be developed. Or the user groups that insists on a new 210 foot Downey Cr bridge pay all the added cost without delay. There have been many plans to repair the Suiattle road and all have been stopped by activist's. I certainly hope this time that all the based are covered as I expect appeals to the decision to repair will occur this time too. I think they had hoped that the money would dry up and win by the lack of funding (it's worked in the past). The added studies are certainly adding to the cost. Please repair the Suiattle River road and get it open ASAP!</p>		
93.	<p>04/11/12 letter hand delivered to Darrington Ranger District, 1405 Emens Avenue North, Darrington, WA 98241</p>	<p>The Darrington Planning Commission has chosen to go on record as supporting the Alternative B, which proposes to restore vehicle access with repairs of the flood-damaged sites, and to rehabilitate abandoned sections of Road 26. We also want to state that Alternative A and Alternative C will present major reductions of economic value to our community. The Planning Commission is a volunteer committee of individuals appointed by the Town Council of Darrington, who are working to provide the community of Darrington with a comprehensive plan for future development in Darrington. We are concerned both with the financial future of Darrington and the socio-economic viability of the community. As pertains to the project review, we want to note an error in Section 3.15, Socioeconomic Affected Environment, in the document. The project plan proposes to consider the local economic considerations, and specifically considers the Town of Darrington. Section 3.15 does not project specific impacts in relation to each option under consideration. There are facts presented concerning visitor use, and projected dollars spent in the local community. We would like to suggest that the evaluation should increase the dollar value considerably from what is presented on page 146. Recreation spending is often given much higher value than the suggested \$5 average per visitor. ("If half the visitors spent \$10..."). Please refer to the following</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>document: <i>Economic Impacts, of Recreational Spending on Rural Areas: A Case Study</i> John C. Bergstrom University of Georgia, H. Ken Cordell, Gregory A. Ashley, Alan E. Watson USDA ForestService. Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute: Publication # 206 CITATION: Bergstrom, John C.; Cordell, H. Ken; Ashley, Gregory A.; Watson, Alan E. 1990. Economic impacts of recreational spending on rural areas: a case study. <i>Economic Development Quarterly</i>. 4(1): 29-39. http://leopold.wilderness.net/pubs/206.pdf This survey finds an average of \$23 dollars spent in 1990, which would be \$39 today, which would be 8 times larger than the value put forward in the Suiattle River Road analysis. The economic value has two components: the dollars per visitor and the number of visitors. There are not good specific data directly available measuring the actual visitors to the Suiattle area, and there can only be general speculation of the change in visitor use by each proposal. One data point that is available with a good history of record keeping is the registration box for the Suiattle Trail. The Darrington Ranger District data shows that Suiattle Trail use is less than 1/10th of the use measured in pre flood damage years. We think that this factor of 10 is very representative of showing how much decline in activity will result from either the A or C Alternatives. The project plan is dramatically under-valuing the visitor dollar impact. The socioeconomic value to the community of Darrington is much larger than just visitor counting. The future of Darrington also depends on the people who choose to live here, work here, and create businesses here. The Suiattle Road provides an unique opportunity in forest and environment for the community because of both the type of forest and the lowland wilderness that the full length of the road accesses. The visitor season for the end of the Suiattle Road is literally months longer than other road opportunities in this area. For all these reasons, the Darrington Planning Commission, strongly supports the Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road Project, WA FS ERFO 071-2023.</p>		

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94.	04/11/12 email	The repairs to the Suiattle River Road have been scoped on multiple occasions. It is time for action rather than further study and stonewalling by the few opponents of this project. Alternative B (complete repair) needs to be approved and moved on. It is apparent by the EA that it will be most beneficial to the environmental goals envisioned by the various pieces of environmental legislation. The Suiattle Road as pointed out in the document is an extremely high value access corridor for numerous recreational opportunities during all seasons. It had been utilized by a large number and varied types of the general public. It is effectively only one of two access points for reasonable Western access to the Glacier Peak Wilderness. The repairs to the road are supported by a very large majority of the comments in past scoping, various native-American tribes, and the USFS. In summary, I urge your organization to select Alternative B, make a decision of “Finding of No Significant Impact”, and as stated move on this project in it’s entirety in 2013.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
95.	04/11/12 email	As a member of the Back Country Horsemen of Washington (BCHW), I am writing to endorse Alternative B as the only acceptable/reasonable proposal for pack and saddle stock users. BCHW members (volunteers) help maintain trails throughout the State of Washington. Our efforts will be critically hindered without road access to the trailheads and we must have parking for our vehicles, trailers and supplies. Suiattle River Road FR 26 is the only way to deliver supplies and materials to people that work to maintain trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. To assure our continued efforts we need complete restoration of the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and their approaches. If this restoration doesn’t happen it will also impact Search and Rescue operations. By implementing Alternative B you will be insuring the continuation of cooperation between BCHW volunteers and federal agencies. This generation and future generations will be able to enjoy the back country that belongs to all of us.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
96.	04/11/12 email	I understand you are taking comments on the fate of the Suiattle river road. Please list me as being in favor of reopening the Suiattle river road. I am an avid backpacker and there are many truly inspiring hikes accessible from that road that are difficult to get to any other way. I must admit, there is a part of me that wishes that area to be closed to human traffic to maintain its pristine nature, but overall I think people should be able to experience the beauty of that region without much arduousness.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
97.	04/11/12 email	PLEASE repair this road so that it can be open once again! My husband and I hiked down the road Easter weekend to the turn off to Green Mountain. We spent a peaceful night camped next to the river. This is a beautiful area that SHOULD be open for the public to enjoy! One of our favorite hikes was the trail to Green Mountain and we have not been up there since the road closure. Other memorable trips include doing the Ptarmigan Traverse and coming out at Downey Creek, hiking up to Image Lake and on over to Holden, and a backpack from Buck Creek Pass to the Suiattle River Road. PLEASE open this road so we can do those hikes again!	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
98.	04/11/12 email	I am in favor of reopening the road, as it provides access to one of the county's finest outdoor recreation areas.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
99.	04/11/12 email	I am in support of repairing the flood damage. We need local options to recreate and enjoy our national forests. In this time of tough economies, hiking locally is one affordable way to vacation and recreate. plus I'm sure it indirectly brings jobs to mountain communities like Darrington in support of tourism and recreation. Please rebuild this road.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
100.	04/11/12 email	Please reopen the Suiattle river road Dear Washington D.O.T I understand you are taking comments on the fate of the Suiattle river road. Please list me as being in favor of reopening the Suiattle river road.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
101.	04/11/12 email	As a frequent hiker, climber, and environmentalist I strongly encourage the Suiattle River Road (FS Rd #26) to be maintained so that people can continue to experience the best that Washington has to offer in terms of the natural beauty and inspiring wilderness. Access to these areas is essential to engage people in conservation and protection of the wilderness. With any maintenance, it is important to minimize the environmental impact, but not necessarily eliminate it.		Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
102.	04/11/12 email	I urge you to reopen the road as soon as possible. Every year the reopening is delayed. It means we are losing more trails. This area is truly important to outdoor enthusiasts. It is one of the most beautiful areas in Washington. No-one can get there to maintain the trails meaning they may be lost forever. This is one of the shorter routes into the Glacier Peak Wilderness.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
103.	04/11/12 email	Continued Access to Glacier Peak As a frequent hiker, climber, and environmentalist I strongly encourage the Suiattle River Road (FS Rd #26) to be maintained so that people can continue to experience the best that Washington has to offer in terms of the natural beauty and inspiring wilderness. Access to these areas is essential to engage people in conservation and protection of the wilderness. With any maintenance, it is important to minimize the environmental impact, but not necessarily eliminate it.		Thank you, your comment is noted.
104.	04/11/12 email	The EA for this project is one of the better ones I have read. Alternative B, restoring full access and following the Forest Plan, best serves the public at large and I am fully in favor of it. I am a long time user of the area and wish to see the historic recreation opportunities re-established for all and for future generations. I believe the efforts going into long term fixes of Alternative B and the mitigation are reasonable and best comply with Forest Plan direction and other laws that the Forest Service must operate under. I will save "good job" for when the road repairs are actually complete, but nice work (assuming Alternative B is implemented) so far.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
105.	04/11/12 email	I am sending this e-mail to support Alternative B for repairing the Suiattle River Road. I grew up and live in the Darrington area. I have spent a lot of time up the Suiattle, hiking, fishing, and hunting. I still do, even with the road closed I still ride my mountain bike up the road to the different trail heads. I am disappointed that I haven't been able to take my children up to Green Mountain to see the wonderful views, or Downey creek to fish. Also, the campground and trailheads at the end of the road should not be abandoned. I believe that there needs to be vehicle access to the end of the road. There will be too much recreation lost if the road is not restored to its end.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
106.	04/11/12 email	I understand that you are taking comments on the opening of the Suiattle River Road. I have been a hiker and climber all of my life and have treasured access to this beautiful area. Please consider re-opening this road for the future generations to enjoy.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
107.	04/12/12 email	Alternative C Thank you for the opportunity to review the Suiattle River Road EA. Alternative C appears to be a good compromise that will continue to allow access to an otherwise remote area with reduced project cost in relation to Alternative B.I would not consider Alternative A.	C	Thank you, your comment is noted.
108.	04/12/12 email	I support Option B to repair the road to its end at milepost 23.0	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
109.	04/12/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead for the following reason(s): The Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads and 2 car-camp grounds is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen, and the simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult. Also, volunteer efforts are critical to trail maintenance and recruiting volunteers to walk 24 miles round trip to work on trails would be extremely difficult. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. Reopening this road would also have a beneficial effect on the economies of local towns such as Darrington. There are many good reasons to repair and reopen this road and restore access to this wonderful area that has been closed for too long. Let's please move forward with alternative B and restore access to a beautiful and important area of our public lands.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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110.	04/12/12 email	Re-opening road As a hiker of many years, I can tell you that access to the Glacier Peak Wilderness via the Suiattle River Road has been greatly missed. I remember some wonderful trips taken years ago.....the Milk Creek, Vista Creek Loop, and Image Lake. There are a few more hikes in that area that we would love to do, if we could get car access to the trailheads. Please support alternative B.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
111.	04/12/12 email	Please use alternative B, Repair the road and keep access open and available.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
112.	04/12/12 email	As a Washington local, avid climber and one who enjoys to spend much of my time outdoors I appreciate the ability to access wilderness recreation in a feasible manor. I do not want to see future development expanding into wilderness areas but I do not want to lose what access we have already. As I have read in the EAS FS road 26 has historically been important for access to the Glacier peak wilderness area. Currently there is no timely access to Glacier Peak as the other main access road, FS road 49, is currently under repairs for an undetermined amount of time. Currently that repair period has been extended twice. There are other roads in the area that are being completely abandoned such as the Illabot Creek road and others even that will most likely never receive the funding needed to see appropriate repairs, such as the clear creek road (one of my personal favorites). I would like to see Alternative B conducted but would be most appreciate of any reopening of the road such as described in Alternative C. I DO NOT want to see the road stay in the condition it is in or to see the federal government spend abundant sums of money to simply abandon the road. We must strike a balance between development and preservation. We need to conserve the access we currently have to the wilderness and I think that rebuilding and relocating the damaged section of FS road 26 would be a helpful step in improving recreational access to this beautiful area of the North Cascade. Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion and providing the public with this accessible source of information from which to make an educated opinion.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
113.	04/12/12 email	I write in strong support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead the following reasons: The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>camping, berry picking, picnicking. I recognize the high cost of maintenance does not warrant keeping them open is high, and they are no longer needed. The Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads, 2 car-camp grounds, however, is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. In addition, equestrian packers have long supported (both on contract and as BCH volunteers) the work of trail maintenance in that wilderness trails system from the Suiattle trailhead at the end of the Suiattle road. If the trailhead at the end of the road is not open to stock users with trailer parking at the trailhead, then those pack strings will not be able to support trailwork along the West portion of the Suiattle, Milk Creek and PCT trail systems. This is a huge loss to the public because without stock to pack in materials and tools as well as supplies for trail crews, those trails will just deteriorate to the point of no longer being usable. Years and years of investments of time and money will be lost, as will a vital access to the wilderness. The loss of the Suiattle Road would also make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult Page 3 of the EA identifies the Suiattle River Road as a “high need road” by The 2003 Forest-wide Roads Analysis or recreation and purposes. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient, and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing, which is good for fish and the tribes like it. Thank you for your attention to my input. Again, I strongly support option B.</p>		

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114.	04/12/12 email	Reopen the Suiattle River Road It has been some time since we have been able to venture to the Sulfur Creek campground and then on to Miner's Ridge. The journey now is too long for most people to tackle in a typical weekend plus vacation. You have my support for reopening the road to its terminus 23 miles in. Thank you for your time.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
115.	04/12/12 email	Option B to Open the Suiattle River Road I have read the options for opening the Suiattle River Road and feel that the Option B would be the best plan. I have looked at trail maps and read trail books for the last 3 years and have had that area on my list of places to go. My grandsons will be getting old enough in a few years to go hiking and/or backpacking on those trails and I can hardly wait for them to open up.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
116.	04/12/12 email	I would like to go on record as supporting Option B - repair the road to its end at milepost 23.0. I'm an avid mountaineer and this road provides the only viable access to the west side of the Glacier Peak Wilderness area and is sorely missed by the outdoor community. Please maintain this needed access for the community.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
117.	04/12/12 email	support option B I support Option B for the Suiattle River Road.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
118.	04/12/12 email	Please repair the Suiattle Road I am in strong support of the proposed action to fix the Suiattle River Road (#26) all the way to the campground past Sulphur Creek. I haven't been able to take my boys hiking up there for years, and it is long past time to re-open the access to some fantastic hiking trails and fishing holes. I am a past president of the Skagit Alpine Club, and I know many of our members feel the same as I do. Please fix the road ASAP!	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
119.	04/12/12 email	Suiattle river road restoration I support Alternative B	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
120.	04/12/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead the following reason (s): The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed camping, berry picking, picnicking. I recognize the high cost of maintenance does not warrant keeping them open is high, and they are no longer needed. The Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads, 2 car-camp grounds, however, is critical for hikers,	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult Page 3 of the EA identifies the Suiattle River Road as a “high need road” by The 2003 Forest-wide Roads Analysis or recreation and purposes. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient, and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing, which is good for fish and the tribes like it. ARRA funds breakdown. ; recruiting volunteers to walk 24 miles round trip to work on trails would be impossible.		
121.	04/12/12 email	I am writing in support of the project to reroute and reopen the Suiattle River Road in the MB/S national forest. The loss of this road to storm damage years ago removed reasonable access to a wonderful section of public lands that many of us were previously able to enjoy. The famous “Ptarmigan Traverse”, a favorite trip for many mountain enthusiasts in the northwest and beyond, is now far more difficult to manage with the lack of easy road access to the southern end of the traverse. I respect the need to evaluate environmental impacts when moving roads, but people in this area had come to rely on the Suiattle River Road. The more people are able to responsibly enjoy our wilderness treasures, the more likely they are to support causes that support public lands and environmental protection for them. A plan to move the road and re-open it will cause minimal environmental impact and restore access to an area that many people love. I believe the benefits far outweigh the negatives in this case.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
122.	04/12/12 email	I am writing in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead and this repair is already fully funded. Repairing the Suiattle River Road will restore an incredible amount of access for the widest variety of recreationists across the board, as well as re-enabling culturally significant activities of affected Indian tribes. Repairing this one road will also dramatically reduce overuse that has increased in other nearby recreational areas such as the North Fork Sauk. Alternative B will also include the already fully funded (by Salmon Recovery Board Fund) repair/upgrade of the Downey Creek crossing improving fish habitat; this is also supported by the Indian tribes and all biologists who have had input into this project. The project proposes using an old logging road around washouts 2, 3 and 4 to get the road to a higher elevation, out of wetlands and outside the Wild and Scenic River boundary and will eliminate the threat of future washouts. This new connector road will NOT pass through old-growth - far from it, it has all been logged or burned in the last century. Furthermore, the existing road that goes through wetlands will be removed and the area rehabilitated. It will actually be better environmentally than it is now. Finally, the Sulphur Creek Campground and the huge existing paved parking lot at the end are all in great shape. It is illogical to consider closing this section. In conclusion - Alternative B is fully funded, has no significant environmental risk according to the experts that have contributed to the EA and it repairs the road to the 2003 terminus at Suiattle Trailhead - restoring all our access. Let's do it!	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
123.	04/12/12 email	Please move forward with a full restoration to all trailhead access points along the Suiattle road (option B). The benefits of investing in this reliable access point to our wilderness outweigh the impacts to the valley in re-routing the washouts. I have personally invested volunteer labor in maintaining those trails (along with many others), and would like to see them enjoyed by future generations.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
124.	04/12/12 email	I hike, and I support option B for the Suiattle River Road Just a note from a WTA member. I hike, and I support option B for the Suiattle River Road.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
125.	04/12/12 email	Reactivate the Suiattle River Road I write this message to express my opinion on the Suiattle River Road. I am in favor of rebuilding and or restoring the road for public use. I am a climber and backcountry skier, and both of my parents participated in these activities. Roads at low elevation assist entry into the wilderness and mountains, and this road provides access to a large area of the range. Walking, climbing, and skiing in the wilderness gives people a greater appreciation of the beauty of the wilderness. I know human activity and building can stress wildlife and vegetation, but with proper precautions and stewardship we can minimize our impact. If we close off historic entry points into the wilderness we loose touch with wild lands. If people loose touch they can forget and make preservation efforts harder. Yes we should replace the road in a way that has minimal impact, but not replacing it eliminates the chances for wild experiences who have limited time free for adventures. In a broader picture humans are part of the environment and have influenced nature since humans arose. Closing the road is similar to erecting a wall.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
126.	04/12/12 email	I would like to give my support to repair the Suiattle River Road. I actively use this area to backpack and climb and would like to see access to this area facilitated by this project.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
127.	04/12/12 email	The Suiattle River Road EA entertains three options: Option A would keep the road closed to vehicle traffic; Option B would repair the road to its end at milepost 23.0; Option C would repair the road to milepost 20.2, the turn-off to FR 2680 and the Green Mountain trailhead I support options B and/or C.I have missed hiking in this beautiful area!	B/C	Thank you, your comment is noted.
128.	04/12/12 email	I am writing because of a potentially disastrous plan to permanently close the Suiattle River Road. Please count me in to support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road to the Suiattle Trailhead should be repaired the following reasons: As a frequent visitor to this area, closing this section of road will deny all of us who enjoy hiking and climbing in this area virtually eliminates all of our access to the west side of Glacier Peak. There are 7 trail heads, 2 campgrounds and the Suiattle Guard station which are all served by this road. Since the White Chuck approach was destroyed (and will never be rebuilt) this and the N Fork Sauk (which is also currently out of commission) are the only west side approaches to Glacier	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>Peak. The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed camping, berry picking, picnicking. I understand that the high cost of maintenance does not warrant keeping them open is high, and they are no longer needed. The Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads, 2 car-camp grounds, however, is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make the trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult Page 3 of the EA identifies the Suiattle River Road as a “high need road” by The 2003 Forest-wide Roads Analysis or recreation and purposes. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient, and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing, which is good for fish and the tribes like it. Furthermore, recruiting volunteers to walk 24 miles round trip to work on trails would be impossible if this road is closed.</p>		

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129.	04/12/12 email	Please repair the Suiattle River Road to the end. When I was younger I hiked on the Green Mountain Trail, but I never got to the top, so I missed seeing the lookout and the fabled view. Because of work, I didn't have the time to take extended vacations in the wilderness; I was limited to day hikes. Now that I'm a senior citizen, I'm still pretty much limited to day hikes. And how I'd like to give the Green Mountain Trail another go. Maybe I could make it all the way next time. But I'd have to be able to get to the trailhead in order to try it. I've been waiting a long time for the road to be repaired to provide access. Now I understand there are some well-meaning groups advocating for the closure of the road, and they may have a point. But it seems to me if the road is closed, before long there won't be many people who remember the reasons it was put there to begin with. Who will be able to see the wildflowers, the birds, and the old-growth forests? Who will know of the streams that feed the powerful rivers? Who will recall the vistas? Who will get out and hike in our nature areas? Who will care? We'll just watch Rick Steves on TV and wonder why the Swiss can provide access to their mountains, but we can't. I just don't get it. It may be selfish of me, but I hope you will get on with the relocation and repairs, all the way to milepost 23, and I hope the job will be done in such a way that the road doesn't wash out in the future. Or even consider putting in a transportation system that doesn't require a road, like a gondola or even a chairlift. There's got to be some way to provide access. I hope you'll find it.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
130.	04/12/12 email	Keeping the few roads that we have available allows us to get to areas that would normally not be unaccessible to most. I truly believe in the protection of the wilderness for future generations as well as plants and wildlife but if we can't get to it to see it what purpose does it serve to protect it if it can be enjoyed. I recommend keeping the Suiattle Road Open all the way.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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131.	04/12/12 email	As an avid northwest hiker and photographer and someone who appreciates the balancing act the forest service plays in keeping recreation and protection of the wilderness lands at an even standing, I am in support of the full reopening (Alternative B) of the Suiattle River Road. Currently the road closure prohibits dayhiking of any kind into any part of the Glacier Peak Wilderness. Even with the roadway opened to MP 20.3 this would still leave a number of the best trails in the state just outside of being able to do them as anything less than a backpack. As someone who has never had easy access to this area my only knowledge and experience of the area comes from photographs from backpackers. It seems a shame to me that an entire generation hasn't been able to see something so breathtaking as this area. I'm a firm believer that if you want people to care about a place, to want to protect it, you have to let them see it and experience it for themselves, to "give them a reason" to want to save or protect a place. With the road washed out and the area so cut off and isolated I believe that will not be the case. Again, I support Alternative B (full reopening) wholeheartedly and look forward to the day when I can have a choice between dayhiking or backpacking in the Glacier Peak Wilderness.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
132.	04/12/12 email	I am in favor of making necessary repairs to the Suiattle River road. I am an avid skier and climber and would like to have better access to this region of the North Cascades. As it is now, this region is very inaccessible and inhibits my enjoyment of the natural beauty of the region. I hope this is helpful in the decision making process.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
133.	04/12/12 email	Please do Plan B! I have been waiting many years to do some hikes from trailheads accessed through this closed section of the Suiattle River road to access the Green Mountain, Sulphur Mountain and Huckleberry Mountain trails. I have started hiking within the past 10 years late in my life and have more and more appreciated access to the wilderness to enjoy its beauty. To access the Green Mountain trailhead today would require 10mi along the road which admittedly is flat but the next 6 miles up 2680 would be very strenuous for my age with a backpack and this option would only be available to the young. I hope you finally repair this road and we can get to see wonderful Glacier Peak up close!	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
134.	04/12/12 email	I am in favor of Option B would repair the road to its end at milepost 23.0;	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
135.	04/12/12 email	I enthusiastically support Alternative B as described in the March 2012 EA Document. There are no significant environmental impacts as a result of the project and for the most part there are substantial improvements to the environment compared to doing nothing or only partially repairing the road. As a hiker, amateur photographer, mountaineer and former volunteer Operations Leader for 25 years in Everett Mountain Rescue, I can testify that this road is the most important western access for recreation in the North Cascades. It has become even more significant after the loss of the White Chuck River road and trail to Glacier Peak and its connections to the Pacific Crest Trail. The Suiattle River Road provides access to seven trails and two car-campgrounds, all of which have been inaccessible other than on foot or bicycle for the past six years. The Forest Service identified this road as a High Need Road for all vehicle types in their 2003 analysis. The loss of this road and the White Chuck as an access to the Pacific Crest Trail and Glacier Peak has focused all climbers, horses and hikers in the White Pass area. The detrimental impact of this heavy traffic is noticeable on the trail and the alpine meadows. The Alternative B proposal has several attractive features: At Sites 1 through 5, the road is rerouted well away from the river and will ensure against future erosion as well as removing it from wetlands. The removal of trees is minimized by utilizing the route of a former logging road at higher elevation. This also includes rehabilitation of the old road route and wetlands to their natural state. At Site 6, the road is also moved further away from the existing bank and reduces the future risk of erosion. Site 7 and 8, the Downey and Sulphur Creek bridge approaches, are modified to allow the natural flow of high water without damage to the road and are endorsed by the Tribes, the National Marine Fisheries Service and other experts that have contributed to the EA. Access to Sulphur Creek Campground, the primitive Downey Creek Campground, the Downey Creek Trail, the Sulphur Creek and Mountain Trails, Milk Creek Trail, Suiattle River Trail and all the other trails and routes these connect to – is restored to all user groups. It allows use of the large existing and undamaged parking lot at the road end that is already capable of handling the traffic. I am confident from the EA that there is no significant	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		<p>environmental impact to this option and that it is supported by expert evaluation in the EA. I am against Alternatives A and C because both these options would deny most recreational users access to the trails and campgrounds at the end of this road. Alternative A, doing nothing, makes it a full day's journey to the end of the road and back on either foot or bicycle. Alternative C only restores about half the road and would still require 4 to 5 miles walk each way to get to the most popular trailheads at the end of the road. In order to reach the existing Wilderness camps, such as on Miners Ridge, the added distance would put this out of reach for most hikers in one day. This would result in new camps being established at lower elevations in the Wilderness Area, which would have significant environmental impact. Furthermore, a new terminal parking area established near the Green Mountain Road or Pasture would result in dangerous traffic conflict between vehicles, horses and pedestrians. Alternative B is the best option, and I'm confident that with the standard engineering and construction practices set forth in the EA, there is no significant environmental impact.</p>		
136.	04/12/12 email	<p>I am a backcountry skier and would love to be able to use this road to get access to Glacier peak and I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead the following reason (s): The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed camping, berry picking, picnicking. I recognize the high cost of maintenance does not warrant keeping them open is high, and they are no longer needed. The Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads, 2 car-camp grounds, however, is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult Page 3 of the EA identifies the Suiattle River Road as a "high need road" by The 2003 Forest-wide Roads Analysis or recreation and purposes. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		sufficient, and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing, which is good for fish and the tribes like it. ARRA funds breakdown. ; recruiting volunteers to walk 24 miles round trip to work on trails would be impossible.		
137.	04/12/12 email	Please fix the road. It is missed by many.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
138.	04/12/12 email	I would like to express my opinion that the Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road should be approved and the be repaired to the end. The loss of this road and its wonderful campgrounds and day hiking trails not to mention it's access to some awesome wilderness areas would just be a shame.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
139.	04/12/12 email	Option B I choose Option B, because it provides better access to some of the most beautiful backcountry in the Cascades. I've been to Image Lake twice, one since the floods, and would love to go again. Extending the road would take some of the recreational pressure off some of the other parts of the Cascades. I have full confidence in the ability of the forest service to manage this land, and am willing to pay to help out. Thanks for asking for input.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
140.	04/12/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead for the following reason(s): The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed camping, berry picking, and picnicking. I recognize the high cost of maintenance does not warrant keeping them open and they are no longer needed. However, the Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads and 2 car-camp grounds is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen, and the simple enjoyment of being outdoors. Page 3 of the EA points out that the Suiattle River Road is a "high need road" as determined by The 2003 MBS Forest-wide Roads Analysis. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		<p>maintenance extremely difficult as well as restricting access permanently to an area that has traditionally been enjoyed by multitudes of people and has cultural significance to local Indian tribes. Furthermore, volunteer efforts are critical to trail maintenance and recruiting volunteers to walk 24 miles round trip to work on trails would be extremely difficult. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing which would be good for fish. The Indian tribes support repairing this bridge and improving fish habitat and according to section 1.9 of the EA a Salmon Recovery Board Fund grant was approved in 2011 which would provide funding for this repair. Reopening this road would also have a beneficial effect on the economies of local towns such as Darrington. In summary, there are many good reasons to repair and reopen this road and restore access to this wonderful area. It has been too long that the public has been unable to access this area and the improvements to be implemented in the construction of the new road would benefit riparian and wetland areas and improve fish habitat. Let's please move forward with alternative B and restore access to a beautiful and important area of our public lands.</p>		
141.	04/12/12 email	<p>Re-Open the Suiattle Road I want to express my strong support for reopening the entire length of the Suiattle Road. Early during my time in Boy Scouts I did several hikes in the Glacier Peak area that were only accessible by the Suiattle Road and have very fond memories of hiking in that region.I feel strongly that the area should be re-opened for use and that starts with rebuilding the entire length of the Suiattle Road.</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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142.	04/12/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead the following reason (s):The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed camping, berry picking, picnicking. I recognize the high cost of maintenance does not warrant keeping them open is high, and they are no longer needed. The Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads, 2 car-camp grounds, however, is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult Page 3 of the EA identifies the Suiattle River Road as a “high need road” by The 2003 Forest-wide Roads Analysis or recreation and purposes. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient, and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing, which is good for fish and the tribes like it. ARRA funds breakdown.; recruiting volunteers to walk 24 miles round trip to work on trails would be impossible.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
143.	04/12/12 email	Please Repair the Suiattle River Road! Yes to Option B I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead for the following reason(s): The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed camping, berry picking, and picnicking. I recognize the high cost of maintenance does not warrant keeping them open and they are no longer needed. However, the Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads and 2 car-camp grounds is critical for hikers, backpackers,	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen, and the simple enjoyment of being outdoors. Page 3 of the EA points out that the Suiattle River Road is a “high need road” as determined by The 2003 MBS Forest-wide Roads Analysis. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult as well as restricting access permanently to an area that has traditionally been enjoyed by multitudes of people and has cultural significance to local Indian tribes. Furthermore, volunteer efforts are critical to trail maintenance and recruiting volunteers to walk 24 miles round trip to work on trails would be extremely difficult. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing which would be good for fish. The Indian tribes support repairing this bridge and improving fish habitat and according to section 1.9 of the EA a Salmon Recovery Board Fund grant was approved in 2011 which would provide funding for this repair. Reopening this road would also have a beneficial effect on the economies of local towns such as Darrington. In summary, there are many good reasons to repair and reopen this road and restore access to this wonderful area. It has been too long that the public has been unable to access this area and the improvements to be implemented in the construction of the new road would benefit riparian and wetland areas and improve fish habitat. Let’s please move forward with alternative B and restore access to a beautiful area of our public lands.</p>		

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144.	04/13/12 email	Suiattle River Road -- Support for Alternative C My toddler, husband and I enjoy hiking and backpacking in Washington's beautiful wilderness areas year-round, including many trips each year to the North Cascades. We appreciate the beauty of the untouched areas, as well as the sense of courage and calm that we get when we explore them. The preservation of our state's wild and pristine forests is of great interest to us. I was happy to see that an EA was done, to help inform how the Suiattle River Road is rebuilt. After reviewing the EA, I support Alternative C for the re-build as it offers a good balance of fiscal responsibility for the state and ecological preservation of these fragile environments.	C	Thank you, your comment is noted.
145.	04/13/12 email	I am in favor of option B of repairing it to the end. This would definitely open some beautiful areas to recreation which our growing population will definitely need. i miss the walk along Downey Creek and the Old Growth cedar forest.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
146.	04/13/12 email	Support for Rebuilding the Suiattle River Road I understand that you are currently considering options for rebuilding the Suiattle River Road. I am writing to strongly advocate for investment in this project. Green Mountain was one of the first hikes I did on a weekend after moving to Seattle. The hike was so outstanding -- the perfect mix of varied terrain, close enough to Seattle to make a round trip in one day, a rewarding vista at the end and other hikers to enjoy the path without feeling overcrowded -- eight years later it still stands out as an outstanding day and one of the hikes that cemented me as a hiker in the Cascades (I'd never been a hiker before moving to Seattle). I've been wanting to return for several years and to bring others to the trail to get hooked on hiking as I am, but we just keep waiting for the road to be rebuilt. I'm also very eager to hike to Image Lake as an overnight, but have been waiting for this trail access. Option B, full repair of all 23 miles of road, would be ideal, but if cost is prohibitive, I urge you to at least rebuild the road to the Green Mountain trailhead (Option C). That road leads to a spectacular piece of the Glacier Wilderness -- please, give us a way to enjoy it again.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
147.	04/13/12 email	Subject: I like it I would just LOVE it if you fixed this road. I can remember some great hikes from years past off this road. So Please FIX IT!!!	Fix road	Thank you, your comment is noted.
148.	04/13/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B or at a very minimum, Alternative C for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead to allow public access to public lands. The Suiattle River Road has historically served as	B then C	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		<p>access to 7 trailheads and 2 car-camp sites which are critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car campers, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, back-country skiers, photographers, mushroom pickers, fishermen and those seeking the simple enjoyment of being outdoors in a pristine wilderness area. As this area belongs to the public, providing public access should be a priority in the decision to repair/rebuild this road. Page 3 of the EA identifies the Suiattle River Road as a “high need road” by The 2003 Forest-wide Roads Analysis for recreational purposes. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle River Road. If the Suiattle River Road is not repaired/rebuilt, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing, which is good for fish and the tribes. Therefore, it is less desirable than the repair to the Suiattle Trailhead. However, in light of current budget constraints, Alternative C would at least provide a starting point toward a full restoration/reconstruction of the road going forward. Alternative A would not only disallow access but, if in the future it were determined to reopen access, the costs to taxpayers would certainly be substantially greater. Therefore, for those two reasons, Alternative A should be the lowest scored option. Please consider the views of the public in general going forward with this project. While I recognize that organized environmental groups will advocate for the shut-down of public lands to the public, the ‘greater good’ of our citizenry to have access to public lands should prevail in your decision process. Thank you for your consideration of this request as you deliberate the future of the Suiattle River Road project.</p>		
149.	04/13/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead for the following reason(s): The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		<p>be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed camping, berry picking, and picnicking. I recognize the high cost of maintenance does not warrant keeping them open and they are no longer needed. However, the Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads and 2 car-camp grounds is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen, and the simple enjoyment of being outdoors. Page 3 of the EA points out that the Suiattle River Road is a “high need road” as determined by The 2003 MBS Forest-wide Roads Analysis. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult as well as restricting access permanently to an area that has traditionally been enjoyed by multitudes of people and has cultural significance to local Indian tribes. Furthermore, volunteer efforts are critical to trail maintenance and recruiting volunteers to walk 24 miles round trip to work on trails would be extremely difficult. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing which would be good for fish. The Indian tribes support repairing this bridge and improving fish habitat and according to section 1.9 of the EA a Salmon Recovery Board Fund grant was approved in 2011 which would provide funding for this repair. Reopening this road would also have a beneficial effect on the economies of local towns such as Darrington. In summary, there are many good reasons to repair and reopen this road and restore access to this wonderful area. It has been too long that the public has been unable to access this area and the improvements to be implemented in the construction of the new road would benefit riparian and wetland areas and improve fish habitat. Let’s please move forward with alternative B and restore access to a beautiful and important</p>		

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		area of our public lands.		
150.	04/13/12 email	<p>I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead for the following reasons: The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed camping, berry picking, and picnicking. I recognize the high cost of maintenance does not warrant keeping them open and they are no longer needed. However, the Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads and 2 car-camp grounds is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen, and the simple enjoyment of being outdoors. Page 3 of the EA points out that the Suiattle River Road is a “high need road” as determined by The 2003 MBS Forest-wide Roads Analysis. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground next to impossible as well as restricting access permanently to an area that has traditionally been enjoyed by a vast array of people and has cultural significance to local Indian tribes. Furthermore, volunteer efforts are critical to trail maintenance and recruiting volunteers to walk 24 miles round trip to work on trails would be extremely difficult. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing which would be good for fish. The Native American tribes support repairing this bridge and improving fish habitat and according to section 1.9 of the EA a Salmon Recovery Board Fund grant was approved in 2011 which would provide funding for this repair. Reopening this road would also have a beneficial effect on the economies of local towns such as Darrington. In summary, there are many good reasons to repair and reopen this road and restore access to this</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		wonderful area. It has been too long that the public has been unable to access this area and the improvements to be implemented in the construction of the new road would benefit riparian and wetland areas and improve fish habitat. Let's please move forward with alternative B and restore access to a beautiful and important area of our public lands.		
151.	04/13/12 email	I support Alternative B, reopening the Suiattle River Road to its end.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
152.	04/13/12 email	I would like to lend 110% of my support as a member of the Washington Trails Association for repairing the Suiattle River Road to its end at milepost 23.0. I am a native Washingtonian who has been hiking the Cascades for over 50 years. This road provides the primary access to the west side of the Glacier Peak Wilderness area plus serves as access to numerous trail heads and campgrounds. Over the last decade we have seen several roads in this area closed or shortened due to flooding, landslides, you name it, that have not been repaired resulting in extremely limited access to several of the finest wilderness and recreational areas in the United States. For decades my generation has been very fortunate to have had access to this area and I believe we have an obligation to pass that along to the generations that follow.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
153.	04/13/12 email	Let's do Option B and re-open this road! I've been there, before and after the washout, and 'before' was better -- Option B improves trail access, is healthy for Darrington, destroys no wilderness. The route is there, the funding is there, let's put the workers to work and the road back in service.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
154.	04/13/12 email	I would like to comment on the proposed repairs to the Suiattle River Road. I think the only repairs made to the road should be to mitigate erosion, water quality impacts, wildlife impacts, and aesthetic impacts. If this can be done without opening the road to vehicular traffic, all the better. We don't need more road access, we need less!	Fix problems without providing vehicular access	Thank you, your comment is noted.
155.	04/13/12 email	Open the Suiattle River Road I am in favor of opening the Suiattle River Road to it's end at milepost 23.0	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
156.	04/13/2012 per postmark	<p>I am writing in support of reopening the Suiattle River Road and support alternative-B. In this era of limited funds and prioritizing which roads to keep it is important that we choose the most important access points to maintain and preserve for future use. This road is very important. The Suiattle River Road accesses 7 trailheads and 2 car-camp grounds, is important for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen, and the simple enjoyment of being outdoors. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing which would be good for fish. The Indian tribes support repairing this bridge and improving fish habitat and according to section 1.9 of the EA a Salmon Recovery Board Fund grant was approved in 2011 which would provide funding for this repair. Speaking pragmatically, Alternative B is also better because funding has been secured, while alternative C will require more work, design, and time to build a new parking area just beyond Green Mountain Road. A parking area already exists at the end of the road and it is in good shape; access should reach it. Trail and preservation also increasingly relies on volunteer work. If volunteers have to walk a roundtrip distance of 8 miles just to reach an access point it now requires multiple days for repairs and maintenance. This greatly reduces the number of available volunteers, will result in unrepaired trails, and increase costs down the line. Finally, reopening this road will bring much needed economic support to Darrington and Marblemount from travelers, tourists, and recreational users. There are many good reasons to repair and reopen this road and restore access to this wonderful area. It has been too long that the public has been unable to access this area. Let's please move forward with alternative B and restore access to a beautiful and important area of our public lands.</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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157.	04/13/12 email	support option B I am lifelong Washington state resident and avid outdoorswoman. I support option B.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
158.	04/13/12 email	I am in favor of rebuilding the Suiattle River Road in it's entirety - probably not likely - but no one likes hiking a hot, dusty old roadbed instead of a real trail. At least rebuild it to Downey Creek so Dome Peak can be reached and the Ptarmigan Traverse won't pass into the annals of ancient history. I have in mind some very nasty swamps full of Devil's Club where I would like to consign the idiots that want to close every road possible.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
159.	04/13/12 email	I am very much in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead for the following reason(s): The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed camping, berry picking, and picnicking. I recognize the high cost of maintenance does not warrant keeping them open and they are no longer needed. However, the Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads and 2 car-camp grounds is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen, and the simple enjoyment of being outdoors. Page 3 of the EA points out that the Suiattle River Road is a "high need road" as determined by The 2003 MBS Forest-wide Roads Analysis. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult as well as restricting access permanently to an area that has traditionally been enjoyed by multitudes of people and has cultural significance to local Indian tribes. Furthermore, volunteer efforts are critical to trail maintenance and recruiting volunteers to walk 24 miles round trip to work on trails would be extremely difficult. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing which would be good for fish. The Indian tribes support repairing this bridge and improving fish habitat and according to section 1.9 of the EA a Salmon Recovery Board Fund grant was approved in 2011 which would provide funding for this repair. Reopening this road would also have a beneficial effect on the economies of local towns such as Darrington. In summary, there are many good reasons to repair and reopen this road and restore access to this wonderful area. It has been too long that the public has been unable to access this area and the improvements to be implemented in the construction of the new road would benefit riparian and wetland areas and improve fish habitat. Let's please move forward with alternative B and restore access to a beautiful and important area of our public lands.		
160.	04/13/12 email	PLEASE!! Do the right thing and move on option B for reopening the Suiattle River Road.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
161.	04/13/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead for the following reasons: The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed camping, berry picking, and picnicking. I recognize the high cost of road maintenance does not warrant keeping all the roads open when they are no longer needed. <u>However</u> , the Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads and 2 car-camp grounds is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen, and the simple enjoyment of being outdoors. Page 3 of the EA points out that the Suiattle River Road is a "high need road" as determined by The 2003 MBS Forest-wide Roads Analysis. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult as well as restricting access permanently to an area that has traditionally been enjoyed by multitudes of people and has cultural significance to local Indian tribes. Furthermore, volunteer efforts are critical to trail maintenance and recruiting volunteers to walk 24 miles round trip to work on trails would be extremely difficult. As an avid recreational hiker, this is an area that I have long desired to explore. I've been hiking regularly for	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>more than ten years and am thrilled about potentially being able to once again access this area for day hikes to some of the most beautiful areas in the world! I missed my opportunity to enjoy this area back when I was just beginning to hike and have been praying for the day when access to this area would one day become a reality. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing which would be good for fish. The Indian tribes support repairing this bridge and improving fish habitat and according to section 1.9 of the EA a Salmon Recovery Board Fund grant was approved in 2011 which would provide funding for this repair. Reopening this road would also have a beneficial effect on the economies of local towns such as Darrington. In summary, there are many good reasons to repair and reopen this road and restore access to this wonderful area. It has been too long that the public has been unable to access this area and the improvements to be implemented in the construction of the new road would benefit riparian and wetland areas and improve fish habitat. <u>Let's please move forward with alternative B and restore access to a beautiful and important area of our public lands.</u></p>		
162.	04/13/12 email	<p>I am in support of Alternative B or at a very minimum, Alternative C for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead to allow public access to public lands. The Suiattle River Road has historically served as access to 7 trailheads and 2 car-camp sites which are critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car campers, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, back-country skiers, photographers, mushroom pickers, fishermen and those seeking the simple enjoyment of being outdoors in a pristine wilderness area. As this area belongs to the public, providing public access should be a priority in the decision to repair/rebuild this road. Page 3 of the EA identifies</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		<p>the Suiattle River Road as a “high need road” by The 2003 Forest-wide Roads Analysis for recreational purposes. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle River Road. If the Suiattle River Road is not repaired/rebuilt, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing, which is good for fish and the tribes. Therefore, it is less desirable than the repair to the Suiattle Trailhead. However, in light of current budget constraints, Alternative C would at least provide a starting point toward a full restoration/reconstruction of the road going forward. Alternative A would not only disallow access but, if in the future it were determined to reopen access, the costs to taxpayers would certainly be substantially greater. Therefore, for those two reasons, Alternative A should be the lowest scored option. Please consider the views of the public in general going forward with this project. While I recognize that organized environmental groups will advocate for the shut-down of public lands to the public, the ‘greater good’ of our citizenry to have access to public lands should prevail in your decision process. Thank you for your consideration of this request as you deliberate the future of the Suiatlle River Road project.</p>		

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
163.	04/13/12 email	I am recommending alternative B to return Road 26 to its length prior to the 03 floods, Terminating at the Suiattle Camp Ground, with the original width to accommodate stock treks & Trailers and other maintained vehicles, with appreciate turn outs for meeting. As a stock user-packer-hunter there has been no access to the Glacier Peak Wilderness Area since fall 2010, when the 49 road was closed for maintenance and hopes for a 2012 opening are slim. Alternative B is fully funded and should be in full production ASAP as Hampton Mill is down to one shift and Darrington and Granite Falls have been loosing ground The access to the GPWA. Is the life saving blood for both Towns and all those down stream that rely on recreation money passing through their community. As for the safety aspects of the three options, B is the only plan that will work for Search and Rescue and the local Fire&EMT units. Please start option B with best possible speed.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
164.	04/13/12 email	A well done EA. The proposed repairs as indicated within Alternative B, which is the Alternative that I favor for this project, are good and will improve existing problems, especially the one that has existed at the Downey Cr. Crossing. for many years. See also the comments that I made on October 12,2011 concerning this project.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
165.	04/13/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. I believe the road should be repaired to the Suiattle River Trailhead the following reasons: The Suiattle River Road and its access to seven trailheads, two car campgrounds serves hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car campers, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. Rebuilding the road will facilitate better access to wilderness areas. Having an alternative to the North Fork Sauk Rd. will disperse usage and reduce environmental impact. As the population in Western Washington continues to grow, providing access to more areas with proper facilities and oversight, will increase awareness of and help lower human impact on environment - (e.g. managed disposal of human waste, managed pet access, permitted camping etc.) Please consider the growing support for alternative B.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
166.	04/13/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead to allow public access to public lands. The Suiattle River Road has historically served as access to 7 trailheads and 2 car-camp sites	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		<p>which are critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car campers, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, back-country skiers, photographers, mushroom pickers, fishermen and those seeking the simple enjoyment of being outdoors in a pristine wilderness area. As this area belongs to the public, providing public access should be a priority in the decision to repair/rebuild this road. Page 3 of the EA identifies the Suiattle River Road as a “high need road” by The 2003 Forest-wide Roads Analysis for recreational purposes. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle River Road. If the Suiattle River Road is not repaired/rebuilt, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing, which is good for fish and the tribes. Therefore, it is less desirable than the repair to the Suiattle Trailhead. Alternative A would not only disallow access but, if in the future it were determined to reopen access, the costs to taxpayers would certainly be substantially greater. Therefore, for those two reasons, Alternative A should be the lowest scored option. Please consider the views of the public in general going forward with this project. While I recognize that organized environmental groups will advocate for the shut-down of public lands to the public, the ‘greater good’ of our citizenry to have access to public lands should prevail in your decision process. Thank you for your consideration of this request as you deliberate the future of the Suiattle River Road project.</p>		

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
167.	04/13/12 email	I believe FS 26 should not be rebuilt, for the following reasons: 1. The Suiattle River is one of the great wild rivers of the northwest--- it is a destination in itself, not something to be driven past on the way to the high country. The cataclysmic floods and ensuing flood-carnage is something we should regard with wonder and curiosity, just as we regard Mt. St. Helens. If the road is closed, opportunities could be created for the appreciation of a cataclysmic riparian environment. 2. The river clearly does not want the road there. This is a road which has been hammered again and again, with increasing severity. As the environmental assessment notes, the rebuilt road (option B) will face a high probability of further flood damage. It's time to let it go. 3. The rebuild would require destruction of old-growth forest and considerable new road segments. This is too great a cost for a road which will certainly be destroyed again in the future. It is deeply perverse to bulldoze ancient forest so that people can zip through a wild and magnificent landscape in their cars, on their way to 'go see nature.' 4. It is misguided to say that the road closure puts trailheads out of reach. The 'trail' begins where the road ends; there are numerous well-loved trails in the northwest which follow old road-beds. By closing the road, you'll be bringing the wilderness closer.	A	Thank you, your comment is noted. See Chapter 2 for Alternative but Eliminated from Detailed Study as well as Alternative Considered in Detail.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
168.	04/13/12 email	Subject: Suiattle River Road reopening -- I support Option B Greetings, My name is Jay Wilkinson and I am a wilderness lover and lifelong resident of the Pacific Northwest. I support Option B of the Suiattle River Road reopening. Why create another long valley hike at the expense of all the other legitimate uses made available by keeping that road open to cars? There are campgrounds up that road that will be forever lost. Why should the people who like to go to campgrounds lose access to those? What about the mushroom and berry pickers and dayhikers and weekenders and fishermen? What about skiers who want to be able to access the terrain on Glacier Peak that's been lost since this road has been closed? Time is a precious thing, not all of us have all the time in the world to hike. Some people work a lot and can only get out on the weekends. Why should they lose the ability to go somewhere they used to be able to go for a weekend because a relatively few people want to make everything harder and longer to get to? There are plenty of places to go when you want a long hike away from cars, but there aren't that many big valleys with campgrounds along them that provide somewhat reasonably easy access to terrain around Glacier Peak any more. We've lost enough, let's not lose any more, especially not when the funding for all this is in hand. Let's get it done.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
169.	04/13/12 email	Option B My husband and I have hike the Suiattle River Trail to Image Lake and beyond once before and once after the washout in 2005. It is one of the best trails in the Pacific Northwest. We encountered a group of young people who had taken the train from Minnesota to hike it to Holden Village. And they were awestruck, to put it mildly. One of the amazing things about this trail is that it has so many junction possibilities--Holden Village, Spider Meadows, Buck Creek Pass, Glacier Peak, even Stehekin on Lake Chelan. Of course, these are in addition to the lovely trails that connect directly to the road itself. Please go with Option B and restore the road to its former length.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
170.	04/13/12 email	I don't have time now to explain my reasons but I support Alternative B. Let's finally get this road constructed	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
171.	04/13/12 email	Please work to open Suiattle River Road (FS Rd #26) I'm an avid climber, hiker, and back-country skier who lives in Lake Stevens. I would like to see Suiattle River Road (FS Rd #26) restored to it's intended use so we can access the beautiful country it takes us close to.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
172.	04/13/12 email	I support Option B which would repair the Suiattle River Road to milepost 23.0, which will allow access for hikers to some of the best trails in the Cascades.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
173.	04/13/12 email	I just wanted to add my voice as an avid hiker of the Cascades that I'd love to see the Seattle River Road rebuilt. I love hiking in the region and dearly miss having access to some of the region's best trails for the last few years. I don't have much in the way of expertise to lend to the discussion but I heartily support all rebuilding efforts and would love for this area to be accessible to hikers once again.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
174.	04/13/12 email	Thank you for this opportunity to provide public comment. I would like to express my support for Alternative B so as to restore public access to these public lands. Although I reside far away from the State of Washington, I fly out the Pacific Northwest once or twice every year in late spring and/or early summer for ski mountaineering on various snow-covered volcanoes. Volcanoes in Washington and Oregon that I have skied from the summit include Scott (i.e., Crater Lake's highest peak), Bachelor, Jefferson (from only ~9k), St Helens, Middle Sister, Baker-Sherman, South Sister, Lassen, Baker- Grant, Hood, Adams, Shastina, Shasta, and Rainier. As you can imagine, these are rather arduous endeavors. But missing from that nearly comprehensive list is Glacier Peak. Although I don't want my skiing to be excessively easy (otherwise I'd just be heading up established ski resorts on chairlifts), I do like being able to drive to a trailhead. But with the current road situation, any ski mountaineering on Glacier Peak involves tedious walking along what used to be a publicly accessible road. I realize that you face many competing demands for available road construction funding. However, Glacier Peak (from what I've heard...) is a very special place. I don't want to see it developed in anyway, but restoring road access to some backcountry trailheads (whether to be used for my ski mountaineering or many other backcountry recreationalists pursuits by many other people) should be a high priority for transportation funding.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
175.	04/13/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead for the following reason(s): The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed camping, berry picking, and picnicking. I recognize the high cost of maintenance does not warrant keeping them open and they are no longer needed. However, the Suiattle River	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		<p>Road and its access to 7 trailheads and 2 car-camp grounds is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen, and the simple enjoyment of being outdoors. Page 3 of the EA points out that the Suiattle River Road is a “high need road” as determined by The 2003 MBS Forest-wide Roads Analysis. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult as well as restricting access permanently to an area that has traditionally been enjoyed by multitudes of people and has cultural significance to local Indian tribes. Furthermore, volunteer efforts are critical to trail maintenance and recruiting volunteers to walk 24 miles round trip to work on trails would be extremely difficult. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing which would be good for fish. The Indian tribes support repairing this bridge and improving fish habitat and according to section 1.9 of the EA a Salmon Recovery Board Fund grant was approved in 2011 which would provide funding for this repair. Reopening this road would also have a beneficial effect on the economies of local towns such as Darrington. In summary, there are many good reasons to repair and reopen this road and restore access to this wonderful area. It has been too long that the public has been unable to access this area and the improvements to be implemented in the construction of the new road would benefit riparian and wetland areas and improve fish habitat. Let’s please move forward with alternative B and restore access to a beautiful and important area of our public lands.</p>		
176.	04/13/12 email	I very strongly support Alternative B (restoring the road). This area should be shared by all!	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
177.	04/13/12 email	<p>I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead for the following reason(s): The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed camping, berry picking, and picnicking. I recognize the high cost of maintenance does not warrant keeping them open and they are no longer needed. However, the Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads and 2 car-camp grounds is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen, and the simple enjoyment of being outdoors. Page 3 of the EA points out that the Suiattle River Road is a “high need road” as determined by The 2003 MBS Forest-wide Roads Analysis. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult as well as restricting access permanently to an area that has traditionally been enjoyed by multitudes of people and has cultural significance to local Indian tribes. Furthermore, volunteer efforts are critical to trail maintenance and recruiting volunteers to walk 24 miles round trip to work on trails would be extremely difficult. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing which would be good for fish. The Indian tribes support repairing this bridge and improving fish habitat and according to section 1.9 of the EA a Salmon Recovery Board Fund grant was approved in 2011 which would provide funding for this repair. Reopening this road would also have a beneficial effect on the economies of local towns such as Darrington. In summary, there are many good reasons to repair and reopen this road and restore access to this wonderful area. It has been too long that the public has been unable</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		to access this area and the improvements to be implemented in the construction of the new road would benefit riparian and wetland areas and improve fish habitat. Let's please move forward with alternative B and restore access to a beautiful and important area of our public lands.		
178.	04/13/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B, full repair of the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead for the following reasons (to name just a few): 1) <u>Personal enjoyment</u> . Among many reasons, the most important is the simple love of the trails, forests, meadows and high ridges attained from the Suiattle River Road. I have performed many, many days of volunteer trail maintenance and logging out on Huckleberry Mtn, Downey Creek, Green Mtn, Sulphur Hot Springs, Milk Creek, and the Suiattle River trail; the Suiattle watershed was my first destination when I began to hike and backpack in Washington, and it is like home to me. Before 2006, when the road was washed out at milepost 12.5, I visited the trails and various secret places along the Suiattle River Road several times a year – spring, summer, winter and fall visits, to see each place during different seasons and different weather – rain, fog, sunshine, spring flowers, and fall colors. I enjoy hiking, backpacking, photography, berry picking, car-camping, quietly creeping into the meadows at Milk Creek to see the resident bear there, and relaxing on a giant rock alongside the Suiattle River in a secret spot. I have missed seeing this lovely place in various seasons and various weather as I used to do. The road end at milepost 12 is a deal-breaker for several visits per year, and volunteer work has dwindled to one or two trips per season due to logistics, more time off work necessary, and getting a crew and tools 12 miles down the road <i>before</i> stepping onto a trail. 2) <u>Public well-being</u> . The President's America's Great Outdoors initiative. The Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads, 2 car-camp grounds, is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. 3) <u>Cumulative impact</u> . With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003 and the the North Fork Sauk trail is bearing the brunt of the Suiattle Road closure, and may become worse, depending on the fate of the Illabot Road to the north. The North Fork Sauk Trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, backpackers. The parking lot	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		<p>there is no longer sufficient, and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. This is no offense to our equestrian friends; I'm sure they wish the Suiattle Road open as well, and are to be commended for their patience. 4) <u>Local business and community spirit</u>. While I have no statistics, I've seen the town of Darrington degrade the last several years. Several businesses have closed; the Sauk River Trading Post (a supplier of fishing and camping supplies); one bar and, one restaurant. The grocery clerks, waitresses and baristas that I have spoken to over the years miss the extra business from hikers. 5) <u>Potential for loss of wildlands advocacy</u>. The recent lawsuit to block the repair of the Suiattle River Road has turned at least some people I know against the concept of Wilderness and of environmental protection and restoration. The lawsuit and ongoing threats by these organizations has created the perception that Wilderness and environmental considerations are a blockade to access. The repair of the Suiattle River Road will once again provide access and instill a sense of order and confidence in US Forest Service land managers' ability to provide recreational opportunities. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include a new trailhead, road-to-trail conversion, it does not address converting Sulphur Creek campground to a backcountry camp (pit toilets vs outhouses), and it does not address reconstructing a crossing at Downey Creek. The additional nearly 10 miles RT added to a hike from the Suiattle Trailhead is not conducive to weekend trips into the backcountry. Ending the road at Green Mountain Road would force equestrians, hikers, climbers, backpackers and families to share at least a portion of the road (on hoof or foot), with vehicles headed to the Green Mountain trail, creating a dangerous situation. In addition, American Recovery Act Funds been invested on the lower Suiattle River Road; that, plus the new re-routes and the Downey Creek crossing can make portions of the Suiattle Road a great example of environmental upgrades.</p>		

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179.	04/13/12 email	Support for option B for the Suiattle River Road. Please re-open the Suiattle River Road. I am a frequent hiker, and I enjoy the wilderness that is accessible through that road.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
180.	04/13/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead the following reason (s): The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed camping, berry picking, picnicking. I recognize the high cost of maintenance does not warrant keeping them open is high, and they are no longer needed. The Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads, 2 car-camp grounds, however, is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult Page 3 of the EA identifies the Suiattle River Road as a “high need road” by The 2003 Forest-wide Roads Analysis or recreation and purposes. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient, and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing, which is good for fish and the tribes like it. ARRA funds breakdown. recruiting volunteers to walk 24 miles round trip to work on trails would be impossible.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
181.	04/13/12 email	Support for Alt.B Suiattle Road #26 After reading and re-reading the EA and road word alternatives for the Suiattle Road FS #26 - I support Alt B. I would very much like to see the road repaired to the end of the road at the Milk Ck TH. I feel that this access to the Glacier Peak Wilderness is essential to the outdoor enthusiast and the general public who live in and visit Washington state. I feel that Alternative B best suits the needs of the public and our access into the most spectacular piece of wilderness in Washington. I hope that this goes to heart and that Alternative B for the Suiattle Road is the chosen path.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
182.	04/13/12 email	Please reopen Suiattle Road to the end (option B). I moved to Washington in spring of 2006, and hiked Green Mountain that summer. After 6 years of hiking, it remains one of my favorite hikes. I'd love the opportunity to do this hike again, and explore the rest of the region.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
183.	04/13/12 email	It is so exciting to think that the Suiattle River Road may be repaired soon. This is a beautiful area and a great hiking access point that has been inaccessible to the public for way too long. There is an entire generation that is growing up and being denied the opportunity to hike and enjoy this beautiful area. I support complete restoration of this road to its former endpoint.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
184.	04/13/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B or at a very minimum, Alternative C for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead to allow public access to public lands. The Suiattle River Road has historically served as access to 7 trailheads and 2 car-camp sites which are critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car campers, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, back-country skiers, photographers, mushroom pickers, fishermen and those seeking the simple enjoyment of being outdoors in a pristine wilderness area. As this area belongs to the public, providing public access should be a priority in the decision to repair/rebuild this road. Page 3 of the EA identifies the Suiattle River Road as a "high need road" by The 2003 Forest-wide Roads Analysis for recreational purposes. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		<p>the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle River Road. If the Suiattle River Road is not repaired/rebuilt, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing, which is good for fish and the tribes. Therefore, it is less desirable than the repair to the Suiattle Trailhead. However, in light of current budget constraints, Alternative C would at least provide a starting point toward a full restoration/reconstruction of the road going forward. Alternative A would not only disallow access but, if in the future it were determined to reopen access, the costs to taxpayers would certainly be substantially greater. Therefore, for those two reasons, Alternative A should be the lowest scored option. Please consider the views of the public in general going forward with this project. While I recognize that organized environmental groups will advocate for the shut-down of public lands to the public, the ‘greater good’ of our citizenry to have access to public lands should prevail in your decision process. Thank you for your consideration of this request as you deliberate the future of the Suiattle River Road project.</p>		
185.	04/13/12 email	I am an avid hiker who completely supports option B, reopening the Suiattle River Road to its former end past Downey Creek.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
186.	04/13/12 email	I am writing as the USFS Liaison for Traildusters Chapter of the Back Country Horsemen of Washington (BCHW) to encourage you to proceed with Alternative B for repair by relocations and rehabilitation of Road 26 in the MBS National Forest. The evolution of reasons for the existence of our national forests has resulted in public recreation becoming one of the most important. Road 26 is vital for public access to our national forest recreational areas in this region. The most important reason for full rehabilitation of road 26 is public safety. Use of the road as a hiking trail is unsafe in its present condition. This is especially true at the Downey Creek crossing. There is presently no funding available for improvement of the route as a trail. Not only will it remain unsafe for at least several years, but the road, in its present location, being used as a trail will continue to deteriorate with future flood events. The Pacific Crest Trail crosses the trails originating from the end of road	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>26. Use of the PCT has increased greatly in the past several years. Search and Rescue organizations use road 26 to access hikers and riders in difficulty in this region of the PCT. During periods when helicopters are grounded due to bad weather (a common occurrence) the present condition of road 26 increases the time required to access the PCT by 24 hours or more. This time delay could be a life or death difference. Access to public recreation in our national forests for middle and low income tax payers is primarily a weekend occurrence. The present condition of road 26 makes access to the interesting wilderness areas of the MBS National Forest in the region of the Suiattle River drainage a very difficult to impossible weekend event. Thus the area has become the exclusive domain of an elite group with more free time available. Car camper use of Sulphur Creek Campground is non existent without repair of road 26. This was a popular campground in the Darrington area. With population growth, more, not fewer campgrounds are needed. If the road to Sulphur Creek is not repaired there will be considerable expense to MBS National Forest to decommission this facility. I am told the toilet facilities will need to be demolished and hauled out. Pack stock use of the trail system in the Suiattle Rive drainage has been an important aspect of recreational use of this area. Failure to implement Alternative B will effectively eliminate use of pack stock in this area. Neither Alternatives A or C would provide suitable parking for trucks or trailers bringing in pack stock to access these trails. In addition to pack stock being used for recreation BCHW has participated in trail maintenance activities both with direct work and by using pack stock to carry tools and supplies for other user groups such as WTA for trail work events. Clearly USFS expense for maintaining trails in this area will increase or trail quality will decrease if Alternate B is not accomplished. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient, and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. User groups, including Washington</p>		

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		Trails Association and Back Country Horsemen of Washington, are becoming a very significant part of trail maintenance. The long distances needed to travel to work sites without Alternate B being accomplished will severely curtail volunteer trail work parties in the Suiattle River drainage. Current use of the crossing at Downey Creek by hikers and pack stock users is damaging fish habitat. It is also potentially damaging to hikers and pack stock users as it is unsafe to use without rebuilding the bridge. This would be solved by instituting Alternate B. Traildusters Chapter of the Back Country Horsemen of Washington unanimously and enthusiastically supports the implementation of Alternate B of the Suiattle River Road Project. As tax payers we feel we are being severely restricted from using this beautiful portion of our National Forest.		
187.	04/13/12 email	Re-open the Suiattle River Road I support Option B.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
188.	04/13/12 email	I want to voice my support for fixing the Suiattle Road to its end. I love to get out an hike and having better access to such beautiful areas would be amazing.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
189.	04/13/12 email	I am writing to you to express my support for Alternative B, the complete re-opening and re-routing of the Suiattle River road. Access to outdoor recreation is very important to me and, as long as the road doesn't create significant new environmental impact, I believe that it should be re-opened in its entirety. As I understand the plan, the new re-routed section of the road will actually restore some wetlands that were compromised during the construction of the current road. Washington is a huge and beautiful state, and it is a sad irony that the access to Washington's wild places is shrinking as the popularity of outdoor sports is growing. Please act to restore access to the Suiattle River road trailheads so that future generations can enjoy access to Washington's wild places.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
190.	04/13/12 email	I support Option B I do solemnly support Option 'B.' I hope the Suiattle River road is extended its full length.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
191.	04/13/12 letter (per postmark)	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead for the following reason(s): The Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads and 2 car-camp grounds is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen, and the simple	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>enjoyment of being outdoors. Reopening this road would also have a beneficial effect on the economies of local towns such as Arlington, Darrington, Rockport, and Sedro Woolley. Page 3 of the EA points out that the Suiattle River Road is a “high need road” as determined by The 2003 MBS Forest-wide Roads Analysis. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult as well as restricting access permanently to an area that has traditionally been enjoyed by multitudes of people and has cultural significance to local Indian tribes. Furthermore, volunteer efforts are critical to trail maintenance and recruiting volunteers to walk 24 miles round trip to work on trails would be extremely difficult. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. In summary, there are many good reasons to repair and reopen this road and restore access to this wonderful area. It has been too long that the public has been unable to access this area and the improvements to be implemented in the construction of the new road would benefit riparian and wetland areas and improve fish habitat. Let’s please move forward with alternative B and restore access to a beautiful and important area of our public lands.</p>		

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192.	04/13/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. I believe the road should be repaired to the Suiattle River Trailhead the following reasons: The Suiattle River Road and its access to seven trailheads, two car campgrounds serves hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car campers, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance very difficult. Due to the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003 and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail has become overused by equestrians, hunters, climbers and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the campgrounds have been overrun and deteriorated. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired to its end, the continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will further degrade the wilderness experience of people entering the Glacier Peak Wilderness. I also believe that Alternative B represents the most sound option from an environmental perspective. Alternative B calls for the wetlands area – which would be subject to further degradation under Alternative A – to be rehabilitated. Alternative B’s relocation of the road further away from the river at the Huckleberry trailhead will help abate future washout threats. Likewise, Alternative C would result in the new construction of a large parking lot to be built somewhere in the vicinity of the Green Mountain Horse Pasture. By contrast, Alternative B would restore access to the existing trailheads at Downey Creek trailhead and the road end. Thank you for considering my support of Alternative B.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
193.	04/13/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead. Hiking and camping access is important to me.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
194.	04/14/12 email	I am a stock user and Back Country Horseman. I support Alternative B, in part because I cannot get access to the PCT at that point unless FR 26 is repaired. I consider the “environmental” objections to repairing this road without requiring a full Environmental Assessment <u>asinine</u> .	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
195.	04/14/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. I believe the road should be repaired to the Suiattle River Trailhead for the following reason: I miss going to Lime Mtn as a day hike. Thank you for considering my support of Alternative B.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
196.	04/14/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. I believe the road should be repaired to the Suiattle River Trailhead the following reasons: The Suiattle River Road and its access to seven trailheads, two car campgrounds serves hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car campers, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance very difficult. Due to the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003 and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail has become overused by equestrians, hunters, climbers and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the campgrounds have been overrun and deteriorated. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired to its end, the continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will further degrade the wilderness experience of people entering the Glacier Peak Wilderness. I also believe that Alternative B represents the most sound option from an environmental perspective. Alternative B calls for the wetlands area – which would be subject to further degradation under Alternative A – to be rehabilitated. Alternative B’s relocation of the road further away from the river at the Huckleberry trailhead will help abate future washout threats. Likewise, Alternative C is would result in the new construction of a large parking lot to be built somewhere in the vicinity of the Green Mountain Horse Pasture. By contrast, Alternative B would restore access to the existing trailheads at Downey Creek trailhead and the road end. Thank you for considering my support of Alternative B.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
197.	04/14/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead the following reason (s): The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed camping, berry picking, picnicking. I recognize the high cost of maintenance does not warrant keeping them open is high, and they are no longer needed. The Suiattle River Road	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		<p>and its access to 7 trailheads, 2 car-camp grounds, however, is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult Page 3 of the EA identifies the Suiattle River Road as a “high need road” by The 2003 Forest-wide Roads Analysis or recreation and purposes. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient, and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing, which is good for fish and the tribes like it. ARRA funds breakdown. ; recruiting volunteers to walk 24 miles round trip to work on trails would be impossible.</p>		
198.	04/14/12 email	<p>I am writing in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. I believe this road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead. The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed camping, berry picking, picnicking. I recognize the high cost of maintenance does not warrant keeping all of them open, and many are no longer needed. The Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads and 2 car-camp grounds, however, is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photographers, mushroom pickers, fishermen and the simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The loss of the Suiattle River Road would also make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult. Page 3 of the EA identifies the Suiattle River Road as a “high need road” by The 2003 Forest-wide Roads Analysis or recreation and purposes.</p> <p>With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient, and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle River Road. If the Suiattle River Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C provides some access to two trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing. Alternative B does include this repair, which is good for fish (and the tribes like it). On a more personal note, the Suiattle River Road has been closed for much of the time I've been hiking in western Washington. This has prevented me from accessing many spectacular dayhikes and backpacking trips in an area I very much look forward to exploring in the future.</p>		
199.	04/14/12 email	<p>I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. I believe the road should be repaired to the Suiattle River Trailhead the following reasons: The Suiattle River Road and its access to seven trailheads, two car campgrounds serves hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car campers, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance very difficult. Due to the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003 and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail has become overused by equestrians, hunters, climbers and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the campgrounds have been overrun and deteriorated. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired to its end, the continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will further degrade the wilderness experience of people entering the Glacier Peak Wilderness. I also believe that Alternative B represents the most sound option from an environmental perspective. Alternative B calls for the wetlands area – which would be subject to further degradation under Alternative A – to be rehabilitated. Alternative B's relocation of the road further away from the river at the Huckleberry trailhead will help abate future washout threats. Likewise, Alternative C is would result in the new</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		construction of a large parking lot to be built somewhere in the vicinity of the Green Mountain Horse Pasture. By contrast, Alternative B would restore access to the existing trailheads at Downey Creek trailhead and the road end. Thank you for considering my support of Alternative B.		
200.	04/14/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. I believe the road should be repaired to the Suiattle River Trailhead the following reasons: The Suiattle River Road and its access to seven trailheads, two car campgrounds serves hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car campers, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance very difficult. Due to the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003 and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail has become overused by equestrians, hunters, climbers and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the campgrounds have been overrun and deteriorated. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired to its end, the continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will further degrade the wilderness experience of people entering the Glacier Peak Wilderness. I also believe that Alternative B represents the most sound option from an environmental perspective. Alternative B calls for the wetlands area – which would be subject to further degradation under Alternative A – to be rehabilitated. Alternative B’s relocation of the road further away from the river at the Huckleberry trailhead will help abate future washout threats. Likewise, Alternative C is would result in the new construction of a large parking lot to be built somewhere in the vicinity of the Green Mountain Horse Pasture. By contrast, Alternative B would restore access to the existing trailheads at Downey Creek trailhead and the road end. Thank you for considering my support of Alternative B.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
201.	04/14/12 email	I wanted to write to advise you of my support for “Alternative B” of the Suiattle River Road Project. I have camped in the back country near Bachelor Meadows, climbed Dome Peak and hiked the Ptarmigan Traverse but have been unable to visit this area in a decade due to the road washout and Suiattle River Road closure. Outdoors men and women of all levels of participation, climbers, horse enthusiasts, fishermen, backpackers, birders, hikers all would be best served by “Alternative B”, which I note, is fully funded. I have reviewed the Environmental Assessment and the four acre loss of forest is negligible, has no projected long term affect on habitats and no projected adverse impact on the Suiattle River. I urge you to choose “Alternative B” as it represents the best choice and the best use of our public funds opening up opportunities for our citizens to once again have access to the pristine wilderness that has been unavailable for nearly nearly ten years. Please carefully consider how your choice of “Alternative B” will best serve the public and be the best possible use of allocated public funds.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
202.	04/14/12 email	I fully support the opening of the Suiattle River Road to it’s end as this is one of the most wonderful areas of the Cascades. I have been hiking in these mountains for 40+ years and feel the accessibility is essential to bring future generations to the glory of this area and cementing their love and devotion to preserving the high country. I would also embrace the option of opening to the Green Mt road if the economics force that reduction of the repair.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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203.	04/14/12 email	reopening the roadTo whom it may concern: As a Seattle native, I have hiked the Olympics and Cascades for 40 years and look forward to many years to come with my 11 and 9 year old children. As a physician working in the area, I know of no better exercise for the body, mind and spirit than day-hiking or better yet, backpacking. Until the closure of the Suiattle river road 8 years ago one of my favorite destinations was the Glacier peak wilderness. I have taken numerous trips there including Sulfur mountain, the Bath lakes traverse, Lime ridge, Image lake, Gamma ridge, Milk creek and the highland walk from the Suiattle to Holden as well as the Ptarmigan traverse. It has been disappointing to witness the delays to reconstruction of this vital back-road that accesses such wonderful country. I consider myself an environmentalist but not an elitist and find difficulty understanding the people trying to block this endeavor while the numerous trails slowly fall into disuse. Perhaps most important is my deep seated concern that eventually if this land is not used and accessed, wilderness status or not, will eventually fall back into the hands of those who would exploit it for it`s natural resources. I strongly favor reopening the road to its former end. Please do not hesitate to contact me.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
204.	04/14/12 email	I am strongly in support of Alternative B. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead to allow public access to public lands. The Suiattle River Road has historically served as access to 7 trailheads and 2 car-camp sites which are critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car campers, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, back-country skiers, photographers, mushroom pickers, fishermen and those seeking the simple enjoyment of being outdoors in a pristine wilderness area. As this area belongs to the public, providing public access should be a priority in the decision to repair/rebuild this road. Page 3 of the EA identifies the Suiattle River Road as a “high need road” by The 2003 Forest-wide Roads Analysis for recreational purposes. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle River Road. If the Suiattle River Road is not	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		repaired/rebuilt, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing, which is good for fish and the tribes. Therefore, it is less desirable than the repair to the Suiattle Trailhead. However, in light of current budget constraints, Alternative C would at least provide a starting point toward a full restoration/reconstruction of the road going forward. Alternative A would not only disallow access but, if in the future it were determined to reopen access, the costs to taxpayers would certainly be substantially greater. Therefore, for those two reasons, Alternative A should be the least considered option. Please consider the views of the public in general going forward with this project. While I recognize that organized environmental groups will advocate for the shut-down of public lands to the public, the 'greater good' of our citizenry to have access to public lands should prevail in your decision process. Thank you for your consideration of this request as you deliberate the future of the Suiattle River Road project.		
205.	04/14/12 email	My opinion is that you should repair the road as described in alternative B.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
206.	04/14/12 email	I am a hiker, backer and I support alternative B. Rebuild the road!!!!!!!!!!	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
207.	04/14/12 email	I love hiking, and knowing there's a possibility that the Suiattle Road will be rebuilt makes me excited. It's not just me though. It's other hikers, kyakers, climbers, horseback riders, campers, bikers and outdoor enthusiasts as well. Some have lost access to one of their favorite areas in the state for the last decade. Others, like me, have never had the opportunity to visit the west side of the Glacier Peak Wilderness, known for its wildflower meadows, deep old growth forest, and numerous lakes and peaks. I grew up in Wenatchee, hiking the east side of the Glacier Peak Wilderness. It's beautiful. When I moved to Seattle for college in 2003, I began research on hikes I could do on the west slope that weren't easily accessible to me before, and many of the hikes accessed by the Suiattle Road quickly made it to the top of my list: Milk Lakes, Image Lake, Green Mountain, Downey Creek and Bachelor Meadows. Almost 10 years later they are still there at	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		the top of my list, waiting to be crossed off. I am part of the generation that has never seen what is regarded by many as one of the best areas in the Cascades. I won't be the only one missing out if the road isn't rebuilt though. The economy of the local town of Darrington will get a boost from people visiting the nearby Suiattle River and its trails and campgrounds. While alternative C would provide access to 2 trailheads, it would not create any parking options, would not fix the Downey Creek crossing, and would still leave an 8 mile round trip to the end of the old road, making maintenance on those campgrounds and trails much more difficult, and costly. With both the Suiattle Road and White Chuck Road closed, access to this area is nearly impossible. I strongly encourage you to choose option B, the full repair of the Suiattle Road.		
208.	04/14/12 email	I am writing to ask you to please add me to the list of those in favor of reopening the Suiattle River Road.	B/C	Thank you, your comment is noted.
209.	04/14/12 email	I am a longtime member of Back Country Horsemen of Washington and have helped maintain trails throughout the state of Washington for many years. We use pack animals to help maintain these trails and need access to the trailheads as well as parking sufficient for stock trailers and tow vehicles. To help maintain the PCT we need access from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 to bring in supplies and materials for crews working on trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. This route is also used for Search and Rescue access. Restoring access to the Green Mountain access trail (Alt. C) is not sufficient for truck and trailer use. Fixing the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and approaches is what is needed (Alt.B). Trail maintenance with full access restoration (Alt B) must be given in order to provide for agency and volunteers to help preserve back country experience for all users now and in the future. Back Country Horsemen of Washinton endorse Alternative B as the only acceptable proposal for pack and saddle stock users.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
210.	04/15/12 email	I am a long-time hiker and someone who feels that preservation of our northwest environment is important. I urge support of efforts to renew washed out roads in the Suiattle River area in order to reclaim recreational and learning opportunities in the west Glacier Peak area.	B/C	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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211.	04/15/12 email	I am sooo very tired of having roads to trail heads closed and or gated. Road repair is very basic to your management responsibility. My son hikes the PCT every year and my husband and I ride it yearly when we camp. If this lack of repair of roads continues people will have to give up horses and pack animals which will be a major economic hit to this state.	B/C	Thank you, your comment is noted.
212.	04/15/12 email	Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Suiattle River road project. We are pleased to see that alternatives have been provided with consideration for salmon habitat. We support alternative C (with important modifications) because we know the road well, and know that it will fail (again) at MP20.8. Not only is this portion of the road on a powerful outside bend in the Suiattle River, it is also below unstable material—the road will literally fail from below or above, and likely both. It makes no sense to construct any significant infrastructure at or beyond MP20.8, such as the million dollar bridge cited in alternative B to span Downey Creek, when one considers the risk of failure so close downstream (west) of Downey Creek. What does make sense is removing the causeway/fill approach to the damaged span crossing Downey Creek. This area represents critical spawning for 40% of all salmon in the Suiattle River, and the lower Downey channel should be restored to allow free flow. Here are specific ideas on how to modify alternative C to get the most for our taxpayer dollars. Site 2, Milepost 12.6: Consideration should be given to locating a retaining wall on bedrock above Ordinary High Water (OHW) that will allow reconstruction of the road close to or on the original alignment. By basing the retaining wall on bedrock above OHW, the restraints imposed by the Wild and Scenic River status of the Suiattle River can be avoided. Rebuilding the road on the existing alignment will save 1.2 acres of old growth forest and eliminate a steep, unsafe, 11% grade “hump” in the design of the rerouted road. Sites 2 & 3, Milepost 12.7 to 13.8: Realignment and narrowing of the footprint of the road project clearance should be undertaken to avoid and minimize the taking of large trees. Remember, this is a gravel road in rugged mountains, not a highway. The width of the construction zone should not exceed 35 feet for a road prism that is 14 feet. As well, road alignment should be altered by teams on the ground to avoid large old growth trees on the east end of the re-route. End motor vehicle access at Milepost 19.0, the Green Mountain Road 2680 turn-off: A sufficient parking area and	C	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>unloading station for pack stock should be provided here. It may be possible to place a temporary gate at MP 20.7, just short of the washout at MP 20.8. There is/can be small parking area there for trailhead drop off and turn-around until the 1.7 miles of road between there and MP 19 washes out (as we believe it eventually will, see Skagit Co-Op Hydrology maps). Perhaps even allow vehicle parking along the side of the road. Site 6, Milepost 20.8: While this site is beyond the end of the motorized vehicle accessible road, per Alternative C, we must call attention to the instability of this slope. We believe that insufficient attention is paid to the potential for catastrophic failure here. Also approximately 40% of the threatened Suiattle River Chinook salmon stock spawns in portions of Downey Creek immediately adjacent to the proposed reconstruction route. The situation at this location is why investing in significant highway-style infrastructure beyond this point does not make sense, fiscally or ecologically. Site 7, Milepost 20.9: The Downey Creek Bridge. This is also beyond the end of the road for Alternative C. However some remedial work needs to be done here. The approach embankment to the existing bridge should be removed to allow for the free flow of floods on Downey Creek, as is called for in Alternative B. A stock/pedestrian bridge extension could be designed and installed at a fraction of the million-dollar cost of the automotive bridge extension called for in Alternative B. A suitable analog for such a span can be found in the new bridge crossing the South Fork Stillaguamish on the Big Four trail. Sulphur campground could be maintained as a family-friendly hike-in campground, a wonderful opportunity for low elevation hiking in the magnificent Suiattle valley.</p>		
213.	04/15/12 letter attached to email	<p>As a sixty-nine year resident of Darrington, I support “Alternative B” of Road 26 (Suiattle Rd) at all eight sites. Unlike Bill Leider who will try anything to keep the road closed. I would like it opened so all of us can enjoy the Suiattle drainage, as we have for as long as the community of Darrington can remember. The road was built before the “Wild and Scenic Designation”. I can’t understand why so many hoops must be jumped through just to repair an existing road. The Town of Darrington has suffered enough at the hands of these granola bar eating environmentalists who want Darrington to disappear so they can have the whole area to their selfish selves. We must have taken good care of this area because they all want it now.</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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214.	04/15/12 email	As an avid mountaineer and active volunteer with the Pacific Crest Trail Association (former board of directors member), I wish to express the importance to me of repairing and re-opening the Suiattle River Road. Areas such as Green Mountain, Milk Creek, Mica Lake, Miners Ridge, Image Lake, Plummer Mountain and Gamma Hot Springs are essential for recreation for myself and many other residents of the Pacific Northwest. They provide solace and an escape from the stresses of working in the office, and the Suiattle River Road provides access to so many of these spots that re-opening it could have a multitude of beneficial effects.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
215.	04/15/12 email	Please count me in as a life long hiker (57 years) who wants to see the Suiattle River Road open again to the end. Losing access to Milk Creek, Sulphur Mt., Lime Ridge, Vista Ridge and all things north of Glacier Peak would be depriving future generations of so much that we have enjoyed. Please don't let that happen!	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
216.	04/15/12 email	Please select Alternative B The Back Country Horsemen of Washington endorse Alternative B as the only acceptable proposed Alternative for pack and saddle stock users. Please choose Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road Environmental Analysis (EA) to repair the eight damaged locations on the road and restore use of the road to its former terminus past Sulphur Creek for stock trailers. We need full restored access (Alternative B) which includes fixing the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and approaches. The Pacific Crest Trail is a very important component of our trail system and brings economic benefit to our state and country. Stock use on the Pacific Crest Trail and on connecting trails accessed from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 <i>provides the only way</i> to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. In addition to working and recreational access, this route was used for <i>Search and Rescue operations</i> . I am a stock user with the Back Country Horsemen of Washington. We maintain trails throughout the state with pack and saddle stock support. We cannot sustain this effort without road access to the trail heads along with having suitable parking areas for trailer towing vehicles.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
217.	04/15/12 email	Please take the steps necessary to open back up the suiattle road. It represents important access to backcounty activities such as mountaineering, hiking and mountain biking. We love this area. We live in this area and we should have the rights of access.	B/C	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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218.	04/15/12 email	I would like to see the Suiattle River Road repaired and provide access into a beautiful area for the people of Washington state. I believe that any state or federal monies spent on this project, would be in the good interest of all. "Heck...make it a toll road!"	B/C	Thank you, your comment is noted.
219.	04/15/12 email	I am writing to you in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road Project. As the project is fully funded and the road can be repaired with little environmental impact, there is no reason not to restore full access to this wonderful area. One need only look back at how popular this are was with the many different user groups to understand that Alternative B is choice that most benefits our community.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
220.	04/15/12 email	Please Re-open the Suiattle River Road I am in favor of re-opening the Suiattle River Road. This is a valuable roadway to our wilderness. Besides helping tourism and local small business, it will also encourage people to just simply go out for a drive and a picnic along the county road ways.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
221.	04/15/12 email	Being an experienced packer and outdoor enthusiast, I have made the trip to Miners Ridge a couple times sense the Suiattle Rd has been not usable. My finding are as follows a large section of the Cascades that are very difficult to get to. The trip I make is 25 mile long and it is clear with the backlog of trail Maintenance, having the Suiattle Rd washed out there is large section of trail that is almost impassable by stock. As a member of the Back Country Horsemen and a volunteer to the Cle Elum Ranger Dist. And WDFW. I see the repairs to this road invaluable to our future stock users. Plan B is the only acceptable option for volunteers and F.S personal to maintain and use a very large section of trail. Stock users need a large area to stage and turn around stock trailers.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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222.	04/15/12 email	In the early '80s, working for the USFS I would come to Darrington running fire crews, the place was a very active and growing community of families, proud Americans that were full of hope for the future of our nation. Some twenty years later, my ex-wife worked for the Darrington school system, and we had a place in Sauk Prairie near the Suiattle River. The community had definitely taken some hard knocks economically, and it was trying to make the transition to more of a recreation service community. I remember all of the activity with kayakers, riders, and hikers in the White Chuck drainage, the Suiattle, and the Mt Loop Highway trail systems. There was hope though that the economy would pick up with this transition. I remember discussing the future of the Arlington – Darrington corridor in the Oso General Store with area residents. I had similar conversations at Rockport. Now, the economy seems to be continuing to falter. The Oso General Store is closed. Recreation in the White Chuck drainage has been seriously cut off with that partial road closure. The Kennedy Hot Springs are no longer there, for which little could have been done. However, restoring the Suiattle River Road is definitely in the hands of the government to make the decision to repair. The Suiattle River Road is the key arterial to access the Pacific Crest Trail system from the west in this area of Washington. As a stock user and hiker, I have used this access myself for both riding and hiking. Without it, maintenance of the wilderness trail systems will be severely hampered. As it now stands, there is not a meaningful place to park a horse trailer to travel in the drainage system. Please restore access in the drainage, not just to the Green Mountain trailhead, but all the way past Sulphur Creek, as proposed in Alternative B. Please stay committed to this goal which best serves the will and the residents of Washington State.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
223.	04/15/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead for the following reason(s): The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed camping, berry picking, and picnicking. I recognize the high cost of maintenance does not warrant keeping them open and they are no longer needed. However, the Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads and 2 car-camp grounds is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers,	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		<p>hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen, and the simple enjoyment of being outdoors. Page 3 of the EA points out that the Suiattle River Road is a “high need road” as determined by The 2003 MBS Forest-wide Roads Analysis. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult as well as restricting access permanently to an area that has traditionally been enjoyed by multitudes of people and has cultural significance to local Indian tribes. Furthermore, volunteer efforts are critical to trail maintenance and recruiting volunteers to walk 24 miles round trip to work on trails would be extremely difficult. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing which would be good for fish. The Indian tribes support repairing this bridge and improving fish habitat and according to section 1.9 of the EA a Salmon Recovery Board Fund grant was approved in 2011 which would provide funding for this repair. Reopening this road would also have a beneficial effect on the economies of local towns such as Darrington. In summary, there are many good reasons to repair and reopen this road and restore access to this wonderful area. It has been too long that the public has been unable to access this area and the improvements to be implemented in the construction of the new road would benefit riparian and wetland areas and improve fish habitat. Let’s please move forward with alternative B and restore access to a beautiful and important area of our public lands which has a very special place in my heart.</p>		
224.	04/15/12 email	Alternative B I support alternative B, repair to the end. This is in reference to WA FS ERFO, 071-2023.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
225.	04/15/12 email	Please select Alternative B Please choose Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road Environmental Analysis (EA) to repair the eight damaged locations on the road and restore use of the road to its former terminus past Sulphur Creek for stock trailers. The Pacific Crest Trail is a very important component of our trail system and brings economic benefit to our state and country.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
226.	04/15/12 email	storm damage 1. I am a stock user with the Back Country Horsemen of Washington. We maintain trails throughout the state with pack and saddle stock support. We cannot sustain this effort without road access to the trailheads along with having suitable parking areas for trailer towing vehicles. 2. Stock use on the Pacific Crest Trail and on connecting trails accessed from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 provides the only way to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. In addition to working and recreational access, this route was used for Search and Rescue operations. 3. It is not sufficient to restore use for truck/trail combinations simply to the Green Mountain access trail (Alternative C). We need full restored access (Alternative B) which includes fixing the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and approaches. 4. Restoration of access for agency and volunteer maintenance of the trail systems must be given a top priority if we are to continue providing opportunities in the back country for the current and future generations of users. 5. The Back Country Horsemen of Washington endorse Alternative B as the only acceptable proposed Alternative for pack and saddle stock users.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
227.	04/15/12 email	Please re-open the Suiattle River Road. We have a population that desperately needs increased recreation, and many of our trails in the area are grossly overcrowded. The demand and the benefit are clearly there.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
228.	04/15/12 email	Full restoration of road access Full restoration of road access is what is needed for Suiattle river road.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
229.	04/15/12 email	Please open this road with PLAN B option. We need to keep access points open into this beautiful area for all to enjoy. There are so few places from the west side to hike into this area. Also it is a long a stretch between points on the PCT as it is. A whole generation of hikers has missed an opportunity to hike these trails.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
230.	04/15/12 email	I wish to express my full support for reopening this important pathway for outdoor recreation to Snohomish county hikers, climbers, picnickers and other visitors. This roadway is an important path to areas that I and my friend and family wish to visit. My Grandchildren have not had the opportunity to see this area, since it has been closed for so long. Please reestablish the roadway as soon as possible with no delays. This is an important area to reopen for recreation and should be top priority for funding. Please do not delay this project another year.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
231.	04/15/12 email	We are a Canadian family who loves to vacation in Darrinton and Marblemount areas. For the last 25 years we spent 2 weeks and several weekends a year, in the area, camping and staying in various resorts and hotels. We normally spend several thousand dollars a year in the local communities in Washington. We have not done this in the last several years because of key forestry roads being closed and not accessible. These roads have such a history dating back to native American Indians. It would be a shame not to repair them and restrict access to the most extreme backcountry users. Please consider investing in the future of the local communities and repair these roads. I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead the following reason (s): The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed camping, berry picking, picnicking. I recognize the high cost of maintenance does not warrant keeping them open is high, and they are no longer needed. The Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads, 2 car-camp grounds, however, is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult Page 3 of the EA identifies the Suiattle River Road as a “high need road” by The 2003 Forest-wide Roads Analysis or recreation and purposes. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient, and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing, which is good for fish and the tribes like it. ARRA funds breakdown. ; recruiting volunteers to walk 24 miles round trip to work on trails would be impossible.		
232.	04/15/12 email	I support Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road, please repaired this road to the Suiattle Trailhead. The full length of this road is critical to many user groups, amongst them hikers, climbers, family car campers, fishermen, and equestrian (and many others I haven't noted). My family and I used this road frequently (15+ years) for backpacking, camping, and fishing prior to its current closure. We look forward to its reopening.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
233.	04/15/12 email	I urge you to adopt Alternative B on the Suiattle River Road EA. Our forest roads are being shut down at alarming rates and now a new excuse has cropped up.....storm damage. I also urge you not to forget that the Forest Service is a MULTIPLE USE organization.....it is not there to serve the needs of the loudest group or the group with the most money, but ALL forest users. Stock trailer access will be eliminated by either Alternative A or C. Stock users cut out many, many miles of trails each year that are used by hikers and others. The Suiattle River is an important access route for many forest users and I urge you to adopt Alternative B.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
234.	04/15/12 email	I trust that the road will be repaired and opened so that I can take my Grandchildren to the end of the road for some great adventures that I have had with my children. With the White Chuck out, it gives us no access to the PCT, Suiattle Pass, Glacier Peak and much more. This is a unique and much needed link to the Cascades. I would like to see this valuable and scenic corridor reopened, so many more generations can enjoy it.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
235.	04/15/12 email	As a life-long hiker and member of the Mountaineers, I would like to express my support for Alternative B (full repair) of the Suiattle River Road. Without repairing the road, the recreational value of the entire area accessed by the road is essentially lost.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
236.	04/15/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead for the following reasons With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is the only way to access the PCT from the west side. We need the Suiattle trailhead to be open. After heading north from the North Fork Sauk point on PCT currently the only way for somebody on the trail to get emergency help is to go through Stehikin or Holden, or add additional 12 plus miles to exit the Suiattle rd., which makes it unbearably long. The camps are there, the beautiful trails are there, the road is mostly in good condition, and the impact on the environment is minimal. Let everybody enjoy this area for our generation, for the generation that missed out hiking this area and for next generation; and I forgot to say also for the city of Darrington.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
237.	04/16/12 email	I am for option B. I would like to see the road opened to the end. Or at least Downey Creek. There is a lot of area this road provides access to. It would be nice to see it open again after so many years.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
238.	04/16/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. I believe the road should be repaired to the Suiattle River Trailhead the following reasons: The Suiattle River Road and its access to seven trailheads, two car campgrounds serves hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car campers, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photographers, mushroom picking enthusiasts, fishermen and others seeking simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance very difficult. Due to the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003 and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail has become overused by equestrians, hunters, climbers and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the campgrounds have been overrun and deteriorated. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired to its end, the continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will further degrade the wilderness experience of people entering the Glacier Peak Wilderness. I also believe that Alternative B represents the most sound option from an environmental perspective. Alternative B calls for the wetlands area – which would be subject to further degradation under Alternative A – to be rehabilitated. Alternative B’s relocation of	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		the road further away from the river at the Huckleberry trailhead will help abate future washout threats. Likewise, Alternative C is would result in the new construction of a large parking lot to be built somewhere in the vicinity of the Green Mountain Horse Pasture. By contrast, Alternative B would restore access to the existing trailheads at Downey Creek trailhead and the road end. I have read the EIS prepared for this project and note that the rerouting of the road and sedimentation mitigation will cause very little environmental impact and may well have less impact than simply leaving the road alone to deteriorate further. Thank you for considering my support of Alternative B.		
239.	04/16/12 email	Reopen I hope that the Suiattle River road re-opens. This gives many access to lots of hike/scrambling areas. Please don't close the access to the wilderness from this road.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
240.	04/16/12 email	I am a stock user with the Back Country Horsemen of Washington. We maintain trails throughout the state with pack and saddle stock support. We cannot sustain this effort without road access to the trailheads along with having suitable parking areas for trailer towing vehicles. Stock use on the Pacific Crest Trail and on connecting trails accessed from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 provides the only way to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. In addition to working and recreational access, this route was used for Search and Rescue operations. It is not sufficient to restore use for truck/trail combinations simply to the Green Mountain access trail (Alternative C). We need full restored access (Alternative B) which includes fixing the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and approaches. Restoration of access for agency and volunteer maintenance of the trail systems must be given a top priority if we are to continue providing opportunities in the back country for the current and future generations of users. The Back Country Horsemen of Washington endorse Alternative B as the only acceptable proposed Alternative for pack and saddle stock users.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
241.	04/16/12 email	I would like to request Option B, rerouting/repair of the entire road. There are so many recreational opportunities out that way and it would be a shame to have access to them cut off.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
242.	04/16/12 email	I am writing support of alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road needs to be repaired to the end to reopen a critical west-side access to the Glacier Peak Wilderness. Significant areas of the wilderness are essentially off-limits to my family without this access - as it takes many more miles/days to reach this area from the east side. As someone who works full-time, adding days to my trips means that I will not be able to fully enjoy this beautiful area. Additionally, opening up access through the Suiattle will prevent other access points from becoming over-crowded. We like to go hiking with our dog. The Glacier Peak is one of the crown jewels of the state, and with returned access, it would be perhaps the most accessible dog-friendly wilderness for those in the central Puget Sound. I understand that you'll be balancing many important interests and viewpoints in this process, I'll leave you with the thought that one of the only ways to retain ongoing public support for natural resources preservation is to ensure that the public has access to them. I hope that the need to protect and preserve this wilderness can be done in a way that balances the long-term support for the concept of wilderness.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
243.	04/16/12 email	Reopening I support the reopening of the Suiattle River Road. As a hiker and, more importantly, as a backpacker, entire areas are not accessible to my friends and me without this road. Please consider reopening it	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
244.	04/16/12 email	Subject: Suiattle River Road EA - Please select Alternative B Please choose Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road Environmental Analysis (EA) to repair the eight damaged locations on the road and restore use of the road to its former terminus past Sulphur Creek for stock trailers. With easy access available for horses, additional business will come to the already economically depressed area. The Suiattle River and Pacific Crest National Scenic trails are a very important component of our trail system and bring economic benefit to our state and country.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
245.	04/16/12 email	<p>I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. I believe the road should be repaired to the Suiattle River Trailhead the following reasons:</p> <p>The Suiattle River Road and its access to seven trailheads, two car campgrounds serves hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car campers, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors.</p> <p>The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance very difficult. Due to the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003 and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail has become overused by equestrians, hunters, climbers and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the campgrounds have been overrun and deteriorated. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired to its end, the continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will further degrade the wilderness experience of people entering the Glacier Peak Wilderness. I also believe that Alternative B represents the most sound option from an environmental perspective. Alternative B calls for the wetlands area – which would be subject to further degradation under Alternative A – to be rehabilitated. Alternative B’s relocation of the road further away from the river at the Huckleberry trailhead will help abate future washout threats. Likewise, Alternative C is would result in the new construction of a large parking lot to be built somewhere in the vicinity of the Green Mountain Horse Pasture. By contrast, Alternative B would restore access to the existing trailheads at Downey Creek trailhead and the road end.</p> <p>Thank you for considering my support of Alternative B.</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
246.	04/16/12 email	As a member of Back Country Horseman of WA., I would like this time to put my support for alternative B. BCHW maintains allot of trails throughout Washington with pack and saddle stock. Sustaining this effort cannot be done by closing this road to the trail head. Suitable parking at the trail head is also a must for horse trailers. Restoration of access for agency and volunteer maintenance of the systems must be given a top priority if we are going to continue providing opportunities in the back country for the current and future generations of users. Stock use on the Pacific Crest Trail and on connecting trails accessed from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 provides the only way to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. It is also used by Search and Rescue operations. Please don't let a small miss guided group of people sway your decision.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
247.	04/16/12 email	we need Alternative B Please choose Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road Environmental Analysis (EA) to repair the eight damaged locations on the road and restore use of the road to its former terminus past Sulphur Creek for stock trailers. With easy access available for horses, additional business will come to the already economically depressed area and boost the economy of the community. The Suiattle River and Pacific Crest National Scenic trails are a very important component of our trail system and bring economic benefit to our state and this is vital for the PCT access.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
248.	04/16/12 email	I am an equestrian user with the Back Country Horsemen of Washington. As a user of these trails I have assisted in maintaining these trails through various areas withing the state with pack and saddle stock support. We cannot sustain this effort without road access to the trailheads along with having suitable parking areas for trailer towing vehicles. Stock use on the Pacific Crest Trail and on connecting trails accessed from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 has been historic throughout my life time. I personally have ridden on a portion of the PCT and would like to ride on other parts of this historic trail. This trail also provides the only way to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. In addition to working and recreational access, this route has been used for Search and Rescue operations. It is not sufficient to restore use for truck/trail combinations simply to the Green Mountain access trail (Alternative C). We need full restored	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		access (Alternative B) which includes fixing the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and approaches. This Alternative B will provide much needed access to areas that are used by stock/equestrian users. Restoration of access for agency and volunteer maintenance of the trail systems must be given a top priority if we are to continue providing opportunities in the back country for the current and future generations of users. Alternative B is endorsed by The Back Country Horsemen of Washington as the only acceptable proposed Alternative for pack and saddle stock users for our generation and the future generation of equine users. http://www.oaklandbaybchw.org I am the Director for the Oakland Bay Chapter of BCHW http://www.parelliconnect.com I believe in the above belief and follow the principles of Parelli Natural Horsemanship to the best of my ability		
249.	04/16/12 email	I would very much like to see the road reopened all the way to the end. This road is an important corridor to the back country in the area. It provides access to an area which is used for recreation by thousands. It would be in the interest of the outdoor community if the road were opened as soon as possible. The opening of the road would also benefit Darrington economically in a positive way.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
250.	04/16/12 email	In summary, I would like Alternative B (Full Restoration of Road Access) to be selected because it provides the public the best access to several trails that enter the Glacier Peak Wilderness and the environmental impacts of Alternative B are minimal. According to my hiking log, my first hike using the Suiattle River Road for access was a backpack trip up the Downey Creek Trail on July 6, 1974. I was 21 years old at the time and hiked with my father who was 55 years old. We would not have been able to do that hike if the road were closed at MP 12.6 as it is today or even if the road were open to the junction with Road 2680. It would have been too far to hike on a weekend. Now that I'm getting close to 60 years of age, I'm very much concerned about access for senior citizens. Senior citizens need the Suiattle River Road opened to the end so they can access and enjoy the several trails accessed by the road. I can speak from personal experience that the trails starting from the Suiattle River Road provide great hiking experiences. In addition to Downey Creek, I have hiked Sulphur Creek (1974), Image Lake (1976), Mica Lake (1977), Bachelor Meadows (1980), Green Mt. (1983) and Huckleberry Mt (1992). I have been wanting to return to many of these destinations, but with the Suiattle	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		<p>Road closed since 2003, that is not possible. In addition, I have been wanting to hike the Sulphur Mt Trail for years. That is a strenuous hike and adding a road walk makes it not possible for me. I would also like to be able to take my family camping at one of the campgrounds on the Suiattle Road. Finding camping spots on weekends is very difficult. We need more campgrounds and opening the Suiattle Road to the end would reopen two more campgrounds. I think it is important to select Alternative B to help disperse Glacier Peak Wilderness users. Currently with the Suiattle Road closed and the White Chuck River Road closed, the only access left is the North Fork Sauk Trail. The North Fork Sauk Trail is now getting badly overused. Not only would Alternative B let more people enjoy the Glacier Peak Wilderness, but it would help the tourist economy of Darrington which has been hit hard by the road closures. Another reason I support Alternative B, is that the other two alternatives do not provide any parking. Alternative B would open the road to the large parking lot at the road end. Alternatives A and C would have just a gate with no parking and no good turn around, especially for horse trailers.</p>		
251.	04/16/12 email	<p>1. I am a stock user with the Back Country Horsemen of Washington. We maintain trails throughout the state with pack and saddle stock support. We cannot sustain this effort without road access to the trailheads along with having suitable parking areas for trailer towing vehicles. 2. Stock use on the Pacific Crest Trail and on connecting trails accessed from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 provides the only way to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. In addition to working and recreational access, this route was used for Search and Rescue operations. 3. It is not sufficient to restore use for truck/trail combinations simply to the Green Mountain access trail (Alternative C). We need full restored access (Alternative B) which includes fixing the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and approaches. 4. Restoration of access for agency and volunteer maintenance of the trail systems must be given a top priority if we are to continue providing opportunities in the back country for the current and future generations of users. 5. The Back Country Horsemen of Washington endorse Alternative B as the only acceptable proposed Alternative for pack and saddle stock users</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
252.	04/16/12 email	I wanted to offer my public comments in support of repairing the entire Suiattle River Road (option B) to offer better and safer access to the trail heads within the area. I realize cost is a major issue, but there are MANY of us outdoor types you utilize this area and it will have an impact on many people. By having the road open volunteer trail crews, and Search and Rescue groups will have better access and thus be able to protect the valuable natural resources better. Think of the increased cost of a rescue in the area if SAR crews need a chopper to facilitate an evacuation rather than just ambulance. The impact on the backcountry with out proper trail maintenance will only continue to degrade the resources until eventually restrictions will have to be imposed in order to limit impact. With the road open trail crews, and rangers can patrol the area to make it safer for all lovers of the mountains. I personally had an amazing trip on the Ptarmigan Traverse a couple years back, but the 10 mile hike out on the closed road vastly impacted our trip. We were worried about how much more committing our route was because of such a long hike out for help. If someone had been hurt during our trip the extra 10 miles could have meant the difference of an entire extra day of walking and thus the difference between life and death. Again I ask you to please consider restoring the entire road (option B) to allow better and safer access to our public lands.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
253.	04/16/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead the following reason (s): The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed camping, berry picking, picnicking. I recognize the high cost of maintenance does not warrant keeping them open is high, and they are no longer needed. The Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads, 2 car-camp grounds, however, is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult Page 3 of the EA identifies the Suiattle River Road as a “high need road” by The 2003 Forest-wide Roads Analysis or recreation and purposes. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		<p>12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient, and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing, which is good for fish and the tribes like it. ARRA funds breakdown. ; recruiting volunteers to walk 24 miles round trip to work on trails would be impossible. The above information is from a form letter that was sent to me. I am in agreement of with it all. But I am also a business owner (The Darrington IGA grocery store) and would like to add a few things of my own. For years various government and private individuals I have met with have been astounded by the beauty of the Darrington area. Most have made the comment that Darrington needs diversify our local economy and get into the ‘tourist business’. Great idea! If only it were that easy. The biggest hurdle we are having to overcome seems to be trying to keep open roads and trails into the mountains. What kind of tourism are we going to be able to build if we don’t have enough access to all the great sites that abound and also allow people to recreate in different manners. We don’t all recreate in the outdoors the same. Some just want to ride in the vehicle and look, some want to camp, some want to fish and hunt, some want to back pack. We need to keep our main roads open for ‘all’ of the public, Lastly let me say, as a struggling business man we need these roads open and maintained to help our businesses stay healthy. Its one thing to get people to our town to enjoy our outdoors but without healthy businesses it will be hard to get them back. A steady and predictable tourist business will be a huge impact for our community.</p>		
254.	04/16/12 email	We need access to the Pacific Crest Trail Head on this road. It needs to be repaired so maintenance work on the PCT can be done. I am a handicapped person that needs a horse to see nature. Please use your plan B (includes enlarging the parking lot at the tail head).	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
255.	04/16/12 email	Please choose Alt B in the Environmental Assessment. Fully restored access is necessary for stock use in maintaining trails and bridges in the area for current and future uses	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
256.	04/16/12 email	<p>Open and maintain Suiattle River road It is easy to see that the closure has impacted a lot of popular hiking and climbing areas. I would hate to think that they would be removed from the many hiking and mountaineering guides that are published. If there were a vote then mine would be to repair and maintain this beautiful wilderness area with great mountain top views and historical lookout structures.</p>  <p>Miners Ridge Green Mountain trailhead – to Green Mountain Lookout Downey Creek trailhead – to the Ptarmigan Traverse Sulphur Creek trailhead – to Bath Lakes High Route Suiattle River trailhead – to the Pacific Crest Trail and other wilderness trails: Miner’s Ridge, Miner’s Ridge Lookout, Buck Creek Pass , and low maintenance trails of Canyon Lake, Gama Ridge, Triad Crossing, and Grassy Point Crystal Creek trailhead – access via Road 26, to Road 25, to Road 27 Meadow Lake/Mountain trailhead – access via Road 26, to Road 25, to Road 27 Boulder Lake – to the Tenas Creek drainage Huckleberry Mountain trailhead – up</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		Huckleberry Creek to Huckleberry Ridge Pacific Crest Trail – Stock and hiker access from the Suiattle River Trail. Campgrounds: Buck Creek Campground Sulphur Creek Campground		
257.	04/16/12 email	I am in strong support of opening up the Suiattle River Road. The access to this beautiful area of the Cascades is for the generations of people who will bond with the land. Those that love this land will grow to learn to protect and preserve it. Please fund this project in a way that will prevent future washouts.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
258.	04/16/12 email	I am a stock user with the Back Country Horsemen of Washington. We maintain trails throughout the state with pack and saddle stock support, and are recognized by most all the state and federal agencies for our successful volunteer efforts to maintain trails and campgrounds in the state of WA and beyond. We cannot sustain this effort without road access to the trailheads along with having suitable parking areas for trailer towing vehicles. Stock use on the Pacific Crest Trail and on connecting trails accessed from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 provides the only way to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. In addition to working and recreational access, this route was used for Search and Rescue operations. It is not sufficient to restore use for truck/trail combinations simply to the Green Mountain access trail (Alternative C). We need <i>full</i> restored access (Alternative B) which includes fixing the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and approaches. Restoration of access for agency and volunteer maintenance of the trail systems must be given a top priority if we are to continue providing opportunities in the back country for the current and future generations of users. The Back Country Horsemen of Washington endorse Alternative B as the only acceptable proposed Alternative for pack and saddle stock users.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
259.	04/16/12 email	Please note that I am very passionately in favor of the re-opening of Suiattle River Road. This area access is essential for our entire local community. Please vote “yes” on re-opening Suiattle River Road.	B/C	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
260.	04/16/12 email	Open Suiattle River Road to The End Please, Please, Please Finally open the Suiattle River Road to The Road end Option B. As a professional Hiker and Photographer of Washington, this road must be opened. It has been devastating that this road has remained closed for so long already. There is still plenty of true wilderness to explore beyond the road so please help us get there by opening the road. OPTION B, PLEASE. When it re opens I will be there to hike and photograph those lost trails! "Take Only Pictures, Leave Only Footprints"	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
261.	04/16/12 email	Please re-open this road.	B/C	Thank you, your comment is noted.
262.	04/16/12 email	I would like to see that road opened up if we have the resources to do it	B/C	Thank you, your comment is noted.
263.	04/16/12 email	I am the scoutmaster of BSA troop 53 from Monroe WA and I would like to voice my support for the repair of the Suiattle River Road to its end! Our troop is hiking the pacific crest trail from Rainy Pass to Stevens Pass this summer. Currently, access to the PCT in the Glacier Peak wilderness is very limited, making emergency response, evacuation, or re-supply difficult! Having the Suiattle River Road repaired to its end would be very helpful! As a scoutmaster I am in a unique position to see the need for access to the wilderness to introduce our youth to the wonderful beauty of our wild places. They are going to be the ones who decide what to do with our wilderness in the future. I can't think of a better way to instill the need to conserve our wild places in our youth than to give them the opportunity to experience the wilderness for themselves. I am concerned with the attitude that we need to block human access to the wilderness to protect it. How can we expect our youth to carry on our legacy of conservation if they have no firsthand knowledge or reverence for the wilderness!	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
264.	04/16/12 email	Please consider reopening the Suiattle River Road. This is an important access for hikers into the backcountry area.	B/C	Thank you, your comment is noted.
265.	04/16/12 letter (per postmark)	I strongly support Alternative B – Repair Suiattle Road 26 at all eight sites, with relocations away from the river, and rehabilitation of abandoned sections of Suiattle Road 26. Please restore Road 26 so that access is available to all. I am an avid hiker and backpacker in the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest and the Glacier Peak Wilderness. Suiattle Road 26 should be repaired and rehabilitated to the fullest	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		<p>extent possible through its entire length. This will allow continued and future access to these spectacular forest areas. This area of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest is a state and national treasure. Suiattle Roads (Roads 26, Green Mountain 2680 and Buck Creek 2600014) repairs are essential to ensuring public access to the Glacier Peak Wilderness and the Pacific Crest Trail.</p> <p>Implementing Alternative B will ensure access to some of my favorite places in Washington State: Huckleberry Mountain, Green Mountain, Buck Creek, Downey Creek, Sulphur Creek, Sulphur Mountain and the Suiattle Trailhead. Implementing Alternative B to repair will once again grant me and other avid hikers and backpackers access to the Suiattle Trailhead, giving us access to the most interconnected trail system in this forest. Connections to the Buck Creek Pass, Railroad Creek, Agnes Creek, and PCT allow us to travel, on foot or horseback, to the Wenatchee National Forest and the North Cascades National Park.</p> <p>Implementing Alternative B will ensure public access to the PCT, providing access south to Stevens Pass and north to the North Cascades National Park. Restoring Suiattle Road 26 will enable critical access to the Glacier Peak Wilderness, one of the most beautiful wilderness areas in the U.S. with glaciers, high mountain lakes and valleys of old growth forest. Repairing Suiattle Roads (Roads 26, Green Mountain 2680 and Buck Creek 2600014) in Alternative B will restore access to these spectacular Glacier Peak hiking and backpacking areas. Please restore Road 26 so that access is available to all. Thank you for your consideration and for your hard work on this critical project!</p>		
266.	04/16/12 news article published on the Internet (online, website)	<p>from http://experiencewilderness.org/news/save-access-glacier-peak-wilderness on April 20, 2012: To Repair or Not to Repair: Why We Should Restore Suiattle Road and Access to Glacier Peak Wilderness by Kitty Craig</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		 <p>The Suiattle Road (Forest Road 26) is one of the few access roads and western portals to the majestic Glacier Peak Wilderness, one of the most wild and least accessible wilderness areas in the state. Flood events in 2003, 2006, and 2007 have made the road impassable, extremely limiting opportunities to explore some of the best hikes, lakes, and peaks of Glacier Peak Wilderness such as the iconic Image Lake and the Pacific Crest Trail. That’s why The Wilderness Society is calling for full restoration of the road—so people can easily access these amazing places once again. The Federal Highway Administration and Forest Service have recently released the Environmental Assessment for the Suiattle River Road Project, offering three alternatives for public consideration: Alternative A: No Action. Would result in no repairs to any of the eight flood-damaged sites along Road 26. Alternative B: Full Road Restoration. Repair Road 26 at all eight sites, with relocations away from the river and rehabilitation of abandoned sections of the 23-mile road. Alternative C: Limited Road Restoration. Repair Road 26 at five sites, with 20 miles of road open to vehicle access (to the junction of Green Mountain Road), but not beyond. Here are five reasons why The Wilderness Society strongly supports Alternative B, restoring the road in its entirety, and encourages others to do the same: It will reopen important recreational resources that provide opportunities for all ages, interests, and ability levels to explore the wildlands and waters of the Suiattle, Glacier Peak Wilderness, and beyond. More than 120 miles of trail is accessible via the seven trailheads along the road; 113 miles (93 percent) of these trails are within</p>		

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		<p>the Glacier Peak Wilderness area. Many of these resources have been underutilized since 2003, and most have seen very little use since 2006. Green Mountain trail use has decreased 98 percent (from 1,414 to 19 reported users) since 2006 and although trails such as the Suiattle, Pacific Crest Trail, and Upper Suiattle River have all been restored since 2006, few have been able to enjoy the new trails. There is broad public support for reopening the road. Scoping comments gathered in 2011 showed that 90 percent of responders want the Suiattle Road reopened as soon as possible (Environmental Assessment, page 21). At the public meeting held in Everett on March 29, 2012, anecdotal evidence showed strong support for restoration of the road for all. The Federal Highway Administration has the money in hand to complete the repairs and open the road by 2013. Funding for any public infrastructure project is limited in the present economic situation and federal funding for road repair has declined significantly over the years. Through the political leadership of congressional representative Rick Larsen, the \$4 million in funds from the Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads program is available until September 2013. Through an innovative partnership with the Sauk-Suiattle Tribe, additional funding for the Downey Creek Bridge repair has been secured through the state Salmon Recovery Funding Board program. Any delay in this project will jeopardize these hard-to-come-by funds for the repair and restoration of the road. Reopening the road would allow the Forest Service to properly manage and maintain facilities along the road and in the wilderness. While recreational use of the Suiattle Road has decreased significantly since 2003 and more so since 2006, the Forest Service has continued administrative management and maintenance of facilities along the road. Motorized access along the entire road is critical to providing adequate public safety, regulatory compliance, and maintenance of National Forest recreational sites and facilities. Reopening the road would increase visitors to the area, thereby increasing economic activity in the greater Darrington area. The cumulative effects of 2003, 2006, and 2007 flood events have resulted in a reduced number of tourists and visitors to Darrington businesses as well as the Darrington Ranger Station (Environmental Assessment, page 147). While reopening the road may have a small positive economic impact on the town of Darrington, any increase in activity is good for the local economy. There are many more reasons to</p>		

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		<p>support the full restoration of the Suiattle Road. The Wilderness Society views the full restoration as imperative; anything less will favor the wishes of a few over the desire of many. Restoration of the road will reopen access to seven trailheads, two campgrounds and large parking areas for hikers, bikers, river users, equestrians, and others. It will provide access to lakes, trails, streams and wild places people have explored for generations, and sorely missed for the last decade. The Wilderness Society firmly believes to create future stewards of our public resources we must provide the opportunity for people to experience the wild places that will inspire them to care—the Suiattle offers such an opportunity.</p>		

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267.	04/16/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead the following reason (s): The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed camping, berry picking, picnicking. I recognize the high cost of maintenance does not warrant keeping them open is high, and they are no longer needed. The Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads, 2 car-camp grounds, however, is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult Page 3 of the EA identifies the Suiattle River Road as a “high need road” by The 2003 Forest-wide Roads Analysis or recreation and purposes. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient, and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing, which is good for fish and the tribes like it. ARRA funds breakdown. ; recruiting volunteers to walk 24 miles round trip to work on trails would be impossible.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
268.	04/16/12 email	Support of Alternative B I am writing to express my support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. I believe the road should be repaired to the Suiattle River Trailhead the following reasons: The Suiattle River Road and its access to seven trailheads, two car campgrounds serves hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car campers, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance very difficult. Due to the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003 and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail has become overused by equestrians, hunters, climbers and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the campgrounds have been overrun and deteriorated. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired to its end, the continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will further degrade the wilderness experience of people entering the Glacier Peak Wilderness. I also believe that Alternative B represents the most sound option from an environmental perspective. Alternative B calls for the wetlands area – which would be subject to further degradation under Alternative A – to be rehabilitated. Alternative B's relocation of the road further away from the river at the Huckleberry trailhead will help abate future washout threats. Likewise, Alternative C is would result in the new construction of a large parking lot to be built somewhere in the vicinity of the Green Mountain Horse Pasture. By contrast, Alternative B would restore access to the existing trailheads at Downey Creek trailhead and the road end. Thank you for considering my support of Alternative B.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
269.	04/17/12 email	I wholeheartedly support the opening of the Suiattle River Road. Planning for trips in the alpine has been hindered with its closure, and I am looking forward to the day it is finally reopened. Please make that day soon. As a hiker and climber, I know that I am one of many who hope that this project will not be put off any longer, as the road's closure has limited many from witnessing the wild beauty of the Suiattle and beyond.	B/C	Thank you, your comment is noted.
270.	04/17/12 email	Please don't close the Suiattle River road. This is a great place to be able to go exploring in the mountains. I hope you will keep it open for future generations.	B/C	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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271.	04/17/12 email	I am writing to express my strong support for Alternative B, which would repair Suiattle River Road in a manner that provides motorized access to a number of trailheads that were in high use prior to damage by flooding. I am a hiking and a climber who has spent the last decade rambling over the Cascades on and off-trail. Prior to the flooding, I had just begun my explorations of the Cascades and hiked the lovely Sulphur Mtn trail with a group of friends. That hatched plans for a traverse to the Bath Lakes, explorations of the Mt. Buckindy group, and rambles along the “abandoned” trails on the east side of Glacier Peak. After the first floods that damaged the road at the Downey Creek Bridge, I completed the Ptarmigan Traverse, which, to this day, remains one of my most memorable trips through the high country. Since the most recent damage, I have not been further up Suiattle River Road than Tenas Creek. If the current closure is sufficient to deter people like me from biking or walking the 10 miles to the old trailhead, I can only imagine the number of people who have lost the chance to see this area of the Cascades with their own eyes. Alternative C, while restoring access to the Green Mtn trailhead, does not fully restore access to the major jump-off points at the road end. Alternative B is a well-thought approach to restoring access and protecting Suiattle River Road against future flooding. I greatly appreciate the work done by the agencies and the tribes to arrive at this alternative.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
272.	04/17/12 email	Plan “B” is the only way to vote. I belong to the Back Country Horsemen and Washington Trail Riders Assoc. I have also belonged to Oregon Equestrian Trails. In the 60 years I have been using the trails for hiking, riding, and biking we have also repaired, graveled, cut brush etc. We need the roads to access the trail heads and get stock trailers, supplies, and people to those points. I want my grandchildren to enjoy the wilderness the same as I do without the limited access a few want. We need the roads to get to the trails.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
273.	04/17/12 email	I support Alternative B. Here are my brief comments: 1. I am a member of the Back Country Horsemen of Washington. As part of our mission we provide thousands of hours of volunteer hours maintaining trails throughout USFS managed properties. Even though our primary emphasis is on equine trails, many of the trails we do maintain are also used by mountain bikers, hikers, climbers, snowmobile riders, bird watchers and anyone else who may use these trails. 2. Stock use on the Pacific Crest Trail and on connecting trails accessed from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 provides the only way to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. In addition to working and recreational access, this route was used for Search and Rescue operations. 3. It is not sufficient to restore use for truck/trail combinations simply to the Green Mountain access trail (Alternative C). We need full restored access (Alternative B) which includes fixing the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and approaches. 4. Restoration of access for agency and volunteer maintenance of the trail systems must be given a top priority if we are to continue providing opportunities in the back country for the current and future generations of users. 5. Alternative B is the only plan which allows full access to vehicles with trailers clear to the original trailheads.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
274.	04/17/12 email	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on options for repair of the Suiattle River Road. Although I live near Boston I come every summer for at least a couple weeks to backpack in the northern Cascades. And Glacier Peak Wilderness Area is my favorite in the entire greater-northwestern region. I have spent weeks in the backcountry on many, if not most of the trails there. Just last summer my brother and I spent a week at Image Lake high above the Suiattle drainage. We hiked in via Holden and Lyman Lake, and it was a perfectly practical and beautiful route to reach the Image Lake area. Access to that spectacular backcountry area from the Suiattle River Road would be a bit more convenient to the urban crowds that can't spare a couple extra hours to swing around to Lake Chelan. But the wilderness must be protected and saved for all to appreciate for generations to come, as the Wilderness Act directs. Comment 1: I have read in detail and seen many photos of the washout damage to the Suiattle River Road. The history of that section is to experience repeated washouts and undoubtedly that will happen again even if it is rebuilt now, thus wasting a large sum of taxpayer's funds. A most workable compromise would be the <u>Alternative C</u> as described in the recent Environmental Assessment statement. This provides renewed access to the Suiattle River trail with the only inconvenience being an extension of a couple miles in the trail length. Comment 2: Those four miles of the extension would be through gorgeous old-growth forest and add an important component to the wilderness experience of any who come to hike there. As one who lives where the entire state, and most of the neighboring states, were all clear cut but a few decades ago, I can assure you that sawing down your old Washington forests is a terrible, terrible mistake and one from which there is no recovery. Thus, I strongly encourage the Forest Service to select <u>Alternative C</u>.</p>	C	<p>Thank you, your comment is noted.</p> <p>Response 1: Risk of future washouts is described in the EA and A-EA, Section 3.2.</p> <p>Response 2: Extent of removal of mature and old forest is described in the EA and A-EA, Section 3.11.1.2.</p>

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275.	04/17/12 email	1. I am a stock user with the Back Country Horsemen of Washington. We maintain trails throughout the state with pack and saddle stock support. We cannot sustain this effort without road access to the trailheads along with having suitable parking areas for trailer towing vehicles. 2. Stock use on the Pacific Crest Trail and on connecting trails accessed from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 provides the only way to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. In addition to working and recreational access, this route was used for Search and Rescue operations. 3. It is not sufficient to restore use for truck/trail combinations simply to the Green Mountain access trail (Alternative C). We need full restored access (Alternative B) which includes fixing the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and approaches. 4. Restoration of access for agency and volunteer maintenance of the trail systems must be given a top priority if we are to continue providing opportunities in the back country for the current and future generations of users. 5. The Back Country Horsemen of Washington endorse Alternative B as the only acceptable proposed Alternative for pack and saddle stock users.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
276.	04/17/12 email	In favor of Alternative B for reopening the Suiattle River Rd I am writing in strong favor of reopening the Suiattle River Road (Forest Road 26) to its end past Sulphur Creek as per Alternative B. Restoring access to the road end is crucial to so many fine activities in this beautiful area. The hiking and climbing opportunities from this road are some of the most desirable in the state. Fixing the road to its end will also provide the opportunity for those who cannot hike for extended distances to see this wonderful region, an opportunity not afforded by the other proposed alternatives. It is essential that children and the disabled can reach areas like this, so they can have the experiences and memories that would not otherwise be attainable. I have a sister and a brother who are disabled and unable to hike any significant distance. When this road is repaired, they can have the chance to come and see why this area is so special. I firmly believe that access to this and other scenic places is critical to expanding public awareness of the need to preserve our wilderness. Many will not care about a place they cannot get to; but once seen, that awareness can lead to increased support and even activism. My understanding is that much if not all of the rerouting of the road and the fixing of the bridges,	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		culverts etc. outlined in Alternative B is already funded, but that this funding will expire in September 2013. Therefore these fixes are not only essential, but must take place immediately. I support funding all the fixes to the road end in their entirety regardless of where the funding comes from. This is without question one of the best uses of our tax dollars that I can envision. It is also my understanding that Alternative B is the option that best takes into account the environmental impact to the area, as studied and proposed by numerous experts and agencies, and will allow the Forest Service the best access to maintain and administer this area. Restoring access here will also benefit local communities, towns that urgently need the economic boost this fix will bring. In my opinion there is no higher priority for restoring access to an area in this state than the Suiattle River Road, complete to past Sulphur Creek. Please restore access to the Suiattle River Road as soon as possible.		
277.	04/17/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead for the following reason (s): I am too old to hike the additional miles that road closure would require to access the Glacier Peak Wilderness area. The funding has already been approved to complete the project. I have traveled extensively in Europe and they appear to me to do a much better job than we do of managing their wild mountain areas in a way that also allows their citizens access. They repair their roads and facilitate people access in an environmentally conscious way rather than try to deny access. We are already loosing too many roads which allow access to the existing mountain trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. Closure of this road puts an overly large burden on the North Fork Sauk trail. The population of Washington State has grown from 4.1 million in 1980 to 6.4 million in 2006 and is projected to reach 8.6 million by 2030. At the same time we have steadily been loosing mountain roads, trails and campgrounds due to lack of funding and overly vocal environmental groups. http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/planning/wtp/datalibrary/population/WSPopulationGrowth.htm We need more campgrounds not less. We need more access, not less, to the beauty and serenity of our forests and mountains as the stress of everyday life in the Puget Sound region increases.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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278.	04/17/12 email	Please repair the Suiattle River Road to its end. I have enjoyed many of the hikes that are accessible from this road, and I would like my friends and family to have this same opportunity in the future.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
279.	04/17/12 email	I am the President of the Ridge Riders Saddle Club representing minimum of 30 horseback riders and would like to recommend the plan that would reestablish the Huckleberry Trailhead and parking area and connecting road repaired.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
280.	04/17/12 email	back country access we need access to all of our backcountry trails for all to enjoy. i am a horseback trail rider and we need as many trail heads and access points open to all	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
281.	04/17/12 email	Know that the project has my strong support to move forward with the full restoration of the Suiattle River Road under Alternative B as described in the Environmental Assessment. Alternative B is a creative and efficient plan that makes an environmentalist and taxpayer like me very proud of my government. Alternative B gets it right! Protection of the environment is enhanced; the long term reliability of the restored road is greatly improved; effective administration of the Glacier Peak Wilderness is once again facilitated; recreational opportunities are restored; and the local economy is provided with badly needed relief. A remarkable aspect of Alternative B comes in the fact that it delivers all the above benefits while making very wise reuse of existing resources. Too often, US citizens witness the costly disposal of resources because those past investments are somehow deemed to be not perfect enough meet our current, unsustainably high standards. We talk a good talk about reusing and recycling depreciated consumer products. So it is with some embarrassment that I observe fellow environmentalist suggesting that far more valuable assets - like the Suiattle River Road - should be dicarded rather than repaired. Fortunately, Alternative B uses a smarter approach to multifaceted resource conservation and public asset management. Alternative B utilizes existing parallel road segments to restore Road 26 in an area of stable second-growth timber, thus shifting the road away from the flood plain and out of wetlands. Not only will three of the current points of road damage be bypassed, but the restored road will be protected from future river erosion and slumping. Re-commissioning and lengthening of Downey Creek Bridge is another example of Alternative B reusing past investments to improve the protection of the environment, while improving the	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		reliability of the road corridor. The remaining road bed – from Downey Creek to the Sulfur Creek campground and Suiattle trail head parking area – is in great shape and ready to be placed back in service. Once again, we see Alternative B making wise use of resources that are already “bought and paid for.” Alternative A and Alternative C – to varying degrees – fail to secure the economic, environmental, recreational, and administrative benefits of Alternative B. Alternative A and Alternative C offer the worst of what our short-sighted, throwaway culture could impose upon the Suiattle River basin and the struggling Darrington community.		
282.	04/17/12 email	We favor replacing the road on the Suiattle River Road – we hiked and repaired the trails in this area before the road was closed and believe that replacement is merited. Concern should be given to seeing that replacement is environmentally correct, but the road replacement is for the public good.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
283.	04/17/12 email with attached PDF letter	I have attached The Wilderness Society’s comments on the Suiattle River Road Project Environmental Assessment. Please let me know if you have any difficulty with the attachment, or any questions. Best regards, <u>PDF attachment</u> : The Wilderness Society is pleased to submit these comments regarding the Suiattle River Road Project. Our organization works to protect wilderness and inspire Americans to care for wild places. To this end, we work in partnership with local communities, businesses, agencies, conservation organizations, recreationists, and local citizens to find solutions for the preservation and stewardship of national public lands. We deeply value access to our public lands, and wilderness areas in particular. <u>The Wilderness Society views the full restoration and repair of Suiattle Road beyond the Sulphur Creek Bridge as imperative; for this reason, we strongly support Alternative B.</u> In 2008, The Wilderness Society launched the North Cascades Initiative to protect and enhance the wildlands and waters of the region. The focus of the North Cascades Initiative is twofold: (1) protect wildlands through public land designations as well as private land acquisition; and (2) expand opportunities for responsible, reasonable recreation on our public lands. Over the next ten years, The Wilderness Society will work with myriad partners to achieve our ambitious protection and recreation goals. The Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest—and the Darrington District—are integral partners as we move forward with our work in the North Cascades. The Suiattle Road (Forest Road 26) is one of the	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		<p>few access roads and western portals to the majestic Glacier Peak Wilderness, one of the most wild and least accessible wilderness areas in the state due to its rugged terrain. With the loss of the upper portion of the White Chuck River Road (FR23), the Suiattle is a crucial access point to the wilderness. Seven trailheads, two campgrounds, 27 miles of the wild and scenic Suiattle River, and tens of thousands of acres of forest provide countless recreational opportunities for all ages and interests along this route. More than 120 miles of trail is accessible via the seven trailheads along the road; 113 miles (93 percent) of these trails are within the Glacier Peak Wilderness area. The Wilderness Society strongly supports Alternative B, reopening the Suiattle River Road to Sulphur Bridge (milepost 22.9), because of the following: <u>It will reopen important recreational resources that provide opportunities for all ages, interests, and ability levels to explore the wildlands and waters of the Suiattle, Glacier Peak Wilderness, and beyond.</u> Many of these resources have been underutilized since 2003, and most have seen very little use since 2006. Green Mountain trail use has decreased 98 percent (from 1,414 to 19 reported users) since 2006 and although trails such as the Suiattle, Pacific Crest Trail, and Upper Suiattle River have all been restored since 2006, few have been able to enjoy the new trails. <u>It will reopen important cultural resources for elders and tribal members to traditional and cultural areas along the Suiattle River.</u> Without repairs, the last 10.6 miles of the Suiattle Road as well as seven miles of other roads are inaccessible by motorized vehicles. These closures extremely limit access to traditional and cultural areas and opportunities to gather traditional forest products such as cedar, mushrooms, and berries. <u>There is broad public support for reopening the road.</u> Scoping comments gathered in 2011 showed that 90 percent of responders want the Suiattle Road reopened as soon as possible (Environmental Assessment, page 21). At the public meeting held in Everett on March 29, 2012, anecdotal evidence showed strong support for restoration of the road for all. <u>The various site repairs and road enhancement activities have been well studied through various plans, assessments, and reviews over the years.</u> The Environmental Assessment presents a strong case for implementing Alternative B, and it is the only alternative most consistent with the Forest Plan, the Forest Roads Analysis, and the Access and Travel Management Plan. <u>The Federal Highway Administration has the</u></p>		

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		<p><u>money in hand to complete the repairs and open the road by 2013.</u> Funding for any public infrastructure project is limited in the present economic situation and federal funding for road repair has declined significantly over the years. Through the political leadership of congressional representative Rick Larsen, the \$4 million in funds from the Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads program is available until September 2013. Through an innovative partnership with the Sauk-Suiattle Tribe, additional funding for the Downey Creek Bridge repair has been secured through the state Salmon Recovery Funding Board program. Any delay in this project will jeopardize these hard-to-come-by funds for the repair and restoration of the road. <u>Reopening the road would allow the Forest Service to properly manage and maintain facilities along the road and in the wilderness.</u> While recreational use of the Suiattle Road has decreased significantly since 2003 and more so since 2006, the Forest Service has continued administrative management and maintenance of facilities along the road. Motorized access along the entire road is critical to providing adequate public safety, regulatory compliance, and maintenance of National Forest recreational sites and facilities. <u>Proposed repairs will enhance the outstandingly remarkable values of the Suiattle’s Wild and Scenic River designation.</u> Alternative B will enhance the wildlife, fish, and scenic values that led to the Suiattle’s designation by rerouting the road in several locations, reconnecting the river with its wetlands, and facilitating channel migration. The Downey Creek bridge extension and embankment removal will significantly improve fish passage and restore the floodplain of the creek. <u>Reopening the road would increase visitors to the area, thereby increasing economic activity in the greater Darrington area.</u> The cumulative effects of 2003, 2006, and 2007 flood events have resulted in a reduced number of tourists and visitors to Darrington businesses as well as the Darrington Ranger Station (Environmental Assessment, page 147). While reopening the road may have a small positive economic impact on the town of Darrington, any increase in activity is good for the local economy. The Wilderness Society strongly supports Alternative B and hopes to see the Suiattle Road restored in its entirety as early as 2013. The road has been closed for nearly a decade, extremely limiting the ability of the public to enjoy the multitude of recreational opportunities along the corridor. The Wilderness Society firmly believes to create future stewards of our public</p>		

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		resources we must provide the opportunity for people to experience the rivers, trails, lakes, forests, and peaks that will inspire them to care. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Environmental Assessment. The Wilderness Society is confident that Alternative B presents the best opportunity to protect the environmental integrity of the area and provide critical access to valued recreational resources. Feel free to contact Kitty Craig, Regional Conservation Representative, at (206) 624-6430 or kcraig@tw.s.org with any questions or further comments regarding this comment letter or our work in the North Cascades.		
284.	04/17/12 email	I wholeheartedly support the opening of the Suiattle River Road. Planning for trips in the alpine has been hindered with its closure, and I am looking forward to the day it is finally reopened. Please make that day soon. As a hiker and climber, I know that I am one of many who hope that this project will not be put off any longer, as the road's closure has limited many from witnessing the wild beauty of the Suiattle and beyond.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
285.	04/17/12 email	I am an avid backpacker and camper and am writing to express my support of the restoration of the Suiattle River Road (Forest Road 26) to its end, beyond Sulphur Creek Bridge at Mile 22.9. I support Alternative B, as well as the repair of the eight damaged sites along the road. This will allow access to campgrounds, seven trailheads and parking for hikers, bikers and river enthusiasts, and allow for dispersed recreation. Since the flood events of the last decade, I have been unable to introduce my children to this area, which contains some of the best hiking, lakes and peaks of the western Glacier Peak Wilderness. I urge you to save the Suiattle Road and truly believe that Alternative B is our best chance to provide access to this beautiful, wild area.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
286.	04/17/12 email with attached MSWord letter	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle trailhead. The Suiattle River Road is access to 7 popular trailheads, 2 campgrounds and the Suiattle Guard Station cabin rental also access to the Pacific Crest Trail. With the loss of the White Chuck Road in 2003 and the road damage to the Suiattle River Road the only access to the PCT in the Darrington Ranger District is from the Sloan Creek Road, FS #49 which has dramatically increased use of equestrian, backpacking and climbers through this one access. I lament to mention that currently the Sloan Creek Road is also closed leaving no	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>access to the PCT from the Darrington Ranger District. Family car camping is an important part of our American heritage and a very affordable family vacation. When the Suiattle River Road was open both campgrounds and the Suiattle Guard Station were very popular. Having the campgrounds open to easy access was a very important part of the Darrington area revenues. The loss of the Suiattle River Road would make trail maintenance very difficult and expensive. It would also make it impossible for concessioners to maintain the campgrounds. The Suiattle basin is also a significant area for our Sauk-Suiattle Tribe as this was one the major areas of population. We need to keep access open for gathering of foods and natural materials and to keep car travel possible so elders can come to these special places. Alternative C would allow limited access, though providing a larger parking area at Green Mountain would not accommodate the vehicles during peak season. Seeing the increased traffic on the Sloan Creek Road since the loss of access from the White Chuck Road and Suiattle River Road is testament to this. You will find several cars parked at each trailhead on the Sloan Creek Road during summer and fall weekends. The Green Mountain parking area would have to be very large to accommodate visitors. It would also eliminate a large campground, and several popular day hikes.</p>		

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287.	04/17/12 email	Support of Alternative B I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. I believe the road should be repaired to the Suiattle River Trailhead the following reasons: The Suiattle River Road and its access to seven trailheads, two car campgrounds serves hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car campers, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance very difficult. Access to the west side of the Glacier Peak Wilderness is highly threatened already. When the North Fork Sauk washes out, you're left with virtually no access unless you plan to hike for 2 solid days just to get somewhere close. The Suiattle River Road is clearly the best access point, not only for Glacier Peak Wilderness, but also for other amazing terrain such as the Ptarmigan Traverse, Downey Creek and its wonderful old growth forest, Bath Lakes, and so much more. I also believe that Alternative B represents the most sound option from an environmental perspective. Alternative B calls for the wetlands area – which would be subject to further degradation under Alternative A – to be rehabilitated. Alternative B's relocation of the road further away from the river at the Huckleberry trailhead will help abate future washout threats. Likewise, Alternative C is would result in the new construction of a large parking lot to be built somewhere in the vicinity of the Green Mountain Horse Pasture. By contrast, Alternative B would restore access to the existing trailheads at Downey Creek trailhead and the road end. Thank you for considering my support of Alternative B.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
288.	04/17/12 email	I am a stock user with the Back Country Horsemen of Washington. We maintain trails throughout the state with pack and saddle stock support. We cannot sustain this effort without road access to the trailheads along with having suitable parking areas for trailer towing vehicles. Stock use on the Pacific Crest Trail and on connecting trails accessed from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 provides the only way to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. In addition to working and recreational access, this route was used for Search and Rescue operations. It is not sufficient to restore use for truck/trail combinations simply to the Green Mountain access trail (Alternative C). We need full restored access (Alternative B) which includes fixing the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and approaches.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
289.	04/17/12 email	Please try to open the Suiattle River road as soon as possible, before more damage and repairs become even more expensive. This road is a national heritage and should be preserved. My granddaughter is eleven years old and has not been able to see the wonders that this route has to offer. I am Everett Mountaineers scrambling instructor and have not been able to take students to see the wilderness beyond this road, so that they can participate in preserving this area. Thank you for your consideration.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
290.	04/17/12 email	1. I am a stock user with the Back Country Horsemen of Washington. We maintain trails throughout the state with pack and saddle stock support. We cannot sustain this effort without road access to the trailheads along with having suitable parking areas for trailer towing vehicles. 2. Stock use on the Pacific Crest Trail and on connecting trails accessed from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 provides the only way to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. In addition to working and recreational access, this route was used for Search and Rescue operations. 3. It is not sufficient to restore use for truck/trail combinations simply to the Green Mountain access trail (Alternative C). We need full restored access (Alternative B) which includes fixing the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and approaches. 4. Restoration of access for agency and volunteer maintenance of the trail systems must be given a top priority if we are to continue providing opportunities in the back country for the current and future generations of users. 5. The Back Country Horsemen of Washington endorse Alternative B as the only acceptable proposed Alternative for pack and saddle stock users	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
291.	04/17/12 email	I am a stock user with the Back Country Horsemen of Washington. We maintain trails throughout the state with pack and saddle stock support. We cannot sustain this effort without road access to the trailheads along with having suitable parking areas for trailer towing vehicles Stock use on the Pacific Crest Trail and on connecting trails accessed from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 provides the only way to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. In addition to working and recreational access, this route was used for Search and Rescue operations. It is not sufficient to restore use for truck/trail combinations simply to the Green Mountain access trail (Alternative C). We need full restored access (Alternative B) which includes fixing the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and approaches. Restoration of access for agency and volunteer maintenance of the trail systems must be given a top priority if we are to continue providing opportunities in the back country for the current and future generations of users. The Back Country Horsemen of Washington endorse Alternative B as the only acceptable proposed Alternative for pack and saddle stock users.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
292.	04/17/12 email	<p>Re: Suiattle River Road Project: Support of Alternative B I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. I believe the road should be repaired to the Suiattle River Trailhead the following reasons: The Suiattle River Road and its access to seven trailheads, two car campgrounds serves hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car campers, kayakers, equestrians, trail runners, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance very difficult. Due to the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003 and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail has become overused by equestrians, hunters, climbers and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the campgrounds have been overrun and deteriorated. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired to its end, the continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will further degrade the wilderness experience of people entering the Glacier Peak Wilderness. I also believe that Alternative B represents the most sound option from an environmental perspective. Alternative B calls for the wetlands area – which would be subject to further degradation under Alternative A – to be rehabilitated. Alternative B’s relocation of the road further away from the river at the Huckleberry trailhead will help abate future washout threats. Likewise, Alternative C is would result in the new construction of a large parking lot to be built somewhere in the vicinity of the Green Mountain Horse Pasture. By contrast, Alternative B would restore access to the existing trailheads at Downey Creek trailhead and the road end. Thank you for considering my support of Alternative B.</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
293.	04/17/12 email	We urge you and other decision makers to find a way to proceed with repairs to the entire Suiattle Road near Glacier Peak in Washington State. The entire road needs to be repaired and kept in repair because of the stunning hiking opportunities in the area. We are dismayed that we are unable to get to one of our very favorite trails, Green Mountain, as a day hike anymore. We used to do Green Mountain as a day hike every year until the road closed in 2006. It is now beyond our reach, especially as we are now in our mid-sixties and would find it prohibitively difficult to do an overnight backpack for the many miles of walking that are now required just to reach the trailhead for Green Mountain. We used to take our children on the Green Mountain hike and would like to do the same for our grandchildren. It is important to preserve our great trails in Washington state. We should be encouraging people to engage in healthy activities, to exercise, and to get outdoors in fresh air and natural beauty. It is a huge step backwards to allow our trails to become inaccessible. By getting people into the wilderness, we will be creating advocates for preserving natural wilderness areas for the future. By providing access to the Suiattle Road, Green Mountain, and our other beautiful hiking areas, we can assure that our present and future voters will grow to appreciate and value our state's natural treasures.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
294.	04/17/12 email	It has come to my attention that the planed and funded repair of the Suiattle River Road is now some how in jeopardy of being completed. I have been a resident of Washington all of my 54 years and have spent many wonderful days enjoying this area. I was actually camping in this area the day My St Helens erupted. I'm at a little loss of why this has become an environmental issue at this stage of the game as it seems with the long history of the road the minimal impact should be well established. I have personally observed this area over the years and how well it has been maintained in a pristine presence especially compared to other areas such as the sultan basin. Maybe this has come with age but as I continue my enjoyment of this great Pacific Northwest I have noticed more and more older hikers out enjoying the beauty and most importantly staying fit doing so. This road needs to be restored so that those who are no longer able to take in long hikes (this could be us some day) can still get out and enjoy their forests. Leaving extended hikes just to get to trail heads is wrong in so many ways and is a dis-service to the public who use the lands. On day trips we use to make the loop and stop in Darrington at the corner gas station for an ice cream or dinner to finish off the day. Without the road that can not happen. I hope that those in charge will come to their senses and restore this road for the generations to come, it truly is a special place in the hearts of many. As I stated before, this area has been open to the public for as long as I can remember and impact from the public has been minimal especially compared to the benefits. Please restore the Suiattle River Road.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
295.	04/17/12 email	I am a Snohomish County resident and back country skier, hiker, hunter and climber who supports the repairs necessary to reopen this important access road.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
296.	04/17/12 email	Re: Suiattle River Road Project: Support of Alternative B I have briefly reviewed the plan alternatives for the Suiattle River Road and I support option B. I have enjoyed several the the hikes available from the road prior to its washout and the extra mileage is a barrier to my repeating those hikes.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
297.	04/17/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead for the following reason(s): The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed camping, berry picking, and picnicking. I recognize the high cost of maintenance does not warrant	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		<p>keeping them open and they are no longer needed. However, the Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads and 2 car-camp grounds is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen, and the simple enjoyment of being outdoors. Page 3 of the EA points out that the Suiattle River Road is a “high need road” as determined by The 2003 MBS Forest-wide Roads Analysis. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult as well as restricting access permanently to an area that has traditionally been enjoyed by multitudes of people and has cultural significance to local Indian tribes. Furthermore, volunteer efforts are critical to trail maintenance and recruiting volunteers to walk 24 miles round trip to work on trails would be extremely difficult. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing which would be good for fish. The Indian tribes support repairing this bridge and improving fish habitat and according to section 1.9 of the EA a Salmon Recovery Board Fund grant was approved in 2011 which would provide funding for this repair. Reopening this road would also have a beneficial effect on the economies of local towns such as Darrington. In summary, there are many good reasons to repair and reopen this road and restore access to this wonderful area. It has been too long that the public has been unable to access this area and the improvements to be implemented in the construction of the new road would benefit riparian and wetland areas and improve fish habitat. Let’s please move forward with alternative B and restore access to a beautiful and important area of our public lands. Sincerely, PS--I have hiked and worked with volunteer trail crews on a number of occasions in that area prior to the most recent washout.</p>		

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		The last time was through the glorious old growth forest on the Sulfur Creek Trail with my daughter who was just a toddler at the time. She's eleven now and I hope to share future wanderings with her in one of my favorite areas in the North Cascades...the Suiattle River watershed.		
298.	04/17/12 email	Please re-open the Suiattle River Road! There are much needed and appreciated recreational opportunities that are currently inaccessible. I strongly prefer option B.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
299.	04/18/12 email with attached MSWord letter and CCs to gpaul@fs.fed.us ; plreed@fs.fed.us ; pforbes@fs.fed.us ; Mike Dawson	Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Suiattle River Road Project Environmental Assessment (EA) dated March 2012. We are happy to assist you with this process to achieve the proper protection for the Glacier Peak Wilderness while still allowing reasonable access to the public. The Suiattle River Road provides critical access to some of the more remote and pristine sections of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT), therefore, we are writing to express our strong support to restore the Suiattle River Road to its original terminus as described in Alternative B of the EA. The PCT was designated by Congress in 1968 as part of the National Scenic Trails System Act (Public Law 90-543). The PCT extends for 2,650 miles from Mexico to Canada through some of our nation's most wild, remote, pristine, and scenic areas. It passes through 3 National Monuments, 7 National Parks, 24 National Forests, and 33 Federally Designated Wilderness Areas. Zigzagging its way through California, Oregon and Washington the PCT boasts the greatest elevation changes of any of America's National Scenic Trails, allowing it to pass through six out of seven of North America's ecozones including high and low desert, old-growth forest and arctic-alpine country. Indeed, the PCT is a trail of diversity and extremes. It is one of America's great scenic treasures that should remain reasonably accessible for all to enjoy. The Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA) is a non-profit organization with more than 9000 members. Our mission is to protect, preserve and promote the PCT as an internationally significant resource for the enjoyment of hikers and equestrians, and for the value that wild and scenic lands provide to all people. A Memorandum of Understanding signed by the PCTA, the US Forest Service (USFS), the Bureau of Land Management, and the National Park Service "recognize(s) the PCTA as the major partner in the management and operations of the PCT." In 2011, programs organized under the PCTA's leadership and coordination provided over 118,000	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>hours of volunteer labor to manage the trail on the ground with an in-kind value exceeding \$2.5 million. In addition to providing a plethora of outstanding recreational opportunities, the Suiattle River Road provides critical access also needed for trail maintenance projects. In 2003, the flood washed away three major trail bridges on the PCT in the area. The lack of road access caused extreme logistical challenges while working to replace some of these existing structures. As funding for Forest Service staff continues to be squeezed, volunteer stewardship opportunities are being recognized as a long-term, sustainable way to take care of our public lands. The number of volunteer projects that are being hosted by PCTA and our partners are growing every year. It will not be practical to expect volunteers to travel such a long distance to reach the PCT. Consequently, less and less trail maintenance will be done resulting in a less desirable trail experience with increasing safety concerns. Before the floods, the PCT could also be accessed from the White Chuck Trail via White Chuck Road. In 2011, the upper 5 miles of White Chuck Road were decommissioned due to flood damage and access is no longer an option. To currently access the PCT, an additional 10.6 miles of walking up the increasingly deteriorating Suiattle River Road is required (21.2 mile round-trip). It has been observed that the majority of PCT users are now accessing the trail from the east side. As a result, less PCT users are stopping in Darrington on their way to the trail for gas, food, lodging, and supplies; diminishing their economic impact from the local community. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments on the EA. If you have any questions or would like any additional information please feel free to contact me.</p>		
300.	04/18/12 email	<p>I am writing in regards to the Suiattle River Road EA. I ask that you proceed with Alternative B which would repair and restore full access along Forest Road 26 to the Suiattle Trail (784) trailhead in the MBS National Forest. I enjoy riding my mules in the mountains and have used this trail in the past. As a mule rider I would be pulling a horse trailer on USFS 26 and the only viable parking or turn around area is the Historic Trailhead near Sulphur Creek. The only way to restore access to stock riders of this primary access trail (784) would be Alternative B and full restoration of FS 26. Annual trail maintenance costs could also be reduced by providing full access with Alternative B, as this trail is a primary arterial into the</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		Glacier Peak Wilderness. With FS 26 restored a shorter access to the entire trail system north of Glacier Peak would be provided to the Forest Service, its maintenance contractors and volunteer workparty groups that show up for only one day of trailwork. I am opposed to Alt. "A" which would effectively lock users out of this portion of Our National Forest and Wilderness area unless the user possessed the time and means for an extended trip via other routes. Certainly a small and select user group. I am opposed to Alt. "C" which unjustly provides access to a single user group, foot traffic. Alternative C would not restore the road or trail to a condition that would allow stock access. Federal projects are to provide equal access for all. In fact the Suiattle trail used to be one of the only trails to provide a handicapped access into the wilderness experience, as the lower section of the trail was handicapped accessible from the trailhead for a ways. In fact I was part of a volunteer workparty that rerouted the trail around a historically large tree which fell across the trail along the handicapped accessible portion. This trail work was right before the original storm damage in 2003. Please restore full access to this trail by approving Alternative B.		
301.	04/18/12 email	I would like to take this opportunity to voice my support for "Alternative B" in the Suiattle River EA. Alternative B is the only option that provides for adequate parking facilities, and all important stock access to the trailhead for the Suiattle Trail #784, which accesses the PCT. This access is critical to the trail maintenance activities on the PCT, as well as in the Glacier Peak Wilderness area. The bottom line: As a now "senior citizen", without this trailhead access, I will most likely NEVER be able to access this area again. Select Alternative B!	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
302.	04/18/12 email	Repair of roads is basic to your management of our tax payer dollars. If packers and riders/campers cannot gain access to areas in the forest and as a result we have nowhere to use our animals and have to give them up, it will really hurt our state's economy. Horse and horse related activities represents 4 billion dollars a year in our state. Losing that would be a major hit to Washington State's bottom line.	B/C	Thank you, your comment is noted.
303.	04/18/12 email	Please retain access to the Glacier Peak Wilderness via the Suiattle River Road. This area is a treasure for current and future generations but the public won't know it if there's no way to enjoy it. An educated and inspired public is the best route to sustainable conservation.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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304.	04/18/12 letter	The Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe supports alternative B in the Suiattle River Road project WAFS ERFO 071-2023.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
305.	04/18/12 email	I am a stock user in WA State and a supporter of recreation on our National Forests. I want full road restoration Alternative B. I became a stock user in 2005 and have road all over but have not yet to have the changer to ride this area do to the road closer. It would be great to have the change to ride this area from the Westside.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
306.	04/18/12 email	As a recreational saddle and pack stock user, access to our public lands and the associated backcountry is vital. For too long now Glacier Peak, the PCT and connecting trailheads have been virtually inaccessible via the Suiattle River Road. The draft Environmental Assessment realistically has only one viable alternative, Alternative B. Repair and realignment of Forest Service Road #26 to its terminus at Sulphur Creek Campground makes sense for a number of reasons. Economically the 'Mountain Loop' communities of Darrington and Granite Falls are dependent on eco-tourism dollars. Reduction in logging on National Forest lands has caused great hardships on these communities and the surrounding area. Alternative B would restore recreational access so long denied, to the public, who otherwise would be unable to enjoy Glacier Peak and the Suiattle River. These families and others would bring dollars to Loop Communities. Safety is always paramount, especially in the backcountry. Alternative B would allow quick and easier access for fire, law enforcement, search and rescue, and other medical providers. Rebuilt and repaired bridges at Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek would allow full access to the Suiattle Trail and the PCT. Funding is available for the repair/realignment of the entire road. Tribes and Fisheries, in cooperation, have agreed and support Alt. B. Through grant money, Downey Creek Bridge reconstruction is funded. Alternative B with reconstruction/repair to Sulphur Creek campground allows for parking areas large enough to accommodate tow vehicles with horse trailers. The other alternatives provide NO parking for these vehicles. Saddle and pack stock users volunteer tens-of-thousands of hours to construct, repair and maintain backcountry trails. Without full access to the terminus of Road #26, this volunteer activity has been curtailed. Alternative B would, again, provide access to campgrounds with sufficient parking and relative closeness to trails in need of repair.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

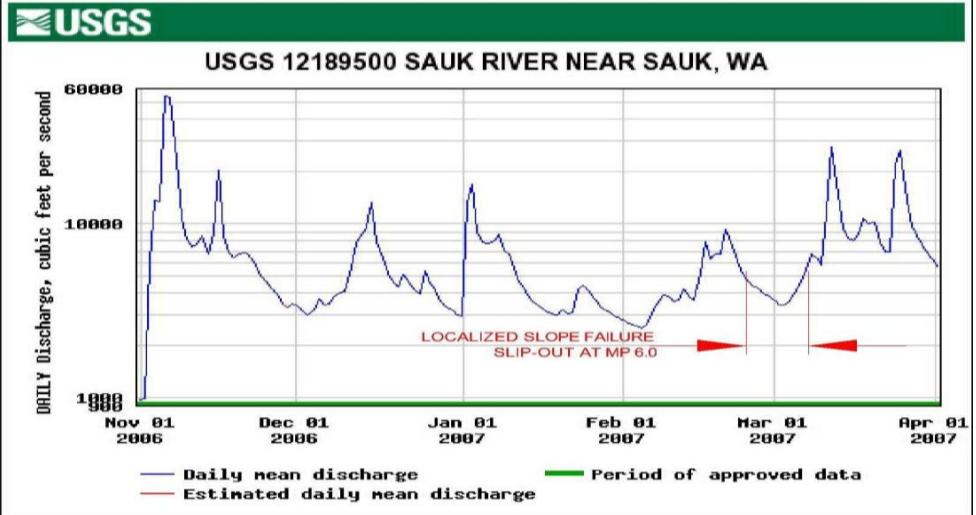
	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
307.	04/18/12 email	I support Option B, which would restore this road to where it had ended before the devastating floods and washouts eliminated it as a main portal of entrance from the west to the Glacier Peak Wilderness. My reasons for supporting Option B are personal; I miss the access to the areas served by the network of trails that prior to the road closure I often used, and I believe that opening the road to the end would reduce traffic on the currently over used North Fork Sauk River road and the trails which it accesses. I believe that the closure of the Suiattle River Road has also increased traffic on the eastern portals to the Wilderness, especially from the Trinity and Spider Meadows trailheads. Certainly funding is hard to come by, but I can't imagine any project which would result in more bang for the buck than would Option B. Thank you for your consideration.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
308.	04/18/12 email	I am writing to let you know I support repairing the Suiattle Road to Suiattle trailhead, (alternative B).	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
309.	04/18/12 letter (per FHWA RECEIVE D stamp, not USPS postmark)	Please let it be known that I would like the Suiattle River Road be opened to the end.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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310.	04/18/12 email	My name is Tamara King and stock access to public lands is very important to us in our household. I am a member of several equine associations one being the Back Country Horsemen of Washington aka BCHW. One of the functions of this group is helping to maintain trails throughout the state with pack and saddle stock support. We cannot sustain this effort without road access to the trailheads along with having suitable parking areas for trailer towing vehicles. Our family and friends frequently seek stock use on the Pacific Crest Trail and on connecting trails. Access from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 provides the only way to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. In addition to working and recreational access, this route was used for Search and Rescue operations. It is not sufficient to restore use for truck/trail combinations simply to the Green Mountain access trail (Alternative C). We need full restored access (Alternative B) which includes fixing the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and approaches. Restoration of access for agency and volunteer maintenance of the trail systems must be given a top priority if we are to continue providing opportunities in the back country for the current and future generations of users. The Back Country Horsemen of Washington endorse Alternative B as the only acceptable proposed Alternative for pack and saddle stock users.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
311.	04/18/12 email	The road needs to be repaired to its former terminus past Sulfur Creek for stock trailer so we can use the major trail heads.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

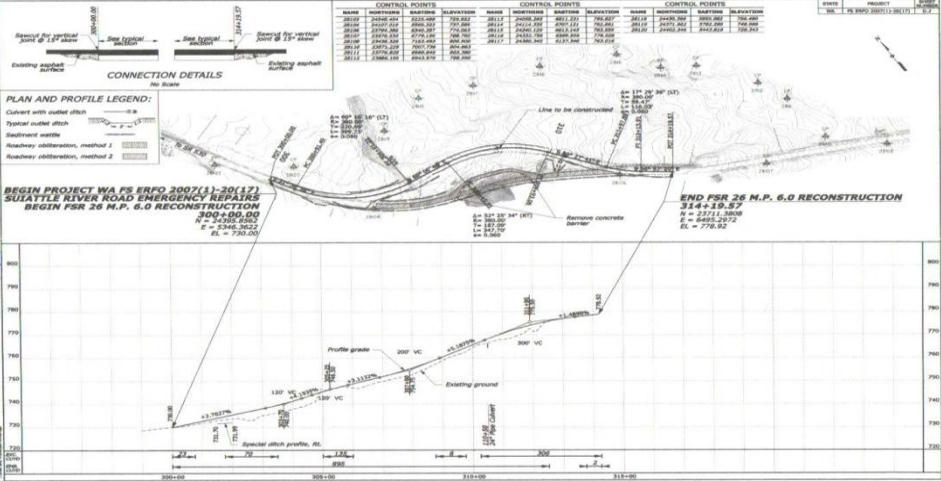
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312.	04/18/12 email with attached PDFs	<p><u>Email:</u> First PDF attachment (“Lider Engineering Suiattle EA Review <u>Comments 18 April 2012</u>”):</p> <p>I am pleased that the Western Federal Lands Highway Division (WFLHD) has seen fit to withdraw its Categorical Exclusion (CE) and prepare an EA for the Suiattle River Road repairs. However the EA that has been released for public comment is not only incomplete, but it appears have essentially no significant changes from the inappropriate CE that had been previously authorized for construction. Many changes are still required to meet minimum acceptability. Comment 1 - The road design still includes “freeway-like” design elements such as excessive clearing limits, large radius curves, and un-maintainable cut/fill banks that are inappropriate for a forest road dead-ending at a wilderness area. There is inadequate wetland mitigation; culverts are not designed for fish passage; and most egregiously, there are major violations of Federal Law, Title 23 United States Code, Sections 120 and 125 with the improper use of Emergency Relief for Federally Owned (ERFO) road funds.</p> <p><u>GENERAL:</u> Comment 2: While none of the WFLHD alternatives proposed in the EA are acceptable, it is possible to salvage a portion of this project to re-open Road 26 for vehicular access as far as Road 2608, the Green Mountain Road. Therefore it is recommended that WFLHD <u>adopt Alternative C, with modifications</u> as follows: Permanently close and decommission Road 26 east of its junction with Road 2608 including the removal of all bridges and culverts Convert the closed road section for foot and pack animal traffic Analyze the impacts of re-opening Road 2608, including culvert replacement on Road 2608 and mining impacts at the Green Mountain Pit located at MP 2.4 Remove the Downey Creek Bridge and do not construct the “causeway”; provide a smaller bridge suitable for foot and pack animal use to protect critical Chinook salmon spawning habitat. Reduce the road speed for design repairs from MP 12.6 to Road 2608 to no more than 25 mph, with a variance for sight and stopping distance areas of constricted lane width. Maximum clearing limits should be 7’ either side of the travelled lane. All road repairs should be slope staked at intervals not exceeding 50-feet. Realign the road segment as</p>		<p>Response 1: Staff from FHWA and the USFS reviewed the proposed road design in spring of 2012 in consideration of comments on the concerns of excessive clearing limits. Clearing limits have been reduced.</p> <p>Response 2: The EA provides a range of alternatives including alternatives not within the jurisdiction of FHWA, the lead agency. Several of these alternatives were considered, but eliminated from detailed study, as described starting on page 24 of the EA. These alternatives represent part of the range of alternatives studied by the ID Team and considered by the Responsible Official</p>

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		<p>suggested between MP 12.7 and MP 13.5 (Station 117.86 to Station 178+03) to avoid the destruction and fracturing of the old growth forest, Late Successional Reserve (LSR) trees. Removal of these trees violates the Northwest Forest Plan Realign the Road at MP 6.0 to reduce costs and limit impacts on State land.</p> <p>Comment 3: Provide the dates of all photographs used in the EA. Comment 4: All comments raised in the lawsuit appeal of the earlier Suiattle River Road EA filed on May 10, 2011 against the USFS and WFLHD remain and by reference are <i>incorporated (see Appendix F)</i> Comment 5: NEPA has two primary goals: (1) to insure that the agency has fully contemplated the environmental effects of its action; and (2) to insure the public has sufficient information to challenge the agency. <i>Idaho Sporting Congress v. Thomas</i>, 137 F.3d 1146, 1151 (9th Cir. 1998); see also, <i>Price Road Neighborhood Ass’n v. U.S. Dept. of Transp.</i>, 113 F.3d 1505, 1511 (9th Cir. 1997) (“one of the twin aims of NEPA is active public involvement and access to information”); <i>Columbia Basin Land Preservation v. Schlesinger</i>, 643 F.2d 585, 592 (9th Cir. 1981) (the preparation of a NEPA document ensures that the public “can evaluate the environmental consequences independently”). NEPA “guarantees that the relevant information will be made available to the larger audience that may also play a role in both the decision-making process and the implementation of that decision.” <i>Robertson v. Methow Valley Citizens</i>, 490 U.S. 332, 349, 109 S.Ct. 1835 (1989). Specifically, NEPA places on the Forest Service an affirmative duty to disclose and analyze scientific information counseling against the action proposed by the agency or calling into question the expected environmental effects of a proposed action. 40 C.F.R. §§ 1502.9(b), 1502.24. See also, 40 C.F.R. §1508.27(b)(4). The Ninth Circuit has repeatedly confirmed that NEPA does not allow an agency to simply disregard contrary science that is directly applicable to its proposal. <i>Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project v. Blackwood</i>, 161 F.3d 1208 (9th Cir. 1998); <i>Center for Biological Diversity v. U.S. Forest Serv.</i>, 349 F.3d 1157, 1169 (9th Cir. 2003); <i>Seattle Audubon Society v. Lyons</i>, 871 F.Supp. 1291, 1318 (W.D. Wash. 1994), aff’d sub nom., <i>Seattle Audubon Society v. Moseley</i>, 80 F.3d 1401 (9th Cir. 1996) (NEPA requires the agency to “disclose responsible scientific opinion in opposition to the proposed action, and make a good faith, reasoned response to it”); <i>Seattle Audubon Society v. Espy</i>, 998 F.2d 699 (9th Cir. 1993) (the</p>		<p>Response 3: – Cover photo and Figure 2 photos – March 14, 2010 Figure 6 -November 2003 – photo from 2006 EA Figure 7- summer 2007 Figure 8- October 2003 – photo from 2006 EA Figure 9- October 2003 – photo from 2006 EA Response 4: comment note –See Appendix F Response 5: There is not scientific controversy regarding the proposed repairs at MP 20.8. There are successive environmental reports with differing conclusions based on the extent of information gathered at the time of the report. The report from SK Geotechnical Services provided an early opinion based on visual assessments (March 2009). Due to the stability concerns raised by this report, the USFS preformed additional site reviews, and measurements and contracted for drilling equipment to bore core samples at the MP 20.8 site (Dec., 2009). Based on the new information, the final slope assessment (USDA Forest Service, 2011) was that the proposed shift into the hillside was a reasonable alternative to maintain access and to limit disturbance to fish or habitat. See the EA pages 77 to 82 for fisheries effects, and pages 11 to 112 for soils, channel dynamics and water quality effects.</p>

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		<p>failure to disclose and respond to the opinions held by well-respected scientists concerning the hazards of a proposed action “is fatally deficient”); <i>Silva v. Lynn</i>, 482 F.2d 1282, 1285 (1st Cir. 1973) (“[NEPA] helps insure the integrity of the process of decision by precluding stubborn problems or serious criticism from being swept under the rug”). The courts have also been clear that the only appropriate place to disclose and discuss a scientific controversy is in the body of the NEPA document itself. <i>Blackwood</i>, 161 F.3d at 1214 (invalidating an environmental document that “contains virtually no references to any material in support of or in opposition to its conclusions. That is where the Forest Service’s defense of its position must be found”). Here, a significant scientific controversy exists about the validity, integrity, and longevity of the proposed repairs to the Suiattle River Road. Geotechnical reports prepared by third party contractors SK Geotechnical and Herrerra Associates suggest that FHWA’s proposed design for the road repairs are inadequate, and that the Suiattle River Road is likely to fail again in the near future, despite – or even because of – the proposed repairs. Indeed, internal Forest Service documents also disclose the instability of the current and proposed road alignment and repairs, and indicates that they are likely to fail again in the future. The EA fails to disclose this information and provide a reasoned explanation for why FHWA and the USFS have chosen design plans and mitigation measures that are unlikely to remain stable. For the purpose of my specific comments, I have organized my comments by each road failure location referenced in the EA. <u>1.0 Mile Post 6.0 REPAIRS 1.1 No Flood</u> in 2007: Comment 6: On or about February 28, 2007 there was a localized slope failure (slip-out) for approximately 165 feet at MP 6.0. Throughout the EA, it is erroneously claimed that the slope failure at Mile Post 6.0 was the result of floods in 2007 in order to qualify the road repair for ERFO funding in violation of Federal law. However, WFLHD has not been able to produce any corroboration that a flood ever occurred on the Suiattle in the late February or early March period of 2007. Indeed the nearest stream gauging station (USGS 12189500 on the Sauk River near Sauk, WA several miles downstream of the confluence of the Sauk River and the Suiattle River recorded low flows during the period of the alleged flood at approximately 3,500 cfs.</p>		<p>Response 6: The November 2006 storm event was a fiscal year 2007. It was that storm event that caused damage to MP 6.0 and for which repairs were authorized under the ERFO program. Though the actual failure was not realized until February/March 2007, the failure was caused by the undercutting of the slope in the November 2006 (2007 ERFO year) storm.</p> <p>A Presidential Disaster Declaration was made, which created eligibility. A Disaster Assessment Report was not completed.</p>

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		 <p>Figure 1: USGS Sauk River Gauge data, Daily Discharge in cfs for the period Nov 1, 2007 to Apr 1, 2007</p> <p>Flows in the Suiattle River can be considered approximately proportional to those measured by the Sauk River gauge. As Figure 1 illustrates not only were flows after the Nov 6, 2006 flood normal, they were indeed low when compared to the normally anticipated winter storm flows. The flows in the Sauk River during the November 2006 flood exceed 59,000 cfs; yet the flow at the time of the localized MP 6.0 failure was only about 3,500 cfs. Rainfall data for this period from the USFS rain gauge in Darrington for this period also substantiates that there was no flood event associated with localized slope failure or slip-out when the MP 6.0 slide is alleged to have occurred. No documentation has been provided whatsoever in previous FOIA requests to the WFLHD or the USFS to substantiate the alleged 2007 flood event ever occurred or that on or about February 28, 2007 there was a presidential or gubernatorial disaster declaration for a region wide storm event that qualifies the MP 6.0 repair for emergency relief funds under 23 CFR § 668.101. The EA should provide documentation for 2007 flood event that is claimed for use</p>		<p>Response 7: Without the context of the comment from the USFS</p>

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		<p>of ERFO funds on this project. 1.2 Failure to Maintain: Comment 7: The February 2007 MP 6.0 slope failure was not the result of an area wide storm over the National Forest, but was attributed to lack of maintenance by forest spokesperson Allen Gibbs, who was quoted in the Everett Herald April 20, 2007 edition regarding the MP 6.0 slope failure as stating, “The road damage that is being seen today is a culmination of the Forest Service’s not being able to maintain roads for more than a decade.” 23CFR§ 668.103 defines a “catastrophic failure” as: <i>Catastrophic failure.</i> The sudden failure of a major element or segment of the highway system due to an external cause. <u>The failure must not be primarily attributable to gradual and progressive deterioration or lack of proper maintenance.</u> The closure of a facility because of imminent danger of collapse is not in itself a sudden failure. (Emphasis Added) Therefore, because the USFS spokesperson publically acknowledged and attributed this road failure as a result of the lack of proper maintenance, the MP 6.0 localized slope failure fails to qualify as a catastrophic failure for emergency relief funds under 23CFR§ 668.103. 1.3 No Economic Comment 8: Justification for Betterment <i>Betterments</i> are added protective features, such as rebuilding of roadways at a higher elevation or the lengthening of bridges, or changes which modify the function or character of a highway facility from what existed prior to the disaster or catastrophic failure, such as additional lanes or added access control. ER funds may only be used where they clearly economically justified to prevent future recurring damage. Economic justification must weigh the cost of betterment against the risk of eligible recurring damage and the cost of future repair per 23CFR§ 668.109(b)(6). In February 2008 the WFLHD prepared a design showing a 1,420 foot re-route repair of the 165 foot localized MP 6 slide, Figure 2 with a construction cost estimate \$479,554. Subsequently the USFS requested that this design be abandoned for a much larger betterment that relocated the road for a distance 2,550 feet at a revised cost of over \$1,048,000; this larger betterment was never justified. FOIA requests to the WFLHD document that there was no benefit cost analysis performed for the betterment proposed in the EA to justify that it qualifies for ERFO funding.</p>		<p>spokesperson, it is speculation that the quote from the Everett Herald is specifically addressing the lack of maintenance at MP 6.0. A copy of the article referenced was requested from the Everett Herald, and the Everett Herald could not find it in their records. Despite what may or may not have been said, the facts show that the failure was not due to a lack of proper maintenance, but to the undercutting of the slope by the fall 2006 flood. See EA page 8 for damage description at MP 6.0.</p> <p>Response 8: Not every change in location is a betterment. Some changes are made because it is not possible to replace at the same location, either because of changes in topography or because of legal impediments. Such changes are not betterments. No betterments are approved for this road with ERFO funding.</p> <p>The USFS responded to the FOIA request in correspondence dated 01/13/12. The EA explains on pages 91 to 94 the situation with the proposed repair and the channel migration zone at MP 6.0. The EA on page 94 provides notes from the 2010 field trip that explains the current proposed route was located to meet Washington State DNR Board manual direction on road construction in relation to the Suiattle River channel migration zone. The 2008 proposal did not meet this direction.</p>

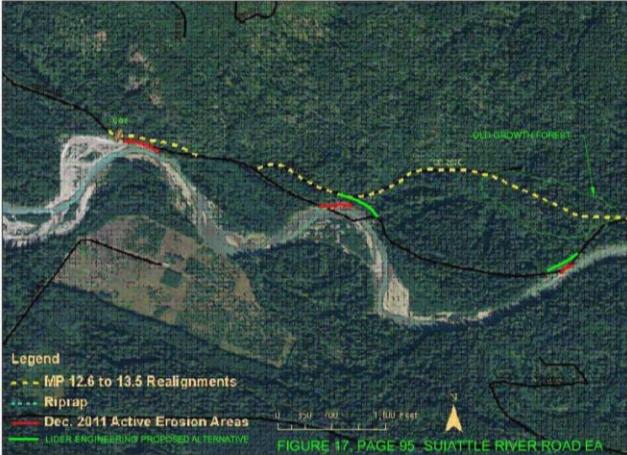
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		 <p>Figure 2: 1,420 foot short bypass that was rejected by the USFS for the more expensive and economically unjustified route proposed in the EA. No Benefit/Cost Analysis was ever prepared for the half mile betterment or produced as a part of the FOIA information request to show that the half mile road relocation is even economically justified as required under ERFO. The ERFO <i>Disaster Assistance Handbook</i>, 2004 edition states: 4.5 Betterments – The ERFO Program is intended to assist the applicant in repairing damaged highway facilities to their pre-disaster condition. In-kind restoration is the predominate type of repair. Added features (betterments) that help protect highway facilities from possible future damage and are economically justified through a benefit/cost analysis may be approved. Requests for funding betterments must be submitted by the applicant to the Federal Lands Highway Division Engineer for approval. A justification and economic analysis should be provided at the time the Damage Site Survey Team prepares the Damage Survey Report. (a) Benefit/Cost Analysis. Betterments must be economically justified to the ERFO Program through a benefit/cost analysis. The analysis must be based solely on the benefit of the projected savings in recurring eligible ERFO repair costs should future disasters occur and the cost of the betterment. When calculating the projected savings (benefits) subtract the estimated</p>		

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		<p>cost of repairing the site with the betterment from the estimated cost of repairing the site again without the betterment. The analysis cannot include other factors typically included in highway benefit/cost evaluations, such as traffic delay costs, added user costs, motorist safety, and economic impacts. Betterments that fail to meet the test of being economically justified for ERFO funding should not necessarily be excluded from the ERFO repair project. If a betterment provides considerable benefit when other factors are considered, the Applicant is encouraged to use other Federal Lands Highway Program funds, agency funds, or local funds, as appropriate, to fund the betterment. It should be noted that the “temporary” repair that was completed in spring 2007 is only approximately 200 to 300 feet in length and has functioned adequately now for nearly 5-years. Therefore, because no benefit/cost analysis was ever performed, the MP 6.0 repairs fail to qualify as an economically justified betterment under 23CFR§ 668.109(b)(6). Comment 9: Should the USFS and WFLHD desire to construct half mile road relocation betterment, then they must seek other funding sources other than ERFO. Comment 10: 1.4 Failure to Make ERFO Repairs a Priority 23CFR§ 668.205(b) states “Emergency relief work shall be given prompt attention and priority over non-emergency work.” This was not done. To make this repair a priority, staff should be working a minimum of 30-hours per week dedicated to the emergency project in question; time sheets showing overtime work or employee time documentation appears not to exist. Indeed, neither the USFS nor the WFLHD prepared a simple project schedule such as a Gantt chart, showing milestone dates and how they proposed to complete this work within 2-years after the end of the fiscal year in which the disaster occurred. (Reference 23CFR§ 668.205(e)) Indeed, just being busy with other non-emergency work appears to be sufficient justification for WFLHD to grant time extensions. Lack of adequate staffing is not an excuse. ERFO funds are available to hire outside consultants to manage, survey, and design these repairs in the event that the agencies do not have adequate staffing in order to commence construction within the stipulated time constraints. 1.5 Disaster Assessment Report Comment 11: Appendix C.3 of the ERFO <i>Disaster Assistance Handbook</i>, 2004 edition details what is required to be included in a Disaster Assessment Report and requires 12 specific elements to be addressed. This was not</p>		<p>Response 9: No betterments are approved. The EA explains on pages 91 to 94 the situation with the proposed repair and the channel migration zone at MP 6.0. The temporary repair is not outside the channel migration zone and does not meet Washington State DNR Board manual direction regarding road construction. In order for a new road easement to be granted the USFS, the new road construction would need to meet Washington State DNR Board manual direction. Since the new road repair is the minimal needed to meet Washington State DNR Board manual direction, the repair costs are the costs of meeting current design standards</p> <p>Response 10: The EA provides a history of efforts by the USFS and FHWA to undertake the repairs in a timely fashion on pages 1 and 2. Road 26 was under contract for repairs in 2006 following the 2003 flood (fiscal year 2004). While the 2006 repair contract was active, the floods of 2006 resulted in loss of access for the contractor, and therefore the USFS contract was terminated. Road repairs following the 2007 event (events are identified by fiscal year) were again under an active repair contract in 2010 until litigation brought by NCCC, PAS and Mr. Lider in 2011 resulted in the termination of the FHWA repair contract. Extensions for emergency relief funds were requested and granted due to the extenuating circumstances explained above.</p> <p>Response 11: A Disaster Assessment Report was not prepared for MP 6.0. The site was damaged by the fall 2006 flood event that was a Presidentially declared disaster.</p>

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		<p>done or was incompletely done. Particularly it is not even clear when the MP 6.0 localized failure occurred. Some at the WFLHD and USFS have stated that the MP 6.0 slip out was the result of the November 2006 flood, and only occurred in February 2007 as the result of a slow and progressive slide. If this is so, then this repair would still fail to qualify for ERFO funding as it in violation of 23CFR§ 668.103 as discussed in Section 1.2 of my comments above. 1.6 The Real Mechanism of the MP 6.0 Slip-Out Comment 12: Prior to the 2007 MP 6.0 localized slip-out, a near vertical face existed near the ordinary high water mark of the Suiattle River. During a disaster assessment in April 2007, Jim Mitchell MBS Forest ERFO Coordinator noted that, “Excessive rainfall is also a contributing factor in the failure of the embankment. Water is seen seeping out from under the roadway approx. 12 feet below the roadway at two separate locations.” Indeed, one of the earlier repairs proposed by the USFS was to install an under drain system to relieve the groundwater pressure on the slope face and rebuild the road in place. It was this groundwater seeping under the roadway from wetlands to north that caused the near vertical soil face to fail. Once the soil material fell into the Suiattle River, it was then quickly carried away by the river’s current. This observation supports the fact that the localized slope failure was not caused by a flood. Rather it was caused by a slow and progressive movement of soil that could have been prevented has adequate maintenance been performed.</p> <p><u>2.0 MILE POST 12.6 REPAIRS</u></p> <p>Comment 13: The proposed repair at MP 12.6 (Station 100+00 to Station 112+56) routes the road into old growth forest and requires the removal of LSR trees in violation of the NW Forest Plan. The road is also pitched up at a 10% grade for 300 feet, then sharply down again for another 300 feet. Comment 14: The drawings issued for construction April 2010 required the use of high explosives to remove a rock outcropping in this area. Please state in the EA if high explosives will be allowed or prohibited from use on this project; and if high explosives are used, exactly what mitigation will be provided. Comment 15: As an alternative the WFLHD should design an alternate route following the existing road as much as possible, with a cut bank into the hill side to avoid removal of as many LSR trees as possible. Then a Benefit/Cost analysis should be performed to justify the use of</p>		<p>Response 12: Comment noted. The USFS and the FHWA believe that the primary cause of the slope failure was the undercutting of the slope by the 2006 flood event. See EA page 8 for damage description at MP 6.0.</p> <p>Response 13: Pages 18 and 19 of the EA provide a map and description of the land allocations in the project area. The project is not in LSR and in any event the removal of trees in LSR would not be a violation of the NW Forest Plan (USDA Forest Service, 2004).</p> <p>Response 14: Page 127 of the EA describes Sec. 7 ESA consultation on noise disturbance which includes the potential for blasting at MP12.6. Blasting (if needed) will occur during the late breeding season when owls and young are mobile and would be able to avoid the work site. The EA goes on to explain that rock fracturing with hydraulic equipment would be the first choice for rock excavation over blasting. Mitigations are listed in the EA on page 127 for the northern spotted</p>

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		<p>ERFO funding for the proposed betterment. For mitigation of any LSR trees should be provided by permanently protecting in the immediate vicinity an area of five times the disturbed area of trees younger than the LSR trees will be protected from logging and allowed to develop into an LSR forest as compensation.</p> <p><u>3.0 MILE POST 12.9 TO 14.0 REPAIRS</u></p> <p>The proposed repair at MP 12.9 to MP 14.0 (Station 117+87 to Station 178+04) routes the proposed road north from its current location near the Suiattle River along an abandoned logging spur road to approximately Station 153+40. The road then turns south into second growth forest to approximately Station 159+67. From Station 150+67 to its return at the existing road at Station 178+04 the road traverses an old growth forest of LSR trees. 3.1 Fish Passable Culverts Road Comment 16: culverts in this area do not meet Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) requirements for fish passable culverts under WAC 220-110 Hydraulic Code Rules and design requirements are further supplemented by Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife's (WDFW) 2003 <i>Design of Road Culverts for Fish Passage</i>, 2003 edition. Specifically, WAC 220-110-100 states in part, "Conduit crossing projects shall incorporate mitigation measures as necessary to achieve no-net-loss of productive capacity of fish and shellfish habitat." In the EA under Fisheries Environmental Consequences, Section 3.7.2 Alternative B, there is no discussion of fish passable culvert requirements on any of the un-named streams in this area. Yet the WFLHD's own report, <i>Wetland Delineation and Stream Assessment Report</i>, December 2008 prepared by Herrera Consultant's Inc. states on pages 38 through 46 that following streams could support fish: Stream 12.6-H1 Stream 12.6-H2 Stream 12.6-P Stream 12.6-R Stream 12.6-T Stream 12.6-X Yet none of the culverts in the MP 12.9 to 14.0 re-route are designed for fish passage in the current draft drawings that were furnished to Lider Engineering for review. Please review this in the EA to require fish passable culverts on these streams. 3.2 Wetland Impacts Comment 17 Wetland Impacts are not adequately addressed in the EA. The EA reports 0.66 acres of wetlands will be directly impacted by the road, however the 0.66 acre figure does not include the acreage of wetlands impacted from the, "hydraulic footprint" of the road. The road design between MP 12.9 to 14.0 calls for roadside ditches to intercept surface flows that are in turn directed to</p>		<p>owl.</p> <p>Response 15: The EA provides a range of alternatives including an alternative to repair in place. Several of these alternatives were considered, but eliminated from detailed study, as described starting on page 24 of the EA. These alternatives represent a range of alternatives studied by the ID Team and considered by the Responsible Official. Note: there are no LSR trees removed.</p> <p>Response 16: The EA on page 80 explains that the tributary streams where crossed at the proposed repair sites (#1 to #5) are not fish bearing streams. The EA further discussed the proposed repairs to fish habitat in the EA on page 81 in which culvert replacements at site #1 to site #5 would be over 200 feet from the Suiattle in non-fish bearing streams.</p> <p>Coordination with the USACE has been ongoing through the proposal and development of this project and will continue. The FHWA will be in coordination with the WDFW.</p> <p>Response 17: Wetland impacts are addressed in the EA with the "hydraulic footprint" of the road considered in design of drainage between MP12.9 and Mp14.0. Ditch relief culverts would maintain flows across the slope and feed wetlands downslope. The proposed restoration of the current road with Alt. B and C in this area would remove the road which acts as a partial levee to floodwaters that might otherwise periodically inundate the riparian wetlands, allowing for interaction of the river with floodplain and wetlands. Page 104 of the EA lists the reports (Hererra 2008 and Hererra 2011) which document the wetland delineation for each repair site with wetlands. The EA on page 16 incorporates by reference these reports which present detailed information at each site, including the repairs at</p>

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		<p>culverts located in road sag locations. This will have the effect of concentrating water in streams and thus drying up and changing the character of the wetlands down gradient of the road. Please address this issue in the EA. Comment 18: The wetlands are not classified; however it is believed to be Class I. Diverting water from the Class I wetlands down gradient of the road will lower their class and impact their functioning. Wetland mitigation proposed is inadequate in area too. While the EA reports 0.66 acres of wetlands impacted, the construction drawings only propose to mitigate 0.60 acres. This is a less than 1:1 ratio. At a minimum, replacement wetland mitigation should be 5:1 which would require a minimum of 3.30 acres of new wetland construction. Please address adequate wetland mitigation in the EA. 3.3 Violation of the NW Forest Plan Comment 19: The EA fails to address violations to the NW Forest Plan by the unmitigated destruction of old growth LSR trees. Please address in the EA how the loss of these trees will be mitigated. For mitigation of any LSR trees should be provided by permanently protecting in the immediate vicinity an area of five times the disturbed area of trees younger than the LSR trees will be protected from logging and allowed to develop into an LSR forest as compensation. 3.4 Failure to Consider Alternatives Comment 20: Lider Engineering has proposed an alternative design that will greatly reduce the construction costs between MP 12.9 and 14.0 as shown on Figure</p>		<p>MP 12.6 to 13.8. The EA on pages 117 and 118 describes the process that was followed to address potential effects to wetlands from the proposed project.</p> <p>Response 18: See response 17 above. Pages 118 through 122 of the EA describe sequential steps taken to avoid, minimize and compensate for project impacts to wetlands, with mitigation sites reviewed in the field with US Corps of Engineers wetland regulatory staff. Coordination with the USACE has been ongoing through the proposal and development of this project and will address classification of wetlands. The FHWA will be in coordination with the WDFW. The wetland surveys by Herrera in 2009 and 2011 document the wetlands and streams in the project area.</p> <p>Response 19: The project is not in LSR and does not remove old growth LSR trees. The EA on pages 18-19 provide a map of land allocations and description of the allocations. Even if the project were in LSR, the NWFP does not call for mitigation for removal of trees in LSRs.</p> <p>Response 20: The EA provides a range of alternatives including alternatives not within the jurisdiction of FHWA, the lead agency. Several of these alternatives were considered, but eliminated from detailed study, as described starting on page 24 of the EA. These alternatives represent a range of alternatives studied by the ID Team and considered by the Responsible Official. While the Modified Alternative C route varies slightly from others considered, it leaves the road in a more vulnerable location to future failures than Alternatives B and C.</p>

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		<p>3. </p> <p>Figure 3, Alternative route proposed by Lider Engineering to avoid the old growth forest.</p> <p>Comment 21: Figure 3 above has been modified from the EA Figure 17, Page 95 to illustrate an alternative route that avoids destruction of the old growth trees and fracturing of this forest. Note how the Suiattle River deflects far to the south in this area, away from the existing road. Indeed this area shows signs of deposition rather than erosion, other than the two small localized washouts shown above. The existing road is in excellent shape between MP 12.9 and MP 14.0. The Lider Engineering proposed alternative will impact wetlands, but this impact will be much less than the 0.66 acres estimated in the EA for the FHWA proposed route. Additionally the Lider Engineering proposed route does not have the down gradient issue of diverting water away from the wetlands as these two locations are relatively close to the Suiattle River. 3.5 No Economic Justification for Betterment</p> <p>Comment 22 There is no economic justification for the road betterment proposed by the FHWA between MP 12.9 to MP 14.0. As previously stated in section 1.3 of these comments, that because no benefit/cost analysis was ever performed, the MP 12.9 to MP 14.0 repairs fail to qualify as an economically justified betterment under 23CFR§ 668.109(b)(6). The FHWA is urged to prepare as a part of the EA a</p>		<p>Response 21: Pages A-1 to A-5 of EA Appendix A provides a Suiattle Road History which includes historic flood damage sites. MP12.8 to MP 14.4 has suffered channel and road encroachment from flood waters in 1980, 1990, 1996 and 2006 ERFO events. The EA on pages 51 to 54 provides assessment of risk of future washouts. The No action Alternative (that would retain Road 26 in place between MP 12.9 and MP 14.4) identified the risk locations for washouts as the locaitons where the road is adjacent to the active channel of the Suiattle River (MP12.6, MP13.0, MP 13.4, and MP 14.3). The modified Alternative C would retain Road 26 in a high risk location for future channel migration and does not provide for any wetland enhancement with the removal of the current road from the active floodplain.</p> <p>Response 22: No betterments are approved.</p>

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		<p>Benefit/Cost Analysis between the Lider Engineering proposed alternative and the FHWA route between MP 12.9 to MP 14.0 and include it as a part of the EA. 3.6 Failure to Make ERFO Repairs a Priority Comment 23 23CFR§ 668.205(b) states “Emergency relief work shall be given prompt attention and priority over non-emergency work.” This was not done. To make this repair a priority, staff should be working a minimum of 30-hours per week dedicated to the emergency project in question; time sheets showing overtime work or employee time documentation appears not to exist. Indeed, neither the USFS nor the WFLHD prepared a simple project schedule such as a Gantt chart, showing milestone dates and how they proposed to complete this work within 2-years after the end of the fiscal year in which the disaster occurred. (Reference 23CFR§ 668.205(e)) Indeed, just being busy with other non-emergency work appears to be sufficient justification for WFLHD to grant time extensions. Lack of adequate staffing is not an excuse. ERFO funds are available to hire outside consultants to manage, survey, and design these repairs in the event that the agencies do not have adequate staffing in order to commence construction within the stipulated time constraints. The EA should provide full documentation as an appendix documenting all time extensions and providing proof such as time cards signed by a supervisor showing that this emergency road repair work was a priority of the USFS & FHWA’s non-emergency work. 3.7 Disaster Assessment Report Comment 24 Appendix C.3 of the ERFO <i>Disaster Assistance Handbook</i>, 2004 edition details what is required to be included in a Disaster Assessment Report and requires 12 specific elements to be addressed. This was not done or was incompletely done. Provide a copy of the Disaster Assessment Report in the EA. 4.0 MILE POST 14.4 REPAIRS Comment 25 Unfortunately the old growth trees in this 900 foot segment of road repair have already been cut down. This irreversible damage was done in secret without public input or comment and in violation of the NW Forest Plan. There is no objection to construction of the road in this new area, provided: All trees felled are used for mitigation purposes only as Large Woody Debris (LWD) either on this project or other projects on the Darrington Ranger District. There shall be no additional clearing performed, <u>whatsoever</u>, beyond the clearing limits as they are currently set by the previous clearing work. For mitigation of the LSR trees that have been</p>		<p>Response 23: The EA provides a history of efforts by the USFS and FHWA to undertake the repairs in a timely fashion on pages 1 and 2. Road 26 was under contract for repairs in 2006 following the 2003 flood (fiscal year 2004. The floods of 2006 resulted in loss of access for the contractor, and therefore the USFS contract was terminated. Road repairs following the 2007 event (events are identified by fiscal year) were again under an active repair contract in 2010 until litigation brought by NCCC, PAS and Mr. Lider in 2011 resulted in the termination of the FHWA repair contract. Extensions for emergency relief funds were requested and granted due to the extenuating circumstances explained above.</p> <p>Response 24: Your comment is noted and addressed in Response 11 above.</p> <p>Response 25: Pages 30 to 31 describe the proposed repair at MP14.4 and the disposal of trees removed at that site. Note: No LSR trees were removed.</p>

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		<p>removed, provide permanent protection in the immediate vicinity an area of at least five times the disturbed area of trees younger than the LSR trees will be protected from logging and allowed to develop into an LSR forest as compensation. <u>5.0 MILE POST 20.9 REPAIRS</u> 5.1 Piling Comment 26 The Downey Creek repair at Mile Post 20.9 calls for a pile supported concrete bridge structure. Piles will be 18-inch steel pipe. Comment 26a Will these piles be treated with epoxy tar set paint or galvanized with zinc that can leach into the water? Please describe the treatment that will be provided on the piles; if there is no treatment on the piles, then state that there will be no pile treatment in the EA. Will the piles be filled with cast-in-place concrete? Then provide then describe the BMP's that will be utilized to prevent concrete from entering the water, including pump truck slurry and washout of concrete equipment. Comment 27 There is a concern that due to the alluvial and Lahar nature of the soil deposits that piling may not be able to be driven deep enough without crushing and failing due to large buried boulders. Describe if any test piles have been driven and the method of pile driving e.g. vibration, diesel hammer, etc. Provide the wave equation blow count required to meet the design load for the bridge. Address the vibratory impacts to fish in adjacent Downey Creek. 5.2 Bridge Deck Comment 28 Draft construction drawings provided indicate that bridge deck will either be precast concrete or steel deck and running surface. Likely either of these options will require cast-in-place concrete deck surface. Please provide then describe the BMP's that will be utilized to prevent concrete from entering the water, including pump truck slurry and washout of concrete equipment. 5.3 Construction Change Notification Comment 29 On past projects, the Darrington Ranger District staff have made cardinal changes to construction projects after the EA had been issued. For instance, on the Mountain Loop Highway, Darrington Ranger District staff elected to delete a bridge and instead push rock into the Sauk River damaging endangered Chinook salmon redds. Please address these past violations and describe in the EA exactly how cardinal changes in the design will be addressed. If the bridge is deleted, a supplemental EA should be prepared for public review and input. 5.4 Betterment Comment 30 <i>Betterments</i> are added protective features, such as rebuilding of roadways at a higher elevation or the lengthening of bridges, or changes which modify the</p>		<p>Response 26: Final design elements are prepared following the decision for repair needs. The objective of the EA is to provide enough site-specific information to demonstrate a reasoned consideration of environmental impacts.</p> <p>Response 26a: See response to number 25 above.</p> <p>Any specific design and construction will be performed so as to prevent environmental impacts that have not been discussed in this EA. The EA describes (beginning on page 37) the mitigation measures for the repairs, including a Spill Prevention, Control and Hazardous Spill Plan to be implemented during construction activities.</p> <p>Response 27: The Project Record is incorporated by reference as described on page 16 of the EA, and includes the specialists' reports and technical documentation used to support the analysis and conclusion in the EA. Copies of the geotechnical reports, final slope stability report, drilling or boring logs, material unit descriptions and letter from the USFS Director of Engineering for Regional 6 from the Project Record (which were used in the final slope assessment) were provide to requestors on April 3 and 4th of 2012. Specific design criteria will be developed if the agency selects a build alternative.</p> <p>Response 28: The EA describes on page 37 mitigation measures for the repairs, including a Spill Prevention, Control and Hazardous Spill Plan to be implemented during construction activities. Specific measures will depend on the type of bridge to be designed if a build alternative is selected. BMPs will be developed at that time to address the specific design.</p> <p>Response 29: This is a FHWA project. Any past changes made by the Forest Service, if any, does not impact this project nor set a pattern for the way FHWA oversees projects. Any change to the project that differs from what is in the A-EA will receive an environmental review before the change is implemented, if a build alternative is selected.</p> <p>Response 30: No betterments are approved for this road with ERFO</p>

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		function or character of a highway facility from what existed prior to the disaster or catastrophic failure, such as additional lanes or added access control. ER funds may only be used where they clearly economically justified to prevent future recurring damage. Economic justification must weigh the cost of betterment against the risk of eligible recurring damage and the cost of future repair per 23CFR§ 668.109(b)(6). As a part of the EA, please provide the benefit/cost economic analysis required by Federal law to justify the construction of the lengthened bridge structure betterment. [redacted] First Declaration of [redacted] May 8, 2011 Suiattle Road Complaint April 19, 2011 <u>Other PDF attachments</u> : Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief (39 pages) filed with the USDC for the Western District of Washington at Seattle captioned NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL, PILCHUCK AUDUBON SOCIETY, nonprofit organizations; and WILLIAM (BILL) M. LIDER, an individual, Plaintiffs, vs. FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION, an agency of the United States Department of Transportation; the WESTERN FEDERAL LANDS HIGHWAY DIVISION, a subdivision of the Federal Highway Administration; the UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE, an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture, Defendants, Civ. Case No. 11-CV-666. First Declaration of [redacted] (19 pages) filed in that lawsuit.		funding.
313.	04/19/12 email	I am a stock user and a member of Back Country Horsemen of America and Washington State... We need alternate B and complete restoration of FR Road 26 including the bridges at Downey and Sulpher Creek. These are necessary for us to get access to the trails that we volunteer to maintain in that area, including the Glacier Peak Wilderness.....The bridges also provide necessary access to bring up supplies, reaching the remote areas for fire fighting as well as for emergency vehicles to help locate lost and/or injured people. I urge you to support full restoration of FR road 26 including the bridges.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
314.	04/19/12 email	The Darrington area has been a recreation destination for over a hundred years, even during its boom years of mining and logging. Over the decades, these heavy industries have been phased out of the area due to economic conditions and federal logging regulations. Despite the loss of population and revenue to the local economy, the remaining Darrington residents have resounded through promoting	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>recreational tourism. Forest Service Road 26, the Suiattle River Road provides access to many of these activities including hiking, camping, horse-trails, rafting, canoeing, fishing, hunting, mountain climbing and snowshoeing. In its most recent Forest Plan, NFS identifies Road 26 as a high-use, multi-season recreation route and a major arterial to the Glacier Peak Wilderness and the Pacific Crest Trail. It gives users multiple options for loops and distance trips through the wilderness as well as equestrian trails and easy hikes for families. This road not only provides access for users, but also a safe and timely route for Search and Rescue teams and fire fighting teams. By not restoring full function of the road, NFS faces further loss of revenue from reduced Recreation Pass purchases and the closure of a concession operated campground. Back-country guides and outfitters also lose revenue as do the businesses in the Town of Darrington, where there is a high rate of commercial vacancies from the loss of logging and milling jobs. Alternative A would permanently reduce recreation-based visitors to the town and prevent the town from diversifying its economy, as recreation seeking visitors will continue on to Skagit County or chose to go south to Mt. Rainier. Selection of Alternative B would provide the highest opportunity for private industry, the Town of Darrington, Snohomish County and the National Forest Service to gain revenue from recreation seeking visitors. Families will have access to easy hikes, equestrians will have the right to use their horse trails and campgrounds, and back-country adventurers will once again have the ability to access the Pacific Crest Trail as well as the Glacier Peak Wilderness for hiking, climbing, snowshoeing and other various activities. In its EA, NFS data shows that in 2003 over 10,000 vehicles traveled on FS Road 26, and since the washout, there has been a reduction of over 4,000 annual vehicle trips. NFS has re-opened other forest roads in Western Washington under similar conditions, including Mt. Loop Highway and the Dosewallips Road on the Olympic Peninsula. In the case of the Dosewallips Road, the towns of Quilcene and Brinnon faced similar economic outlooks as the Town of Darrington. However pre-washout annual vehicle use was 6,000 vehicles less than the Suiattle River Road and yet the road was re-opened. Restoring Road 26 to full use is consistent with its historic use, while complete decommissioning would cut generations off from use of recreational land. Loss of contact with the wilderness reduces public salience of the importance</p>		

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		<p>of establishing and maintaining wilderness areas, which could jeopardize their future. Access to trails and campgrounds also helps us provide healthy communities and has recently been linked to lower obesity levels in residents. Selection of the no action alternative is not only inconsistent with the NFS Forest plan, but also a threat to salmon in the watershed. Alternative B is the best plan for sediment management, by rerouting the road away from Channel Migration Zones to more stable slopes and re-vegetating washed-out areas, NFS significantly reduces the chance of future sediment loads going into the river sytem. The no action alternative will continue to deliver sediment to the watershed as stormwater and additional wash-outs will continue without intervention. ESA listed bulltrout are especially sensitive to fine sediments delivered by road cuts and slides as their redds incubate for 220 days in the streambed. Alternative B not only repairs and re-vegetates the slide areas, but gives the Forest Service the opportunity to replace old culverts with fish friendly ones, and significantly improves fish passage at Downy Creek. Selecting Alternative B will also restore the floodplain in the slide areas and enhance and reconnect various wetlands to the watershed. According to the Forest Service map of the affected sites, none of the reroutes are located in old-growth forest, or within spotted owl or marbled murrelet habitat. In fact, restoring full use gives biologists the opportunity to once again monitor spotted owl habitat that is located via access from Road 26 within the Glacier Peak Wilderness. It is important monitor these Spotted Owl habitat areas to prevent Barred Owl invasion. NEPA requires NFS to adhere to the Indian Religious Freedom Act, and after Sauk-Suiattle consultation during the scoping process, it was determined that there are 2 tribal cemeteries located along Road 26. In addition to the religious sites, the tribe was allotted 80 acres at Mile Post 19.3 that they currently do not have access to and elders are no longer able to collect Yellow Cedar from sites along the road. Due to habitat constraints, Yellow Cedar is limited to microclimates in Western Washington and not a common tree. Alternative B would restore access to all religious sites and allotted tribal lands while the no action alternative and Alternative C would still restrict access to most tribal members. With their physical restraints, tribal elders and children are not able to hike to these important sites. In order to comply with reduced budgets and environmental concerns of</p>		

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		<p>preservationists, certain mitigation measures can be put into place with the selection of Alternative B. The Forest Service can work with both sides to choose other roads that can be decommissioned within the Suiattle River watershed or in other parts of the Wilderness Area. Wildlife thrives best when habitat is contiguous and connected, so road closures can be based on usage as well as habitat connectivity. Phasing of the repair project can also help buffer costs to the Forest Service, as can using volunteer labor for non-engineering services such as re-vegetation of slide sites and post-repair culvert maintenance. Please take these mitigation suggestions into consideration during the selection process as many members of the community are willing to pitch in to keep our public forest roads open for use.</p>		

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315.	04/19/12 email	<p>I write as a recreational user of U.S. National Forest and Wilderness Area lands, and the beautiful Suiattle River watershed. Repaired road access to the upper Suiattle basin and Suiattle River Road trail is important, Comment 1: but in my opinion extending the repair for street legal vehicles beyond Downey Creek is an unnecessary burden and risk to the species that inhabit and or use Downey and Sulfur Creek. Also, because of the regularly changing path of the Suiattle River and its well known ability to deliver enormous logs and log jams at high energy (if this is unfamiliar please inquire of the Milk Creek trail bridge steel I-beams folded up in the log jam downstream from where the trail crossing was) I would speculate a repair to the crossing at Downey Creek as proposed would end up destroyed downstream and the cost of the loss would have to include the then inaccessible Sulfur Creek repair.</p> <p>Comment 2: In my opinion it would make more sense to improve/repair the Downey and Sulfur crossings to pedestrian/bicycle, pack-animal and perhaps off road-type service (meaning restricted to authorized service only) vehicles (i.e. 6 wheel Gators, or tractors, etc) capability. As far as loss of the campground (Sulfur Creek and the dispersed sites upstream of Downey Creek; Sulfur campground has already been partially claimed by the Suiattle River. Perhaps the remaining campsites could be restored (and Downey improved) and the sites/area be limited to bike-in/walk-in only. It would be a unique no internal combustion noise area Forest Service campground. Additional camping amenities could probably be developed in the Buck Creek area if needed. Parking for access to the PCT and Sulfur Creek campgrounds could be developed downstream of Downey Creek making for a short, scenic, and relatively flat couple mile walk to Sulfur Creek and the Wilderness area.</p>	C	<p>Thank you, your comment is noted.</p> <p>Response 1: Environmental effects from the EA and the A-EA are discussed in Environmental Consequences Chapter 3.</p> <p>Response 2: See Chapter 2.1.5 for Alternative but Eliminated from Detailed Study as well as Alternative Considered in Detail.</p>
316.	04/19/12 email	<p>I'd like to express my support for Alternative B, repairing the Suiattle Road in full to restore access to the pre-2003 location. I have been a forest user for over 25 years, and I work as a guide for an approved outfitter that operates on the Darrington District about 15-20 days per year. The loss of the Suiattle access, as well as the White Chuck access, for so many years now has been frustrating and puts severe limitations on our options for recreational use. Please repair the Suiattle Road as proposed in Alternative B.</p>	B	<p>Thank you, your comment is noted.</p>

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317.	04/19/12 email	I'm writing to urge your support for Alternative B: repairing Road 26 and ensuring motorized vehicle access for the public all the way to milepost 23.0. In the last few years Washington State outdoor recreation has lost hundreds of miles of trail for day hiking and other uses because floods or landslides have closed access roads. As our population continues to grow, outdoor recreation is increasingly popular -- and necessary for health and well-being -- while options for recreation are shrinking. I have looked at the plans and alternatives spelled out in the EA, and I believe that repairing the Suiattle Road all the way to milepost 23.0 will best serve the public's interest, the Tribes' interests, and protect this fragile environment.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
318.	04/19/12 email	As a member of the recreating public, considering myself concerned with the balance of natural resources and human use such that future generations develop the strong bond necessary to conserve wild places, I would like to submit my support of Alternative B, repair and relocation of the Suiattle 26 Road to its end. This alternative seems to best fit the purpose and the need outlined in the Forest Plan, on every count ranging from moving the road out of vulnerable flood areas, protecting fish spawning habitat, and maintaining reasonable user access to the backcountry of the Glacier Peak Wilderness. I do not see that Alternative C provides any significantly different natural resource benefit except to increase the complication for recreation.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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319.	04/19/12 email	<p>Please fully restore the 23-mile Suiattle River Road As a supporter of recreation on our National Forests, I want the Suiattle River Road (Forest Road 26) fully restored to its end, beyond the Sulphur Creek Bridge (Mile 22.9). Full road restoration, Alternative B, presents the best opportunity to reopen incredible trails and provide the opportunity for the public to enjoy the wonders of the Glacier Peak Wilderness. Without full restoration, generations will miss out on the majestic view of Image Lake, beautiful meadows of Green Mountain, and critical access to the Pacific Crest Trail.</p> <p>Now I am asking you to repair the eight damaged sites along the 23-mile road using the Emergency Funds already secured by the Federal Highway Administration. Restoration of the road will reopen access to seven trailheads, two campgrounds, and large parking areas for hikers, bikers, river users, equestrians, and others. It will provide access to lakes, trails, streams, and wildlands people have explored for generations and sorely missed for the last decade. Please save the Suiattle Road and restore it in its entirety. I am confident that Alternative B presents the best opportunity to protect the environmental integrity of the area and provide critical access to valued recreational resources. Thank you for your consideration of my comments. Please do NOT add my name to your mailing list. I will learn about future developments on this issue from other sources.</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
320.	04/19/12 email	<p>I am writing in support of the rebuilding/rerouting of the entire length of the Suiattle River Road. I attended the Everett public meeting. And the gentleman that tried to take over the meeting did not speak for me or the majority of the people present as exemplified by the straw vote called by one of his detractors. Also, the arrogant letter to the editor of the Herald needs to be countered. Her comment, "...the less physically able"...can walk along the river on the damaged road speaks to the position of those opposing the improvement of the road. Access the the backcountry is important for all. It might even be argued that by not improving the road denies access under the American Disability Act. Certainly the issue of access for forest protection, Search and Rescue operations and basic safety concerns should necessitate making the repairs. Trail head parking is essential for any use/access. I trust that this repair will not be blocked by those minority special interest groups who want only their interests protected.</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
321.	04/19/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead the following reason (s): The Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads, 2 car-camp grounds, however, is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult Page 3 of the EA identifies the Suiattle River Road as a “high need road” by The 2003 Forest-wide Roads Analysis or recreation and purposes. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient, and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing, which is good for fish and the tribes like it.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
322.	04/19/12 email	RE: option B I am a stock user with the Back Country Horsemen of Washington. We maintain trails throughout the state with pack and saddle stock support. We cannot sustain this effort without road access to the trailheads along with having suitable parking areas for trailer towing vehicles. I feel strongly that we owe future generations access to the Back country which is affordable recreation opportunities. When raising my two boys we frequently used Back country trails. I feel use of public land is a healthy way to spend time with family and friends. The time I spent with my sons in the Back country has left them with an appreciation for wild life, fishing and hiking which they now are passing on to their children. Please adopt plan B.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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323.	04/19/12 email	I am writing in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road Project - full access to the Sulphur Creek Campgrounds. This option is by far the best one as all of the funds are available and the Agencies and Tribes are in agreement. I first went up the road in 1955 on our way up to Image Lake, Suiattle Pass and Lyman Lakes. I would like to go again if the road is restored.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
324.	04/19/12 email with attached PDF	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead for the following reason(s): The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed camping, berry picking, and picnicking. I recognize the high cost of maintenance does not warrant keeping them open and they are no longer needed. However, the Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads and 2 car-camp grounds is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen, and the simple enjoyment of being outdoors. It is also important for access to the Glacier Peak Wilderness and for management of the wilderness area. In addition, the Suiattle Road and the Suiattle River Trail was and is a major access point for the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT). The PCT is not only an economic draw to Darrington but to Snohomish County and the state of Washington. It is a one of the most visited of the world class long distance hiking and equestrian trails. Page 3 of the EA points out that the Suiattle River Road is a "high need road" as determined by The 2003 MBS Forest-wide Roads Analysis. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult as well as restricting access permanently to an area that has traditionally been enjoyed by multitudes of people and has cultural significance to local Indian tribes. Furthermore, volunteer efforts are critical to trail maintenance and recruiting volunteers to walk or bike 24 miles round trip to work on trails would be extremely difficult. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, access to the PCT has moved to the North Fork Sauk Trail or to the east side of the Cascades. Loss of access to the PCT has made maintenance of many sections extremely time consuming and difficult. Even with restoration of the Suiattle Road, it will be a nearly 25 mile hike, one way, to work	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>on the Milk Creek section of the PCT. This is also one of the most problematic sections of the PCT to maintain due to its steep but wet terrain, heavy brush and large windfall. Given Forest Service budgets, motorized use restrictions in wilderness and a short seasonal work season, adding an additional 12 miles to access this section of trail may make annual maintenance nearly impossible. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing which would be good for fish. The Indian tribes support repairing this bridge and improving fish habitat and according to section 1.9 of the EA a Salmon Recovery Board Fund grant was approved in 2011 which would provide funding for this repair. Neither does Alternative C allow for funding for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decommissioning the Suiattle Trailhead including removal of asphalt, concrete toilet, parking bumpers and other material 2. Decommissioning of the Sulphur Creek campground including 20 campsites, two concrete toilets, garbage cans, signage 3. Conversion of the upper 4 miles of the Suiattle road to trail, including construction of a bypass trail and bridge over Downey Creek. 4. Clearing forest for the construction of a new trailhead suitable for stock and access trail below the junction with the Green Mountain Road. This site would out of necessity be nearly 5 miles below the Trailhead. <p>It is also unlikely that the Sulphur Creek campground would be rebuilt or replaced elsewhere. The need for additional campgrounds has long been under discussion in Darrington. This need can be seen on any weekend drive along the mountain loop highway where campers can be seen tucked into every nook and cranny along the Sauk River. The Washington State DNR has had their own funding difficulties and recently closed the popular Derringer campground along the Suiattle River. Permanent closure of the Sulphur Creek campground does not help the situation and only pushes more people into dispersed sites, which is not necessarily good for public health or fisheries. Furthermore conversion of the road to trail would shove precious maintenance resources from the Forest roads program to their even poorer trail program. Maintaining low elevation trails is very expensive and time consuming. Reopening this road would also have a beneficial effect on the economies of local towns such as Darrington. On a personal note, I have spent possibly more time hiking in this valley than anywhere else in the Cascades and</p>		

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		<p>some of my most precious memories have occurred in this part of the Glacier Peak Wilderness. Access to this area is very important to me and my family. In summary, there are many good reasons to repair and reopen this road and restore access to this wonderful area. It has been too long that the public has been unable to access this area and the improvements to be implemented in the construction of the new road would benefit riparian and wetland areas and improve fish habitat. Let's please move forward with alternative B and restore access to a beautiful and important area of our public lands.</p>		
325.	04/19/12 email	<p>I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead for the following reason(s): The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed camping, berry picking, and picnicking. I recognize the high cost of maintenance does not warrant keeping them open and they are no longer needed. However, the Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads and 2 car-camp grounds is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen, and the simple enjoyment of being outdoors. Page 3 of the EA points out that the Suiattle River Road is a "high need road" as determined by The 2003 MBS Forest-wide Roads Analysis. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult as well as restricting access permanently to an area that has traditionally been enjoyed by multitudes of people and has cultural significance to local Indian tribes. Furthermore, volunteer efforts are critical to trail maintenance and recruiting volunteers to walk 24 miles round trip to work on trails would be extremely difficult. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		<p>some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing which would be good for fish. The Indian tribes support repairing this bridge and improving fish habitat and according to section 1.9 of the EA a Salmon Recovery Board Fund grant was approved in 2011 which would provide funding for this repair. Reopening this road would also have a beneficial effect on the economies of local towns such as Darrington. In summary, there are many good reasons to repair and reopen this road and restore access to this wonderful area. It has been too long that the public has been unable to access this area and the improvements to be implemented in the construction of the new road would benefit riparian and wetland areas and improve fish habitat. Let's please move forward with alternative B and restore access to a beautiful and important area of our public lands.</p>		
326.	04/19/12 email	<p>Re: Suiattle River Road Project: Support of Alternative B I am writing in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. I believe the road should be repaired to the Suiattle River Trailhead for the following reasons: I am a proponent of reasonable access to wilderness areas. I don't want to see new roads built, but I believe it is flawed policy to allow areas to fall into disuse because of a road closure such as this one when they have, in the past, been accessible to many people. The road should be rebuilt so that this access can be restored. Alternative A does not allow for reasonable access. On a personal level, I have treasured memories of taking both my sons up Green Mt. on day hikes. And what a beautiful green mountain it is! If Alternative A is chosen I will not have the reasonable opportunity to take my grandson there. In spite of Green Mountain being one of my favorite places to hike, I have not been back there since the road closed a number of years ago. I believe Alternative C would result in many more years of inactivity and loss of the funding to get this important work completed. With the closures of the Suiattle River Road, access to the west side of Glacier Peak is nearly nonexistent at this point. This is not a good use of wilderness resources. I am a former USFS/NPS wilderness/backcountry ranger (8 summers). I would like to see people have reasonable access to this area via the reopened Suiattle River Road. I eagerly look forward to this road getting fixed as the Forest Service was going to do until the lawsuit last year which stopped the road rebuild. The Suiattle River Road</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		provided access to seven trailheads and two car campgrounds. It served a wide variety of users – hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car campers, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photographers, mushroom pickers, and fishermen. It allowed the simple enjoyment of being outdoors for many people. This use needs to be restored. I strongly believe that Alternative B represents the soundest option from an environmental perspective. Alternative B calls for the wetlands area – which would be subject to further degradation under Alternative A – to be rehabilitated. Alternative B’s relocation of the road further away from the river at the Huckleberry trailhead will help abate future washout threats. Alternative C would result in the new construction of a large parking lot to be built somewhere in the vicinity of the Green Mountain Horse Pasture. By contrast, Alternative B would restore access to the existing trailheads at Downey Creek trailhead and the road end. Thank you for considering my support of Alternative B.		
327.	04/19/12 email	My husband and I are avid hikers and have greatly missed the access to trails off the Suiattle River Road. We support alternative B which maintains access to the trails at the end of the road.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
328.	04/19/12 email	I am writing in full support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road Repair. I enjoy outdoor recreation in the Cascade mountains, and the Suiattle River Road is an important access point to a large area with great hiking and climbing opportunities. It would be a shame for this area to remain permanently more difficult to reach, and the campgrounds and trail heads serviced by this road fall by the wayside by decommissioning any portion of this road. This road has historically provided the public access to public lands reached by the trail heads on this road, and it is important to maintain this access. The current closure has concentrated use of this area on other access points, maintaining the Suiattle River Road will help to ease this concentration. While I recognize there are environmental groups organizing against repairing this road, I believe that it is of the greater good to maintain access to public lands for the general public. Please consider the views of the users of this area in your decision making process.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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329.	04/19/12 email	full road restoration Full restoration is the only way for this project. So many outdoorsmen and women. depend on this access for their recreation, it would be wrong not to repair in full.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
330.	04/19/12 email	I'm with Rick Larsen in supporting Alternative B to repair the Suiattle River Road. I can't wait to explore the area once the road is repaired.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
331.	04/19/12 email	We would like Alternative B - for the Suiattle road to be repaired to the end. The Green Mt lookout has a spectacular view! If the road is repaired to the end, there will be access to other trail heads as well. Hikers should have access to this gorgeous area of Washington State. This land should be multi use for wildlife and hikers.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
332.	04/19/12 email	I strongly support alternative "B" to restore, to the degree possible, the access to the Glacier Peak Wilderness that was lost in 2003. As an avid hiker, I believe we should strive to maintain a baseline of recreation access at late-20th-century levels. The societal benefits are many, and the environmental trade-offs eminently reasonable. Regards,	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
333.	04/19/12 email	I am very much hoping for alternative B, the full re-opening of the Suiattle river road. It is one of the last low-elevation roads left, that can be driven all or part of the winter months. It is also one of the last access points to the Glacier peak region from the west. We do not want new roads built, nor even that all roads that washed out get fixed. But we need at least some access maintained to our forests and mountains, or the few remaining places will see even more concentration of use. I oppose ending the road at the Green Mtn road, that makes no sense to me. There is no parking there, no campsites, it is nothing like Downy or Sulfur or the true end of the road.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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334.	04/19/12 email	I strongly support Alternative B, repairing Suiattle River Road 26 to its terminus, restoring this key access to Glacier Peak Wilderness, the Pacific Crest Trail and many other popular trails and campgrounds. I have read the EA (and the two previous USFS Suiattle EAs), and the disappointingly ludicrous N3C proposal for modified Alt. C. Downey Creek Bridge can only be addressed in a practical, environmentally sensitive and permanent manner by Alternative B. I further believe that CEQ guidance supports the adequacy of the FHWA CE for the relatively minor changes required by 2006 storm damage, supplemental to the previous USFS EA. The lawsuit which prompted this current EA was singularly pointless. I believe the overwhelming number of public comments supporting the proposed action demonstrate that the project was not controversial, and that Categorical Exclusion was entirely appropriate and in the public interest. It is gratifying that this thorough EA was prepared and issued so quickly. It also resulted in a substantive improvement for fish passage and spawning at Downey Creek, with support from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
335.	04/19/12 email	I am a member of Backcountry Horseman of Washington ,I am in favor of keeping that road open for horse people and packers to be able to get into the wilderness to keep trails open.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
336.	04/19/12 email	As an avid hiker and backcountry skier, I am writing you to voice my support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. I agree with the vast majority of my fellow outdoor enthusiasts that this road should be repaired back to the Suiattle Trailhead to allow public access to public lands. While I haven't had the time to explore the EA in great detail, at first glance it would certainly seen the impact to restore the road is extremely reasonable given the access to Glacier Peak Wilderness that it will restore. I would be ever disappointed in myself if I didn't take a minute to write you this message and this access was forever lost. Restoring the road is also undeniably a boon for the economically challenged town of Darrington. Again, thank you for taking the time to solicit public opinion, and count me strongly in favor of Alternative B!	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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337.	04/19/12 letter	The alternative I am supporting is Alternative B which repairs and opens the road to Sulphur Creek Campground. I am also asking that at the point where the road goes straight ahead to the river, in the area where the reroute goes onto the old 2570 rd., this portion be left alone and not dug up. Also, that the road bed that is there now be left alone as a walking tread. Nothing would have to be done as the vegetation will naturally grow in without motorized use. It has many views from this route along the river and would be an ideal place to be able to walk and have access to the river. The FS has a bad habit of digging up a road or flat area and planting trees etc in such a way that is not found in nature. The area is mostly flat now, has always been flat without tank traps or waterbars and thickly planted trees. Nature is perfectly capable of growing vegetation in Western WA in areas where motorized vehicles are banned. Make the area along the river where the temporary road is user friendly to folks to walk. Also if the road is closed with boulders in the area where the reroute begins, place the boulders far enough apart for wheel chairs to safely navigate. I am sure we can come up with a wheel chair at the time of building the road to make sure there is room for navigation. There also needs to be enough room to park at least 15 cars along the road and in the abandon straight area for group ceremonial functions. Since I appear to have an older version of the EA, I reserve the right to make further comments when I obtain a current copy of the EA that the Federal Hwys. are using at this time.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
338.	04/19/12 email	I support Option B of the plan -- repairing the road to its end at milepost 23.0. There are many hikes and recreational opportunities that have been off-limits to day hikers for more than 8 years. It is not realistic to expect that everyone can make a multi-day backpack or mountain bike trip to enjoy the natural beauty of this area. I am a life-long resident of Washington State and have been hiking all over the state since I was a child. And I miss going to many of the hikes that are no longer within a dayhike reach. Please consider repairing the road to milepost 23. With so many other roads closed and trails lost, it's very important we do not lose access to more, and especially in such beautiful wilderness.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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339.	04/19/12 email	I support Option B, which would restore this road to where it had ended before the devastating floods and washouts eliminated it as a main portal of entrance from the west to the Glacier Peak Wilderness. My reasons for supporting Option B are similar to my partner Ron Chase who also wrote to you on this. We miss the access to the areas served by the network of trails that prior to the road closure we often used. We believe that opening the road to the end would reduce traffic on the currently over used North Fork Sauk River road and the trails which it accesses. We believe that the closure of the Suiattle River Road has also increased traffic on the eastern portals to the Wilderness, especially from the Trinity and Spider Meadows trailheads. With limited funding, we believe that there would be the most 'bang for the buck' with Option B.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
340.	04/19/12 email with	We strongly support Alternative B – Repair Suiattle Road 26 at all eight sites, with relocations away from the river, and rehabilitation of abandoned sections of Suiattle Road 26. Please restore Road 26 so that access is available to all. As an avid hiker and backpacker in the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest and the Glacier Peak Wilderness, I support and request that Suiattle Road 26 should be repaired and rehabilitated to the fullest extent possible through its entire length. This will allow continued and future access to these spectacular forest areas of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. Suiattle Roads (Roads 26, Green Mountain 2680, Buck Creek 2600014) repairs are also essential to ensuring public access to the beloved Glacier Peak Wilderness and the Pacific Crest Trail. Implement Alternative B to ensure access to some of our favorite places in Washington State: Huckleberry Mountain, Green Mountain, Buck Creek, Downey Creek, Sulphur Creek, Sulphur Mountain and the Suiattle Trailhead. Implement Alternative B will once again grant myself and all hikers and backpackers access to the Suiattle Trailhead, giving us access to the most interconnected trail system in the forest. Connections to the Buck Creek Pass, Railroad Creek, Agnes Creek, and PCT allow us to travel, on foot or horseback, to the Wenatchee National Forest and the North Cascades National Park. Implement Alternative B to ensure public access to the PCT, provide access south to Stevens Pass and north to the North Cascades National Park. Restore Suiattle Road 26 to enable critical access to the Glacier Peak Wilderness, one of the most beautiful wilderness areas in the U.S. with many rare glaciers, high mountain lakes	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
		and valleys of old growth forest. Repair Suiattle Roads (Roads 26, Green Mountain 2680 and Buck Creek 2600014) in Alternative B to restore access to these spectacular Glacier Peak hiking and backpacking areas. Please restore Road 26 so that access is available to all. Thank you very much for your consideration and for your valuable and thorough work on this critical project!		
341.	04/19/12 email	I am writing in support of Option B of the Suiattle River Road environmental assessment. It is a sad irony that, as the population in western Washington has boomed, we are losing more and more hiking trails to road washouts that are never reopened. I personally remember a number of these hikes from my childhood and would love to see the opportunity to hike them again. Please consider repairing the road.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
342.	04/20/12 email	As a hiking/backpacking family we wish to express our support for Option B regarding the restoration of the Suiattle River Road. Wilderness is important to maintain for future generations but wilderness is undervalued when it is effectively locked away from people. Please restore access to the road's end.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
343.	04/20/12 email	<p>I wish to express my strong support for the restoration, re-alignment and reopening of the Suiattle River (NF-26) road to Sulphur Creek as described in Alternative B of the Environmental Assessment. As a member of the board of directors of Washington Trails Association I have taken a special interest in issues concerning access to trailheads and the deterioration of roads leading to non-motorized recreational resources. It is very important to retain opportunities for quality hiking and natural experiences close to the population centers of Puget Sound. The trailheads accessed by NF-26 are less than 100 miles from Seattle, making it convenient for day hiking. Additionally, the location of a campground at the terminus of the road make it ideal for a short multiday outing. I have actually had no experience with the trails accessed by the Suiattle road as I have moved to the region in the last 6 years and most of the road has been closed during this time. However, I have done numerous hikes in the vicinity of Seattle as well as more distant locations. During the summer months the trails near to Seattle are consistently over crowded, while those more distant are more pleasant. This speaks to the need for more hiking opportunities close to the population centers, in order to provide a satisfactory experience without the necessity of excess travel which creates its own negative environmental impacts.</p> <p>Thank you for considering my comment and I hope to soon be able to enjoy these trails in my national forest.</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
344.	04/20/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. I believe the road should be repaired to the Suiattle River Trailhead the following reasons: The Suiattle River Road and its access to seven trailheads, two car campgrounds serves hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car campers, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance very difficult. Due to the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003 and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail has become overused by equestrians, hunters, climbers and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the campgrounds have been overrun and deteriorated. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired to its end, the continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will further degrade the wilderness experience of people entering the Glacier Peak Wilderness. I also believe that Alternative B represents the most sound option from an environmental perspective. Alternative B calls for the wetlands area – which would be subject to further degradation under Alternative A – to be rehabilitated. Alternative B's relocation of the road further away from the river at the Huckleberry trailhead will help abate future washout threats. Likewise, Alternative B would result in the new construction of a large parking lot to be built somewhere in the vicinity of the Green Mountain Horse Pasture. By contrast, Alternative A would restore access to the existing trailheads at Downey Creek trailhead and the road end. Thank you for considering my support of Alternative B.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
345.	04/20/12 email	As a back country stock user and trail repair volunteer I use and NEED to USE these roads to access trail heads. Storm damage happens every year and every year repairs of each and every nature most be addressed. I along with many others go to keep these places available for the american hikers, horsemen and others. I cannot do this without sufficient area to tow and park my vehicle and trailer. The alternate "B" is the only choice I would ask you to do.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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346.	04/20/12 email	Alternate B should be the selected alternate because it will finally restore access that has been lost for a decade (2003 to 2014). The mitigation proposed more than compensates for the temporary resource impacts that may happen during the project construction. Although we appreciate the comprehensive documentation produced, we have been frustrated by the substantial delays caused by the analysis-paralysis. The same storms caused substantial damage in Mt Rainier National Park. The majority of the repairs in the park were completed within a year after the storms. We have lost a decade of visits to special areas. The value of those areas is not an abstract. It can only be fully realized by pausing and reflecting in those places. It is time for this project to begin construction and restore our lost access.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
347.	04/20/12 email	The recreation are in the Suiattle River Road are is very important to the Horse people of the whole area. The Back Country Horseman access this area and in case you don't know the logo.."Leave No Trace", we are active in cleaning trails, picking up refuse, and maintaining the balance of Nature. Please consider this carefully. Many tax dollars are saved because of groups just like this, helping keep our beauty intact.		Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
348.	04/20/12 email	I am writing to support Alternative B in the draft Environmental Assessment for the repair of the Suiattle River Road. As a saddle and pack stock user I have enjoyed many hours in the saddle in Washington's backcountry. It's time we repair the Suiattle River Road so we can access the Pacific Crest Trail and Glacier Peak Wilderness. Alt B would allow rigs with trailers access to Sulphur Creek campground with it's ample parking and access to trailheads leading to the PCT and points east. Alt B would provide access for law enforcement, search and rescue and other medical providers, and fire response crews. Alt B would facilitate trail maintenance with shorter routes to trails and trailheads. Packing stringers and treads for puncheon bridges, saws, etc. is not an easy chore. Whether 10 miles, 4 miles, or 2 miles riding the "road" just to access the trailheads is unacceptable. Other alternatives provide nothing for stock users; no parking, no campground, nothing. The road as designed in the EA appears to cover all issues related to this repair. It is repaired where applicable and realigned where needed. Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges have an acceptable design and are supported by the tribes and Federal fisheries as well as the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife. Alternate B would again allow 'the public' to access the grandeur of the Suiattle River and Glacier Peak. This would be an economic benefit to Darrington and Granite Falls as well as other "Loop" communities. Alt B is the only acceptable design.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
349.	04/20/12 email	I am writing to support of alternative B for the repair of the Suiattle River Road to the End. This will allow access to existing campgrounds, parking areas and many trails. I think it is important to keep this area open to families, older people and well, everyone to enjoy. I understand that money is short but if there is one road that needs to be repaired I feel that this is the one.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
350.	04/20/12 email	I support Alternative B, the repair to the end of the Suiattle Road.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
351.	04/20/12 email	I have used this area and road for 40 years and believe that it should be rebuilt as outlined in option B. Deep access to the mountains is disappearing and this one should remain.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
352.	04/20/12 email with	Once an Alternative is selected, I look forward to commenting on the final design details as they are developed. I am a retired professional civil engineer. I am also a	Modified C	

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	attached MSWord letter and CCs to: Peter Forbes, District Ranger Darrington Ranger District	<p>hiker, backpacker and climber and have enjoyed many trips to the Glacier Peak Wilderness. I have carefully studied the Suiattle River Road Environmental Assessment (EA), the project drawings you were so kind to provide and I have toured all eight of the proposed repair sites. I have also reviewed a number of technical reports about the river and the various sites. I have the following comments on the proposed actions required to reopen the road to motor vehicle traffic. Site I, Milepost 6: no comment, Comment 1a: Site 2, Milepost 12.6: The river meander here has migrated as far north as it can. It has reached bedrock. Future migration of the existing meander will in all probability be down stream to the west. There will not be any farther erosion north into the bank undermining the road. It appears that there is an opportunity here to examine alternatives to the proposed reroute. The following factors should be investigated: What is the elevation of the bedrock at the toe of the slope below the current road? Is this above Ordinary High Water (OHW)? If the bedrock is above OHW, is it feasible to build a steeper retaining wall based on the bedrock, allowing reconstruction of the road on the original alignment. (This will avoid infringement on the normal river channel of the Suiattle.) Maintaining the road on the current alignment will save 1.2 acres of old growth trees and not necessitate blasting to relocated the road through bedrock. If the bedrock is above OHW, make a cost estimate of a retaining wall for comparison with the cost of the proposed reroute. If a retaining wall based on bedrock above OHW is not feasible, consideration should be given to eliminating the twenty-five foot hump at Station 108+50, between Stations 105+50 and 111+00. Comment 1b: The shortened sight distance over the hump is a safety hazard. The 10 percent grade approaching the hump is near the limit of RV's and cars pulling trailers to negotiate. Drivers approaching the hump will be inclined to speed up in order to crest the hump, without being able to see approaching vehicles on the other side. Additional cost incurred to lower the hump should be included in the comparison with the cost of a retaining wall. Comment 2: Sites 3 & 4, Milepost 12.7 to 13.8: Locating the proposed reroute on the existing Forest Service Road 2670 is appropriate. Care should be taken to narrow the cleared footprint of the new road and possible minor adjustments in the alignment undertaken to minimize the taking of large trees between Stations 158+00 and the end at Station 176+00 where</p>		<p>Response 1a: MP 12.6--The geotechnical investigation for this section found that the depth to bedrock is quite variable, and it (bedrock) wasn't encountered in many of the test pits. Where bedrock was exposed (Station 106+25) it is 28' down from the road surface, which is actually below OHW, so it would not be feasible to "base a retaining wall on bedrock above OHW." Therefore, it was decided that a shift in alignment was a more reasonable solution here.</p> <p>Response 1b: The design produced at Station 108+50, between Stations 105+50 and 111+00 meets the profile grade requirements for a low-volume local rural road; the maximum allowable grade is 15%. The design also meets the minimum K-value (rate of change in grade) for the crest vertical curve, as well as minimum stopping sight distance requirements, for a design speed of 25 mph which is also reasonable for this class of road.</p>

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		<p>the rerouted road rejoins the existing road at milepost 13.8.</p> <p>Comment 3: Site 5, Milepost 14.4: I have the same concerns here as at site 2, a thirty foot high hump in the road approached by 11.428% grades on both sides. This presents a safety hazard with steep grades and limited sight distances, compounded by a horizontal curve on the eastside with a parking area for the Huckleberry trailhead.</p> <p>Comment 4: Site 6, Milepost 20.8: Insufficient attention is being paid to the potential catastrophic failure of this slope. The limitation against armoring the toe of the slope in Downey Creek puts this washout at risk and has the potential of isolating any improvements to Sites 7 and 8. When the road is cut back into the hillside, the uphill slope should be protected to minimize the surface sloughing, or erosion, the major failure mode.</p>		<p>Response 2: Thank you, your comment is noted.</p> <p>Response 3 The design produced at MP14.4 meets the profile grade requirements for a low-volume local rural road; the maximum allowable grade is 15%. The design also meets the minimum K-value (rate of change in grade) for the crest vertical curve, as well as minimum stopping sight distance requirements, for a design speed of 25 mph which is also reasonable for this class of road.</p> <p>Horizontal curves at Huckleberry are necessary to realign the road around the washout, and tie it back into the existing road. All meet the minimum curve radius of 85 feet for this class of road is met. The design of this road was heavily constrained by the surrounding topography. To provide less-steep profile grades and longer vertical curves would mean a longer roadway, deeper cuts into the hillside and/or filling into the Suiattle River, making the project more expensive and would involve more site impacts.</p> <p>Response 4 Comment noted. The lack of armoring the toe would have a higher washout risk. Slope sloughing of the terraces along the river is part of the natural processes of the Suiattle River drainage. The new cut slope at MP 20.8 will be seeded and mulched to minimize erosion, but the EA (See pages 53 and 112) describes that the cut would likely continue to have ravel material onto the road while the slope stabilizes.</p>
353.	04/20/12 email	I support Alternative B, repairing the road to the Suiattle TH. This road provides important access to a number of trailheads. The plan to rebuild it looks like a sound plan, and the EA statement is reasonable. Please, let's do it.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
354.	04/20/12 email	I would sure like to see this road system back in service. It's been a great loss having access reduced to nothing over the last decade. It's been one of my favorite places to go and enjoy what nature has to offer on the west side.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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355.	04/20/12 email	I would like to see the Suiatte River road restored to the existing end of the road at the parking lot for the Sulpher Mtn Trail #794 and Trail 784 up the Suiattle River. I support Alternative B. I would like to be able to do hikes and backpack trips to places like Green Mtn., Milk Creek and Image Lake again, but with the road closed, I have not been able to do these trips. Being a senior hiker, the closed road is to far to either hike or bike to these trailheads.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
356.	04/20/12 email	As a former avid hiker/backpacker and currently a frequent trail rider (do to age and health reasons) I am in favor and encourage the Alternative B repairs to Suiattle River Road FR 26. In my almost 40+ years of backpacking I frequently came across horsemen on trails doing maintenance. I enjoyed the their dedication to clearing trails to areas one would not normally use. Secondly they have been used to help in various emergencies over the years. Now that I am in my retired years my ability to enjoy our public lands is mostly limited to horseback. Alternative B allows me that access and does not restrict those trails to an elite few. The Back Country Horsemen Association of Washington help maintain trails throughout the state with pack and saddle stock support. We cannot sustain this effort without road access to the trail heads along with having suitable parking areas for trailer towing vehicles. Stock use on the Pacific Crest Trail and on connecting trails accessed from the Suiattle River Road FR 26 provides the only way to bring in supplies and materials to crews maintaining trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. In addition to working and recreational access, this route was used for Search and Rescue operations. It is not sufficient to restore use for truck/trail combinations simply to the Green Mountain access trail (Alternative C). We need full restored access (Alternative B) which includes fixing the Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek bridges and approaches.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
357.	04/20/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead for the following reason(s): The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed camping, berry picking, and picnicking. I recognize the high cost of maintenance does not warrant keeping them open and they are no longer needed. However, the Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads and 2 car-camp grounds is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers,	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen, and the simple enjoyment of being outdoors. Page 3 of the EA points out that the Suiattle River Road is a “high need road” as determined by The 2003 MBS Forest-wide Roads Analysis. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult as well as restricting access permanently to an area that has traditionally been enjoyed by multitudes of people and has cultural significance to local Indian tribes. Furthermore, volunteer efforts are critical to trail maintenance and recruiting volunteers to walk 24 miles round trip to work on trails would be extremely difficult. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing which would be good for fish. The Indian tribes support repairing this bridge and improving fish habitat and according to section 1.9 of the EA a Salmon Recovery Board Fund grant was approved in 2011 which would provide funding for this repair. Reopening this road would also have a beneficial effect on the economies of local towns such as Darrington. In summary, there are many good reasons to repair and reopen this road and restore access to this wonderful area. It has been too long that the public has been unable to access this area and the improvements to be implemented in the construction of the new road would benefit riparian and wetland areas and improve fish habitat. Let's please move forward with alternative B and restore access to a beautiful and important area of our public lands.</p>		
358.	04/20/12 email	Alternative B I've reviewed this issue and I favor Alternative B.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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359.	04/20/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road and believe the road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead in order to maintain (resume) critical west-side access into the Glacier Peak Wilderness. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003 and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, current access is limited to the North Fork Sauk trail and as a result it is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. I also believe repair of the Suiattle Road will bolster the economies of struggling area communities, such as Darrington, by providing much needed dollars through travel and tourism.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
360.	04/20/12 email	I'm writing to voice my support of Alternative B as it pertains the Suiattle River Road. So many user groups have enjoyed access to this area in the past and it's time our access to this public land was restored. Day hikers, backpackers, mountaineers, skiers, kayakers, mushroom hunters, and horse packers are some of the different user groups that benefit from having the Suiattle River Road repaired. This restored access will bring recreational users back to the area, which will also benefit the local economy of Darrington. One of my personal favorite memories of spending time in this beautiful area dates back to 2002, when access to Glacier Peak required a mere 9 or 10 mile hike in. I was fortunate to climb this lovely mountain with my father that year, and I know it was one of his favorite trips. I still recall his marveling over all the playful marmots we saw. I would absolutely love to be able to return. My reading and understanding of the alternatives has led me to conclude that Alternative B is the most logical option and the best use of resources.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
361.	04/20/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. I believe the road should be repaired to the Suiattle River Trailhead the following reasons: The Suiattle River Road and its access to seven trailheads, two car campgrounds serves hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car campers, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		and campground maintenance very difficult. Due to the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003 and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail has become overused by equestrians, hunters, climbers and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the campgrounds have been overrun and deteriorated. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired to its end, the continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will further degrade the wilderness experience of people entering the Glacier Peak Wilderness. I also believe that Alternative B represents the most sound option from an environmental perspective. Alternative B calls for the wetlands area – which would be subject to further degradation under Alternative A – to be rehabilitated. Alternative B’s relocation of the road further away from the river at the Huckleberry trailhead will help abate future washout threats. Likewise, Alternative C is would result in the new construction of a large parking lot to be built somewhere in the vicinity of the Green Mountain Horse Pasture. By contrast, Alternative B would restore access to the existing trailheads at Downey Creek trailhead and the road end. Thank you for considering my support of Alternative B.		
362.	04/20/12 email	Please consider reopening the Suiattle River Road so myself and my kids will be able to once again enjoy this area.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
363.	04/20/12 email	I support Alternative B. I have biked the Suiattle River Road but I have not been hiking long enough to have had the fortune to hike the trails. In addition to the trails I would love to be able to access the campgrounds with my family while driving a car.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
364.	04/20/12 email	I am in favor of restoring access to Glacier Peak Wilderness and would like to see Alternative B happen. I feel that if people do not have access to these wilderness areas they will not feel the need to protect them. We need to allow our younger generation a chance to explore wild areas so they can appreciate them and advocate for their protection.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
365.	04/20/12 email	I am fully in support of Alternative B, to repair the road to the end. There are a variety of reasons to repair the whole road. The first is in regard to recreation. <u>Recreation</u> - For the past 5 1/2 years the Suiattle River, Milk Creek, Sulphur Mountain, and Sulphur Creek trailheads have required a walk or bike ride to reach. Usage has plummeted. I have ridden the road in mid summer and seen almost	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>nobody. The fine campground at Sulphur Creek has been empty. There are not enough mountain campgrounds close to the Puget Sound area and both Sulphur Creek and Buck Creek have been unavailable. As the population has increased markedly we are not only failing to add campgrounds, we are losing some that we have. This is such a spectacular area. People should be able to enjoy the low forested valleys and the high meadows. A related point is that with the loss of the White Chuck trail and much of that road the North Fork Sauk would be the only west side access to the Glacier Peak area. That trail will be overwhelmed and much degradation can be expected. Having the Suiattle open allows for spreading out the crowds and allowing for less damage and less crowding overall.</p> <p>Not all old logging roads can or should be kept open. The Suiattle with two campgrounds and seven trailheads should be the poster child for a main road with so many recreational access options it absolutely needs to be maintained. Lastly, this is not a road that serves one group. It serves hikers, backpackers, horse riders, kayakers, mushroom pickers, and more. So much for so many and does not require a long drive. <u>The Local Economy</u> - When logging began to decline the towns that depended on those jobs were told to convert their economies towards tourism. Folks would spend money in town when heading out to enjoy the outdoors. Darrington has seen lawsuits to keep the Mountain Loop Highway from being repaired. The Whitechuck Road and trails were lost. Now there is a push to keep the Suiattle from being repaired. The North Fork Sauk was closed last year. There has been no reason for outdoors people to go through town. The economy has been hurt badly.</p> <p>Darrington did what they were asked to do and they have had no help. This needs to stop. <u>The Future Of Environmental Advocacy</u> - I have always considered myself a supporter of the environment. People need to see the forests and mountains in order to develop a desire to maintain them. Efforts to keep people from accessing these jewels are counter productive. I am much less likely to support additional wilderness designation when some people are actively working to make it more and more difficult to access it. Feet on a trail are much less of a threat to wilderness than a lack of a constituency to protect it. <u>A Long Term Solution</u> - I am pleased to see that the repair is forward looking. moving the road away from the river at the previous washouts is necessary. The EA shows that this is likely to minimize future</p>		

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		washouts. The design for the Downey Bridge extension takes into account the need to safeguard the future of the endangered fish which spawn in the creek. Adding 210 feet of bridge and removing the narrow point at the bridge site is a great improvement. Alternate B will allow access to seven trails. It will allow families a short drive to camp in the forest. Alternate C will return access to one trailhead and leave one empty. It will allow access to two trailheads but leave a road walk to reach the other five. Usage will plummet from pre flood levels. The North Fork Sauk will see much heavier use. Alternative A will be another nail in the Darrington economy. Alternative C will not be much better. Alternative B solves all these problems. Returning access to where it was for many decades before 2003 is the right choice.		
366.	04/20/12 email with attached PDF "Suiattle EA Group Comment Letter"	Please find attached a letter signed on to by 10 conservation and recreation organizations in support of Alternative B identified in the Suiattle River Road Project EA (WA FS ERFO 071-2023). If you have any questions about this comment letter, please do not hesitate to contact me. If I can't answer your question, I will be happy to connect you with the appropriate party. <u>PDF attachment ("Suiattle EA Group Comment Letter")</u> : The undersigned organizations take a keen interest in issues that affect trailhead, river, and wilderness access on our public lands in Washington State. Our members are hikers, climbers, equestrians, mountain bikers, and paddlers statewide and view the Suiattle River Road as an important portal to the Glacier Peak Wilderness that has been inaccessible for far too long. We are pleased to see the recently published Environmental Assessment concerning repair of the Suiattle River Road. Our organizations strongly support Alternative B. Forest Road #26 is an important recreational access asset for the public and the Forest Service. It provides access to seven trailheads, two campgrounds, 27.4 miles of the Wild and Scenic Suiattle River, and tens of thousands of acres of forest that provide countless recreational opportunities for all ages. More than 120 miles of trail is accessible via the seven trailheads along the road; 113 miles (93 percent) of these trails are within the Glacier Peak Wilderness area. Together with the loss of the White Chuck River Road, the washouts on the Suiattle have rendered the west side of the Glacier Peak Wilderness and the upper reaches of the Suiattle River out of reach for many of our constituents. For nearly a	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>decade, trail users have missed out on easy access to the meadows of Green Mountain, majestic views of Image Lake, and wonders of the Pacific Crest Trail. Important conservation and recreation access priorities intersect on the Suiattle. As a Wild and Scenic River, its outstandingly remarkable values and free-flowing nature are protected. At several locations, Alternative B will enhance the wildlife, fish, and scenic outstanding remarkable values that led to the Suiattle's designation, by moving the road upslope and reconnecting the river with its wetlands and historical channel. The Downey Creek bridge extension and embankment removal has enormous potential to improve fish passage and give Downey Creek room to migrate across the floodplain in a more natural fashion. We note that a recognized need exists for river access in the vicinity of Downey Creek. In the past rafters and kayakers accessed the river by sliding boats down the steep bank at the Downey Creek Trailhead. Evaluating opportunities to identify a usable put-in associated with the Downey Creek Bridge repairs would fulfill an existing need, be consistent with recreation goals in the Wild and Scenic River management plan, and reduce erosion and safety issues associated with the historic access at the Downey Creek Trailhead. Our organizations value access to our public lands while working to protect them for future generations. We support repair and enhancement of important access roads like the Suiattle Road. At the same time we also support decommissioning those Forest Service roads that do not provide planned recreational access, but carry high aquatic risks to our watersheds and hold excessive maintenance costs for the American taxpayer. As members of the Washington Watershed Restoration Initiative, most of our organizations have worked to advocate for federal funding to address these legacy roads and water quality issues through strategic repairs, storm-proofing and decommissioning. The recreational purpose served by the Suiattle distinguishes it from the many miles of spur roads that sprawl across the forest landscape, the decommissioning of which we have actively supported. Many of these spurs have been dealt with admirably through the recently signed Suiattle Access and Travel Management (ATM) Plan. Thank you for the hard work you have clearly put into the Suiattle EA. Please do not hesitate to contact [redacted] at Washington Trails Association if you have questions or are in need of assistance.</p>		
367.	04/20/12	Washington Trails Association (WTA) is a volunteer-drive non-profit organization	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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	email with attached PDF letter "WTA Comments on Suiattle Road EA"	that dedicates more than 100,000 hours annually to trail maintenance across Washington State, advocates for trail funding and wildland preservation, and educates hikers on our outdoors legacy and how to enjoy it responsibly. With more than 9,500 members and 2,000 volunteers, WTA has a stake in issues that impact hikers and frequently comments on Forest Service projects. The following comments represent our strong support for Alternative B, reopening the Suiattle River Road (Forest Road #26) to Sulphur Bridge (milepost 22.9) and of Alternative B, which would advance this important goal. The Suiattle is one of the last standing western access points to the Glacier Peak Wilderness. With the loss of the White Chuck and the tenuous position of the Illabot, the Suiattle is the last best chance that hikers on the west side of the state have to reach trailheads to green Mountain, and, at the end of the road, Sulphur Mountain. One of Washington's best loop hikes--the 33 mile Suiattle River-Vista Creek-Milk Creek Loop, featured in WTA's 2008 Endangered Trails Report--is accessed immediately from the end of the road. And two fine campgrounds--Buck Creek and Sulphur Creek--grace this route. Forest Road #26 has been the site of ongoing and extensive environmental surveys. The 2006 Suiattle EA, the recently completed Suiattle River Access and Travel Management (ATM) Plan, biological and cultural resources surveys leading up to last summer's Categorical Exclusion (CE) issuance, culminating in the current Draft EA make the case for reopening the Suiattle to Sulphur Creek. Repairing the Suiattle to Sulphur Creek is consistent with Forest Plan direction to maintain transportation system facilities to provide recreation opportunities. We appreciate the pains that Federal Highways and the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie took to ensure that this project's footprint is small and that, in places it stitches together parts of the landscape that were fragmented by the road's current alignment. According to the EA, at site #1 (MP 6.0), <i>Realigning the road by moving it 350 to 400 feet away from the current eroded river bank would move the road out of the modeled channel migration zone ... Restoration of natural draining patters including wetlands and establishment of vegetation in the area of the old road bed would help to stabilize the slope. Wetlands would hold more runoff and increase recharge rather than direction water to the slope, and roots from vegetation would hold soil against erosive forces. (EA, page 110)</i> At sites #3 and 4, ... <i>road realignment upslope</i>		

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		<p><i>allows for road crossing of the drainages in defined channels vs. across the alluvial fans of the streams in the current road location. The relocation also allows for restoration of floodplain connectivity with what would become the abandoned road segment ... The riprap at Site #3 which has the potential to influence channel dynamics, would be removed as part of Alternative B road obliteration actions. This removal would allow for free flow of river within the floodplain, with recruitment of large woody debris and other organic materials, and natural erosion and deposition along the riverbank. (EA, page 111) Finally, at site #7, Removal of the existing roadway embankment and construction of three approximately 70 foot long bridge spans to the existing bridge span would restore the natural channel cross section at the mouth of Downey Creek. The bridge additions would allow the stream to occupy the entire historical alluvial fan, allowing for natural flow patterns and sediment and large woody debris transport and deposition. (EA, page 112)The Downey Creek Bridge extension and embankment removal is one of the most interesting elements of this project. Restoring the mouth of Downey Creek to its normal channel will restore more natural seasonal flows to the Suiattle and be of significant benefit to fish. Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) dollars that have not been spent are always vulnerable to legislative sweeps in order to patch budget holes, so we urge you strongly to get this element underway as quickly in the repair timeline as possible. WTA is confident that by timing work with species habitat concerns in mind and by operating within the confines of seasonal changes in streamflows you can avoid undue environmental harm and restore access to the renowned hiking opportunities accessed from Suiattle River Road. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this project. If I can answer any questions or otherwise be of service to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.</i></p>		
368.	04/20/12 email	I am writing in support of the plan to repair the Suiattle River Road, “Alternative B.” I have enjoyed so many hikes and outings along this road, and have missed my annual trek up Green Mountain since the road washed out.I encourage you to repair it with minimal impact to the surrounding wilderness and old-growth areas.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
369.	04/20/12 email	Below please find comments by the North Cascades Conservation Council (NCCC) on the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Suiattle River Road Project. We support EA Alternative C, with modifications discussed below, which would reopen	C	

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		<p>most of the road and restore motorized access to the popular Buck Creek Campground and the popular Huckleberry and Green Mountain trailheads. Thank you for including Alternative C in the EA. NCCC was formed in 1957 as a non-profit to protect and preserve the scenic, scientific, recreation, educational, and wilderness values of the North Cascades. Over the last half-century, NCCC has led or participated in campaigns to create North Cascades National Park, Ross Lake and Lake Chelan National Recreation Areas, and units of the National Wilderness System, such as Glacier Peak Wilderness, Alpine Lakes Wilderness, William O. Douglas Wilderness, Henry M. Jackson Wilderness, and Wild Sky Wilderness.</p> <p>Inadequate Development of Alternatives Comment 1The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has not adequately developed alternatives to the full-rebuild Alternative B option. The partial rebuild Alternative C option as presented is, as explicitly stated, effectively a “no action” alternative for the road past MP 19. It leaves undone a number of actions which are essential for resource protection and essential to making a partial rebuild option attractive to recreationists. In particular: (1) no trailhead parking facilities would be provided near MP 19; (2) no plan is presented for decommissioning or treating the closed portion of the road beyond MP 19 to forestall future problems from unmaintained culverts, or to remove the causeway across the Downey Creek alluvial fan; and (3) no trail conversion is proposed to ensure that nonmotorized users can continue to transit the road corridor with ease. Aside from Downey and Sulphur Creeks, crossing streams are low-volume, and not likely to require bridging if culverts were removed. The Downey Creek crossing would, however, require some kind of bridge extension to permit all classes of nonmotorized users to reach the current bridge span were the Downey Creek causeway to be removed. The EA states (p.27) that a more thorough formal decommissioning option for the road beyond MP 19 was not pursued because “a decision to convert a road to trail is a decision that would be deferred to the [U.S. Forest Service] who has the authority to determine such access and travel management changes on their road system.” However, 40 C.F.R. 1502.14(c) directs preparing agencies to “Include reasonable alternatives not within the jurisdiction of the lead agency.” By not presenting a more thorough partial decommissioning option, FHWA has failed to meet this standard. The preparers go on to argue against</p>		<p>Response 1: The EA addressed this alternative on p. 27 and explained why it was considered but not analyzed in detail. Alternative C was developed within the guidelines for use of funds for Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads (ERFO). The intent of the ERFO Program is to pay the unusually heavy expenses to agencies that manage road systems, for the repair and reconstruction of Federal roads to pre-disaster conditions. The pursuit of a new parking lot, and decommissioning Road 26 with a road to trail conversion would not be appropriate uses of ERFO funds. Those components would be a decision by the Forest Service outside the scope of this NEPA project and outside the scope of FWHA responsibility and ERFO funding. Alternative C does not preclude a future NEPA analysis and decision by the Forest Service to manage the last 4 miles of Road 26 with road decommissioning or in a road-to-trail option. This option would need to be considered in light of the final decision on the ATM FONSI</p> <p>The EA provides a range of alternatives including alternatives not within the jurisdiction of FHWA, the lead agency. Several of these alternatives were considered, but eliminated from detailed study, as described starting on page 24 of the EA. These alternatives represent part of the range of alternatives studied by the ID Team and considered by the Responsible Official. See response above.</p>

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		<p>partial decommissioning on the grounds that it “would not be consistent with forest plan direction for the Suiattle road” (p.27). In fact this “direction” in the 22-year-old 1990 Forest Plan is nothing but an enumeration of all national forest system roads with their current and anticipated future statuses (MBSNF Land and Resource Management Plan, pp. 4-72 to 4-79). Many things have changed greatly since 1990, most notably the increasingly penurious fiscal environment of the National Forest road system, and the 1994 ROD (“Northwest Forest Plan”) which modified forest plans throughout the region, requiring much greater emphasis on resource protection than before. Many roads on that 1990 Forest Plan list have since been closed or decommissioned, including a number in close proximity to FS 26, some of them trunk roads. Comment 2 In the Suiattle valley, road FS 25, the main trunk south-side Suiattle road, has been decommissioned back six miles since 1990; several tributary roads such as the six-mile long Lime Creek road (FS 2550) have been decommissioned in their entirety. Comment 3 Most recently FS 23, the trunk road in the adjacent Whitechuck River valley, was decommissioned and converted to trail for its final 4.5 miles, despite having a campground and a major trailhead at its terminus. It is notable that the decisions to partially decommission FS 25 and FS 23 were both preceded by significant storm damage which effectively closed them to motor vehicle traffic. We conclude that this “it’s in the Forest Plan” argument against decommissioning has no merit and has been belied many times by the preparing agencies’ past actions. Comment 4 All that is required is a considered decision in a NEPA context, such as is provided by the current EA process. Comment 5: The preparers also argue against a partial decommissioning option on the grounds that it would permanently eliminate motor vehicle access to the Sulphur Creek campground. However, this option would restore motorized access to the Buck Creek campground at around MP 15, which was always much more popular than Sulphur Creek campground when both were motor-accessible. Table 4 of the EA (p.60) reveals that Buck Creek campground consistently drew more than 2.5 times the annual user-days that Sulphur Creek campground did. A permanent MP 19 automotive closure would make Sulphur Creek a walk-in campground with a moderate, level four-mile hiking approach through an attractive riparian forest. Experience with formerly automotive campgrounds on the Dosewallips road</p>		<p>Response 2: Road 25 was not decommissioned, but put into storage from Circle Creek east to Lime Creek, after the six-mile Lime Creek road decommissioning</p> <p>Response 3: The White Chuck Road 23 is not analogous to the Suiattle Road 26 situation. Road 23 was decommissioned through a decision by the Forest Service. While the first 4 miles of Road 23 were repaired with ERFO funds, the final 4.5 miles were decommissioned with the use of Legacy funding from the Forest Service. Note also that Road 23 was not converted to a trail due to major damage to the trail beyond the Road 23 trailhead. There was dispersed camping at the Road 23 trailhead, but no designated campground</p> <p>EA pages 3-6 summarized the relationship of the proposed action to the Forest Plan and other documents. The Northwest Forest Plan of 1994 amended the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie Land and Resource Management Plan of 1990. Therefore, current references to the Forest Plan included the Northwest Forest Plan direction. The Forest Plan puts road systems and segments into a Forest-wide context. Forest Plan direction, including amendments to the Forest Plan, is routinely considered when preparing a project’s purpose and need statement. The current and anticipated status of Road 26 was reviewed as described in the EA on pages 2-3 in evaluating the importance of the road to recreational opportunities and management of the National Forest. Roads are evaluated by the Forest as described above for their current and anticipated uses. Numerous Forest system roads no longer needed have been closed or decommissioned over the last two decades.</p> <p>Response 4: The NEPA process and analysis for road management in the Suiattle River drainage was documented in the Suiattle ATM EA released in December 2010, with the DN and FONSI finalized April 2012. The ATM decision on road management in the Suiattle River drainage will guide forest service decisions on road 26.</p> <p>Response 5: Buck Creek campground has 26 sites, while Sulphur Creek has 20 sites, so the number of users at Buck creek would be</p>

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		<p>(Elkhorn, 1.5 mi.; Muscott Flats, 5.5 mi.) suggests that it would add to the “spectrum of recreation opportunities” by offering a new sort of easy backcountry camping experience. The number of motorized camping spots could be increased by renovating the former east-side Buck Creek campground, now used for unmonitored “dispersed” motorized camping. Preparers further argue against developing a partial decommission option on the grounds that it would require a new trailhead parking lot. Of course it would; we fail to see why this is an argument against fully developing the option. Comment 6: Preparers also argue against decommissioning beyond MP 19 on the ground that it would remove the Downey Creek causeway, and so cut off non-motorized user access to the existing Downey Creek bridge span, forcing them to ford Downey Creek. Hence the preparers assert “Access to four trailheads and Sulphur Creek Campground would be lost” (p.27). This does not make sense, because any sensible decommissioning alternative would also include a re-establishment of means of access to the Downey Creek span for non-motorized users traveling the former road. We are confident that the preparing agencies’ bridge engineers and trail designers could think of something. Furthermore, such a pedestrian/equestrian bridge extension would be highly eligible for grant funds, and considerably less costly than Alternative B’s \$1 million price tag for an automotive bridge at the same site. Comment 7: Riparian Reserves and Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) issues After it leaves the old road prism about a half-mile from its departure from FS 26, the proposed one-mile re-route between MP 12.7-13.6 (sites #3 and #4 in EA terminology) crosses two perennial streams and traverses a wetland. The EA acknowledges that the “approximately .66 acres [of wetlands] would be affected under Alternative B.” We believe that the entirety of this .66 acres is in the referenced wetland. Comment 8: Center-line stakes about 15 feet from the second perennial stream imply that there would be not just stream crossing, but considerable stream displacement at the second stream crossing (about MP 13.5). Allowing a 200-foot site potential tree height and assuming that both perennial streams are not fish-bearing, the riparian reserves would cover roughly 800 feet of the 2,640 feet of proposed entirely new road alignment, and about 600 of the roughly 1,760 feet of this which is through late-successional forest. Comment 9: Standards and guidelines for Riparian Reserves from the 1994 ROD (“Northwest</p>		<p>expected to be greater than at Sulphur Creek campground. The intent of the ERFO Program is to pay the unusually heavy expenses to agencies that manage road systems, for the repair and reconstruction of Federal roads to pre-disaster conditions. Renovation of the Buck Creek campground dispersed site would be outside of the scope of ERFO Road repair project. The pursuit of a new parking lot, with the decommissioning of Road 26 and a road to trail conversion would not be appropriate uses of ERFO funds. These proposals would also be a decision by the Forest Service that was engaged in an access and management assessment for the Suiattle River drainage at the time of this assessment.</p> <p>Alternative C does not preclude a future NEPA analysis and decision by the Forest Service to manage the last 4 miles of Road 26 with road decommissioning or in a road-to-trail option.</p> <p>Response 6: The intent of the ERFO Program is to pay the unusually heavy expenses to agencies that manage road systems, for the repair and reconstruction of Federal roads to pre-disaster conditions. The pursuit of trail crossing at Downey and Sulphur Creek with the decommissioning of Road 26 and a road- to trail conversion would not be appropriate uses of ERFO funds. These actions would be a decision by the Forest Service who was engaged in an access and management assessment for the Suiattle River drainage at the time of this Road 26 assessment.</p> <p>An alternate trail ford or crossing of Downey Creek may be possible, but the EA explains on page 27, that an alternate route had not yet been identified during the preliminary reconnaissance of the area.</p> <p>The action to convert the road to a trail would be a decision by the Forest Service who was engaged in an access and management assessment for the Suiattle River drainage at the time of this Road 26 repair assessment. Alternative C does not preclude a future analysis and decision by the Forest Service to manage the last 4 miles of Road 26 with road decommissioning or a road-to-trail option. This option would</p>

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		<p>Forest Plan” or NWFP) include RF-2(g), which directs managers to meet ACS objectives by “avoiding wetlands entirely when constructing new roads”; and RF-2(f), to meet ACS objectives by “minimizing disruption of natural hydrologic flow paths, including diversion of streamflow and interception of surface and subsurface flow.” Comment 10: Neither Alternative B nor Alternative C (which are identical in their effects below MP 19) meet the plain intent of these standards and guidelines. The proposal instead is to create artificial mitigation wetlands at several sites along the former road alignment (EA, p. 117). But the NWFP makes no provision for the creation of artificial compensatory wetlands in road construction projects; instead it flatly prohibits the destruction of existing wetlands in the course of road construction. Comment 11: MP 20.8 Problems A scientific controversy exists regarding the proposed repairs at MP 20.8. At MP 20.8, a short distance before the Downey Creek crossing, the creek (and also the river, since they are in the same braided floodplain at this point) encroached into the roadway at the base of a steep, forested hundred-foot-high bank, taking most of the road prism. At present the low-water channel of the Suiattle River has retreated south, away from the base of the slope, and at summer and fall flows the creek/river channel adjacent to the base of the slope is in fact occupied wholly by the flow of Downey Creek. This floodplain reach of Downey Creek is of great importance to the Suiattle River stock of the listed Puget Sound Chinook salmon, also known as King salmon, the largest species of salmon. In recent years WDFW redd surveys indicate that approximately 40% of the Suiattle’s entire population of Chinook salmon has spawned in this one short clear-water reach, immediately adjacent to the MP 20.8 washout and to the remnants of the road prism (see picture 1 below). A 2009 analysis of the site by SK Geotechnical, Inc., commissioned by the Forest Service, concluded that the slope above the road prism had a history of failure, was potentially unstable, and that digging into the slope to move the roadway into the bank was ill-advised: <i>“It is ... our opinion that ...shifting the road 15 feet into the slope is not suitable and will likely activate the entire slope to fail almost immediately and perhaps during construction. This failure would result in significant additional soil loss and sediment being introduced into the river.”</i> (SK Geotechnical report, p.16). Such a sediment-delivering failure would of course pose a significant risk to the road-</p>		<p>be a departure from the recent February 2, 2012 Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Suiattle Access and Travel Management Project. That decision documents the road status (open, closed, decommissioned, or road-to-trail) for the transportation system in the Suiattle drainage, including a decision to retain Road 26 as open to motorized vehicles to the terminus.</p> <p>Response 7: The EA on page 104 describes wetland delineation as documented in two reports (Herrera 2008 and Hererra 2011) with a total of 0.66 acre of affected wetlands from MP 6.0 to MP 14.4. Detailed information for each site is provided in the wetland delineation reports. Current estimates of the proposed repair at MP 13.4 will affect approximately 0.16 acre out of the total acres.</p> <p>Response 8: Staking as described cannot be confirmed as center-line staking. The road reroute will cross streams and associated riparian areas. The crossings are outside of LSR as described in the EA on pages 18-19.Response 9/10: The road is designed to meet guidelines from the 1994 ROD. EA on page 111 describes how the proposed road realignment upslope allows for the road to cross the drainages in defined channels vs. the current road location in wetlands and the alluvial fan of the stream drainages. This minimizes the disruption of flow paths.</p> <p>The EA pages on 86 to 88 provided a description of how Alternative B and C meet the Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives. The EA on pages 117 and 118 listed steps to address potential effects to wetlands from the proposed project.</p> <p>Response 11: There is no scientific controversy over the environmental effects given the instability of the slope. There are successive environmental reports with differing conclusions based on the extent of information gathered at the time of the report. The report from SK Geotechnical Services provided an early opinion based on visual assessments (Dec. 2009). Due to the concerns raised by this report, the USFS preformed additional site reviews, and measurements</p>

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		<p>adjacent spawning reach. Under most circumstances such a technical finding would discourage any repair strategy involving digging into the bank; however, because of very limited repair options at this site, MBSNF and FHWA staff instead set to work re-analyzing the slope and the accumulated data and concluded that the original findings of instability had been based on excessively conservative assumptions: “We disagree with the SK Geotechnical conclusion that the hillside above the road is an active landslide...The SK Geotechnical recommendation to not shift the road alignment into the hill is more restrictive and conservative than necessary” (Memo by FHWA engineer Jose Linares, file code 7170-2).</p>  <p>Picture 1: site of MP 20.8 washout and adjacent spawning reach of Downey Creek Without going into the technical details, it is nonetheless clear that conclusions regarding stability are very sensitive to input parametric assumptions, in particular the assumed angle of internal friction, phi. The “revisit” of this phi assumption by FHWA and FS staff resulted in a conclusion that the slope was marginally stable enough to tolerate the proposed repair without failure, although they acknowledge some increased risk of failure: “the low safety factors indicate that some risk is</p>		<p>and contracted for drilling equipment to bore core samples at the MP 20.8 site (2010). Based on the new information, the final slope assessment (USDA Forest Service, 2011) was that the proposed shift into the hillside was a reasonable alternative to maintain access and to limit disturbance to fish or habitat. See the EA pages 77 to 82 for fisheries effects, and pages 11 to 112 for soils, channel dynamics and water quality effects. The EA provides geology, soils, hydrology and water quality effects on pages 88 to 113. The Project Record is incorporated by reference as described on page 16 of the EA, and includes the specialists’ reports and technical documentation used to support the analysis and conclusion in the EA. Copies of the geotechnical reports, final slope stability report, drilling or boring logs, material unit descriptions and letter from the USFS Director of Engineering for Regional 6 from the Project Record (which were used in the final slope assessment) were provide to NCCC on April 3 and 4th of 2012.</p> <p>Response 12 a– The terrace above the slope was harvested, with the spur road at approximately MP 20.6 providing the access for the timber harvest and subsequent fire salvage in the areas. The report dated</p>

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		<p>involved. Shallow sliding, slough removal, high road maintenance costs, and long-term slope adjustments should be anticipated” (analysis memo by Bill Shelmerdine, Olympic NF, titled “Slope stability assessment FSR 26 MP 20.8” dated 11/23/2011). The proposed repair involves moving the road 10-15 feet into the bank, and steepening the lower 40 feet of bank slope up to 45 degrees from its current low-30s-degrees, without armoring or supporting the slope above the road in any way. This would of course entail stripping the lower half of the slope of its vegetation and tree cover. Modeling assumptions aside, there seems ample physical evidence of past instability on this slope. Picture 2 below depicts a downed log across this slope completely buried on its uphill side by mass wasting. Aerial photographs taken in 1944 show this slope as bare, and in fact although it is now forested, the canopy trees are relatively young and appear to belong to a single cohort which successfully colonized the site following the last significant slope movement. Comment 12 aNo stumps are visible on the slope, and the statement by FHWA engineer Jose Linares that the bare slope visible in 1944 was due to clear-cut logging (memo dated October 19, 2010, file code 7170-2) is not supported by physical evidence. By contrast the forest on the bench above is obviously older, and also obviously retains visible stumps from a round of light selective logging (see photo 3). Comment 12 b: It is a safe assumption that the present root structure on this slope now contributes significantly to its recent relative stability. In this context, significantly steepening the lower half of this hundred-foot slope and stripping it of its protective vegetation is obviously risky, and does not seem to obey common-sense standards of prudence in either engineering or resource protection. If this proposed repair is executed at MP 20.8, the continued close proximity of the road prism to the river channel on the outside of a bend also renders it acutely vulnerable to flood damage. Planning and executing a repair with such a high and evident risk of failure is not sensible, not fiscally prudent, not consistent with engineering best practices, and puts ESA-listed fish stocks at risk. NEPA has two primary goals: (1) to insure that the agency has fully contemplated the environmental effects of its action; and (2) to insure the public has sufficient information to challenge the agency. <i>Idaho Sporting Congress v. Thomas</i>, 137 F.3d 1146, 1151 (9th Cir. 1998); see also, <i>Price Road Neighborhood Ass’n v. U.S. Dept.</i></p>		<p>10/19/10 states: “We estimate that the trees between the road and the terrace edge are about 40 to 50 years old. The 1944 aerial photo shows a bare slope above and below the current road location. It is very likely this hillside was logged just prior to 1944 since there are numerous rotted, cut stumps on the terrace and there is an old road to the terrace as evident in the 1944 aerial photo. From what we understand, the hillside did not fail after these trees were cut.”</p> <p>Response12 b: See Response 11 above- The report from SK Geotechnical Services provided an early opinion based on visual assessments (Dec. 2009). Due to the concerns raised by this report, the USFS preformed additional site reviews, and measurements and contracted for drilling equipment to bore core samples at the MP 20.8 site (2010). Based on the new information, the final slope assessment (USDA Forest Service, 2011) was that the proposed shift into the hillside was a reasonable alternative to maintain access and to limit disturbance to fish or habitat. See the EA pages 77 to 82 for fisheries effects, and pages 11 to 112 for soils, channel dynamics and water quality effects. The EA provides geology, soils, hydrology and water quality effects on pages 88 to 113. The Project Record is incorporated by reference as described on page 16 of the EA, and includes the specialists’ reports and technical documentation used to support the analysis and conclusion in the EA. Copies of the geotechnical reports, final slope stability report, drilling or boring logs, material unit descriptions and letter from the USFS Director of Engineering for Regional 6 from the Project Record (which were used in the final slope assessment) were provide to NCCC on April 3 and 4th of 2012.</p>

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		<p><i>of Transp.</i>, 113 F.3d 1505, 1511 (9th Cir. 1997) (“one of the twin aims of NEPA is active public involvement and access to information”); <i>Columbia Basin Land Preservation v. Schlesinger</i>, 643 F.2d 585, 592 (9th Cir. 1981) (the preparation of a NEPA document ensures that the public “can evaluate the environmental consequences independently”). NEPA “guarantees that the relevant information will be made available to the larger audience that may also play a role in both the decisionmaking process and the implementation of that decision.” <i>Robertson v. Methow Valley Citizens</i>, 490 U.S. 332, 349, 109 S.Ct. 1835 (1989). Specifically, NEPA places on the Forest Service an affirmative duty to disclose and analyze scientific information counseling against the action proposed by the agency or calling into question the expected environmental effects of a proposed action. 40 C.F.R. §§ 1502.9(b), 1502.24; see also, 40 C.F.R. § 1508.27(b)(4). The Ninth Circuit has repeatedly confirmed that NEPA does not allow an agency to simply disregard contrary science that is directly applicable to its proposal. <i>Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project v. Blackwood</i>, 161 F.3d 1208 (9th Cir. 1998); <i>Center for Biological Diversity v. U.S. Forest Serv.</i>, 349 F.3d 1157, 1169 (9th Cir. 2003); <i>Seattle Audubon Society v. Lyons</i>, 871 F.Supp. 1291, 1318 (W.D. Wash. 1994), <i>aff’d sub nom.</i>, <i>Seattle Audubon Society v. Moseley</i>, 80 F.3d 1401 (9th Cir. 1996) (NEPA requires the agency to “disclose responsible scientific opinion in opposition to the proposed action, and make a good faith, reasoned response to it”); <i>Seattle Audubon Society v. Espy</i>, 998 F.2d 699 (9th Cir. 1993) (the failure to disclose and respond to the opinions held by well-respected scientists concerning the hazards of a proposed action “is fatally deficient”); <i>Silva v. Lynn</i>, 482 F.2d 1282, 1285 (1st Cir. 1973) (“[NEPA] helps insure the integrity of the process of decision by precluding stubborn problems or serious criticism from being swept under the rug”). The courts have also been clear that the only appropriate place to disclose and discuss a scientific controversy is in the body of the NEPA document itself. <i>Blackwood</i>, 161 F.3d at 1214 (invalidating an environmental document that “contains virtually no references to any material in support of or in opposition to its conclusions. That is where the Forest Service’s defense of its position must be</p>		

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		<p>found”).</p>  <p>Picture 2: buried log at MP 20.8 illustrating mass wasting on the slope above the washout</p>  <p>Picture 3: evidence of partial logging in old bench forest above MP 20.8 slope.</p> <p>Comment 12c:</p>		<p>Response 12c/d: The EA on page 16 incorporates specialists’ reports as part of the project record. The geotechnical reports by SK Geotechnical and Herrera Associates are listed in the EA in chapter 6, page159. Relying on specialists’ information in the Project Record helps implement CEQ Regulations’ provision that agencies should reduce paperwork (40 CFR 1500.4). The objective is to furnish enough site-specific information to demonstrate a reasonable consideration of environmental impacts.</p> <p>In the case of MP20.8, there is no scientific controversy over the environmental effects given the instability of the slope. There are successive environmental reports with differing conclusions based on the extent of information gathered at the time of the report. The report from SK Geotechnical Services provided an early opinion based on</p>

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		<p>Here, a significant scientific controversy exists about the validity, integrity, and longevity of the proposed repairs to the Suiattle River Road at MP 20.8. Geotechnical reports prepared by third party contractors SK Geotechnical and Herrerra Associates suggest that FHWA’s proposed design for the road repairs are inadequate, and that the Suiattle River Road is likely to fail again in the near future, despite – or even because of – the proposed repairs at MP 20.8. Indeed, internal Forest Service documents also disclose the instability of the current and proposed road alignment and repairs, and indicates that they are likely to fail again in the future. Comment 12dThe EA fails to disclose this information and provide a reasoned explanation for why FHWA and USFS have chosen design plans and mitigation measures that are unlikely to remain stable. All of these factors weigh in favor of Alternative C, so that the road would be reopened only as far as MP 19, expensive repairs would not be made beyond MP 19, and future washouts at MP 20.8 would not result in de facto loss of all funds invested in automotive facilities beyond MP 20.8. Comment 13: Loss of Old Forest and Critical Habitat How much old forest (critical habitat for both the Northern Spotted Owl and the Marbled Murrelet) will be felled for this project? The habitat loss will be 1.2 acres for the MP 12.6 washout (EA p.127); either 4 or 2.6 acres for the MP 12.7-13.6 washout (both figures are given on p. 127); and an acre at MP 14.4 has already been felled. This yields somewhere between 4.8 and 6.2 acres of 150-year-old forest lost in the course of this project. Whatever the figure, it is too much. Take the lowest figure given for the MP 12.7-13.6 washout, 2.6 acres. The old forest portion of this re-route is almost exactly a third of a mile. The loss of 2.6 acres of old forest in a third of a mile implies an average clear zone width of 64 feet. We believe the clear zone should not average over thirty to thirty-five feet for a road with a 14-foot running surface, on low-gradient ground. Wherever possible there should be no inboard ditch line, but outsloping should be used instead. We have noticed that on the existing portions of FS 26 there are many instances of large-diameter trees within 6-8 feet of the road running surface. We believe FHWA is using inappropriate design speeds and inappropriate design standards. A clear example of this is the plan to reduce curve radius and “cut the corner” at the downstream end of the MP 12.7-13.6 re-route where it departs from FS 26 onto the old spur. This loss of old forest in the</p>		<p>visual assessments (2009). Due to the concerns raised by this report, the USFS preformed additional site reviews, and measurements and contracted for drilling equipment to bore core samples at the MP 20.8 site (2010). Based on the new information, the final slope assessment (USDA Forest Service, 2011) was that the proposed shift into the hillside was a reasonable alternative to maintain access and to limit disturbance to fish or habitat.</p> <p>See the EA pages 77 to 82 for fisheries effects, and pages 11 to 112 for soils, channel dynamics and water quality effects. The EA provides geology, soils, hydrology and water quality effects on pages 88 to 113. The Project Record is incorporated by reference as described on page 16 of the EA, and includes the specialists’ reports and technical documentation used to support the analysis and conclusion in the EA. Copies of the geotechnical reports, final slope stability report, drilling or boring logs, material unit descriptions and letter from the USFS Director of Engineering for Regional 6 from the Project Record (which were used in the final slope assessment) were provide to NCCC on April 3 and 4th of 2012.</p> <p>Response 13: The amount of mature forest to be removed with the proposed repair is within the estimate of 5 to 6 acres consulted on with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, as discussed in the EA Wildlife section on pages 127 to 134. FHWA and the USFS have discussed ways to minimize the road repair footprint from MP 12.6 to MP 13.8 with the potential of steeper cutlsopes, minimal ditchline, and tighter curve radius such as at the junction of Road 26 and 2670. Final plan designs are expected to reduce the amount of forest disturbance. Specific design criteria will be developed if the agency selects a build alternative.</p>

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		<p>corner is completely unnecessary. The current angle of departure of the spur from FS 26 is perfectly acceptable. At MP 12.6 (the first federal washout) the loss of 1.2 acres of old forest (and a rather steep, ugly re-route) can be avoided by keeping the road close to its pre-washout alignment. It appears that at this site the current alignment is partially on bedrock above OHWM, and this seems certain to impede any significant further movement of the river into the slope. If the bedrock is indeed above OHWM it may be feasible to build a steeper retaining wall based on the bedrock, allowing reconstruction of the road on the original alignment, or moved slightly into the slope. (This will avoid infringement on the normal river channel of the Suiattle.) We suspect that the aggregate loss of old forest contemplated in the current alternatives (both Alternative C and Alternative B have the same effect in these locations) is greater than the amount acknowledged in previous consultations or BiOps with USFWS. We believe the loss of old forest can and should be reduced by more than half. Comment 14 Recommendations We support partial construction of the Suiattle River road to MP 19, and permanent closure at MP 19, as called for in Alternative C. Closure at MP 19 obviates the considerable problems and risks posed by MP 20.8 for full reconstruction. However, as noted above Alternative C is an inadequately developed alternative, and we support also the construction of a trailhead parking lot in the vicinity of MP 19. We support the full decommissioning of FS 26 from MP 19 to the Downey Creek bridge, including the removal of the causeway across the alluvial fan and removal of all culverts from the road prism. We also support the reestablishment of pedestrian/equestrian access to the Downey Creek span via bridge extension. Less expensive options for preserving nonmotorized access (e.g. only partial removal of the causeway, retaining a footing for the current hiker-equestrian bridgelet) should also be evaluated. Beyond Downey Creek there appear to be only two live culverts, one shallow and the other deeper; approaches to treating these two culverts should be evaluated (e.g. deploying a temporary bridge to get a backhoe onto the Downey Creek span, using hand-operated power digging equipment to extract the culverts, or no action). Downstream of MP 19 we advocate minimizing impacts to old forest by narrowing clear zones (cutting fewer trees), by taking a different approach to the MP 12.6 re-route, and more generally using a lower design speed to make it possible to tolerate</p>		<p>Extent of removal of mature and old forest is described in the EA and A-EA, Section 3.11.1.2.</p> <p>Response 14: comment noted</p> <p>Response 15: comment noted</p>

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		<p>tighter radius curves, narrower shoulders, and more obstructed sight lines.</p> <p>Comment 15: As noted above, Alternative C would reopen most of the road and restore motorized access to the popular Buck Creek Campground and the popular Huckleberry and Green Mountain trailheads. The Downey Creek trailhead, terminus of the Ptarmigan Traverse, would be reached by a 1.9 mile walk through the floodplain forest along the closed road upstream of MP 19. Alternative C would also avoid expensive and damaging rebuilding in the vicinity of Downey Creek, including the MP 20.8 washout site that is likely to slide and/or wash out repeatedly in the future, damaging the spawning site of 40% of the Suiattle basin’s Chinook (King) salmon, and stranding the expensive automotive bridge that is proposed for the Downey Creek crossing. Converting the last few miles of the road to a non-motorized condition would obviate future repairs, and would provide low-elevation, longer-season quiet recreation for hikers, bicyclists and equestrians using the closed road when the higher-elevation trails are buried by snow. A similar closure of the uppermost portion of the Middle Fork Snoqualmie Road is widely regarded as a great success, even though it adds a few miles of trail distance to certain destinations, because the added miles of lowland trail do provide popular recreation opportunities.</p> <p>Emergency Relief for Federally Owned (ERFO) Road Fund Issues, Comments, and Questions <u>Comment 1</u> 23 CFR 668.203 defines “Catastrophic Failure” in relevant part as “[t]he sudden failure of a major element or segment of a Federal road which is not primarily attributable to gradual and progressive deterioration or lack of proper maintenance.” The EA states that the flood events of October 2003 and the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007 resulted in “partial and complete loss of portions of the road ...” The EA also states “[f]lood waters eroded sections of the valley terrace on which Road 26 was located, resulting in partial and complete loss of portions of the road, and rendering the road impassible for motorized vehicle traffic.” a. Is it the position of FHWA that the flood events, which resulted in</p>		<p>Emergency Relief for Federally Owned (ERFO) Road Fund Issues, Comments, and Questions</p> <p><u>Response 1</u></p> <p>a. No. 23 U.S.C. Sec 125. Emergency Relief funding is available for two types of damage; natural disasters over a wide area and catastrophic failures (23 CFR 668.205(a). The damage at each of the sites set forth in the EA was the result of a natural disaster over a wide area and not a catastrophic failure of a major element or segment of road (23CFR 668.203 (c)).</p> <p>b. See answer to question 1.a. above. FHWA is not contending that the damage was caused by a catastrophic failure.</p> <p>c. See answer to question 1.a. above. FHWA is not contending that</p>

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		<p>“partial and complete loss of portions of the road” constitute a “catastrophic failure” as defined in 23 CFR 668.203(c)? b. If FHWA contends that the “partial and complete loss of portions of the road” constitutes a “catastrophic failure,” is it, in turn, stating that the “partial or complete loss of portions of the road” resulted from a “sudden failure of a major element or segment of the road”? c. Is it the position of FHWA that the erosions to sections of the valley terrace constitute a “sudden failure”? d. How does FHWA define “sudden failure”? e. To what extent is the erosion to sections of the valley terrace on which Road 26 is located that resulted in “partial and complete loss of portions of the road” attributable to “gradual and progressive deterioration or lack of proper maintenance” given that no repairs have been undertaken to date? Comment 2 23 CFR 668.203(d) defines “Emergency Repairs” as “[t]hose repairs, including necessary preliminary engineering (PE), construction engineering (CE), and temporary traffic operations, undertaken during or immediately after a natural disaster or catastrophic failure (1) to restore essential travel, (2) to protect remaining facilities, or (3) to minimize the extent of damage. The EA states that initial damage to sections of the Suiattle Road were damaged in flood events in October 2003 and again in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007. The EA also states “[f]lood waters eroded sections of the valley terrace on which Road 26 was located, resulting in partial and complete loss of portions of the road, and rendering the road impassible for motorized vehicle traffic.” a. When did the complete loss of portions of road 26 occur? Did this “complete loss” occur after the flood event of October 2003 or after the flood events in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007? b. If the “complete loss” occurred after the flood events of 2006 and 2007, did this “complete loss” occur because no emergency repairs to “minimize the extent of damage” were undertaken “immediately after” the October 2003 flood event? c. Did erosion of the valley terrace occur after the October 2003 flood event? If so, what measures were undertaken to “minimize the extent of damage” to ensure that there did not occur a “complete loss”? d. Why were emergency repairs not undertaken “immediately after” these flood events to “restore essential travel”? e. Why were emergency repairs not undertaken “immediately after” these flood events to “minimize the extent of any damage,” and what damage has resulted from any failure to undertake such emergency repairs “immediately after” these flood events?</p>		<p>the damage was caused by a catastrophic failure. Accordingly, “sudden failure” is not a term applied in this situation.</p> <p>d. No definition of “sudden failure” is provided by FHWA. Such term is not applicable to the damaged roads addressed in the Environmental Assessment.</p> <p>e. Given the migration of the Suiattle River into the terrace the road was built on, the damage to the sites along Road 26 is caused by the natural disaster and not lack of maintenance.</p> <p>Response 2</p> <p>a. Flood events in 2003, and 2006. Sites along the road had complete loss in the natural disaster of 2003. Additional sites had complete loss in the natural disaster of 2006 which led to additional complete loss at MP 6 in 2007.</p> <p>b. The only site that incurred a complete loss after the flood event of 2006 was MP 6 and this complete loss was not the result of a lack of emergency repairs.</p> <p>c. Yes. Erosion occurred during the 2006 flood event. Valley terrace erosion during the 2006 flood caused only minor damage to sites damaged during the 2003 flood. It was not possible to take action due to the fact that the erosion was being caused by the River..</p> <p>d. Emergency repairs were undertaken at MP 6.0 to restore essential traffic. Emergency/temporary repairs were completed at MP 14 prior to the November 2006 storm to gain access to damage at MP 21.</p> <p>e. . The intensity and timing of the flood events were such that the only emergency actions taken were to save life, to secure stranded vehicles post flood and assess damages. Once the flood subsided, no further actions would have limited the damage. The scale of the flood damage in both 2003 and 2006 was significant throughout the area so that the USFS focused on assessing the damage and working with Federal Highways to follow the EFRO process</p>

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		<p>Comment 3 23 CFR 668.205(b) requires that “[e]mergency relief work shall be given prompt attention and priority over non-emergency work.” Furthermore, 23 CFR 668.205(e) requires that “[e]mergency relief projects shall be promptly constructed. Projects not under construction by the end of the second fiscal year following the year in which the disaster occurred will be reevaluated by the DFDE and will be withdrawn from the approved program of projects unless suitable justification is provided by the applicant to warrant retention.” The timing for emergency relief projects is reiterated in Section 1.13 of FHWA’s Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads Disaster Assistance Manual. a. The flood events that resulted in the “partial and complete loss to partial portions of the road” occurred in October 2003 and the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007. How can FHWA utilize emergency relief funds to undertake repairs for damage caused by flood events that happened nine and five-to-six years ago respectively, and yet still comply with the requirements in 23 CFR 668.205 that “emergency relief work shall be given prompt attention. . .” and “shall be promptly constructed?” b. What suitable justification exists to warrant FHWA’s use of emergency relief funds to this repair project for flood events that occurred in October 2003 and the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007? Comment 4 The EA states that the “[d]amage from 2006 at MP 12.6 to MP 14.4 was analyzed in Categorical Exclusion for WA FS ERFO 2007(1)-20(17) Suiattle River Road <i>Emergency Repairs</i> Project (FHWA April 2010).” See EA at Page 1, 4 (emphasis added). The EA states that this project is now “being developed as a <i>permanent repair</i> through the Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads (ERFO) Program of the FHWA Public Lands Highway Program, which is financed by the Federal Highway Trust Fund.” See EA at Page 1, ¶ 6. a. Why was this project initially developed as an “Emergency Repair” project? b. Why is this project now being developed as a “permanent repair” project? Comment 5 The EA states that “the road repair contract for the 2003 flood sites was terminated due to lack of access.” See EA at Page 1, ¶ 7. 23 CFR 668.203(d)(1) defines “Emergency repairs,” in relevant part, as those undertaken “to restore essential travel...” a. Why were no emergency repairs undertaken to “restore essential travel” along Road 26 after the flood events of 2003? b. Is FHWA’s failure to undertake emergency repairs to “restore essential travel” indicative of the fact that</p>		<p>Response 3 a. The 2003 damage occurred in fiscal year 2004. Those repairs were commenced in fiscal year 2006, within the two years provided by 23 CFR 668.205(e). In fiscal year 2007, another natural disaster occurred blocking access to the 2003 natural disaster sites and leading to the termination of that contract. The Forest Service requested an extension for the October 2003 and November 2006 disasters on September 29, 2009. FHWA granted the request on January 12, 2010. The time extension was through September 30, 2010 for sites before MP20 and September 30, 2011 for sites past MP 20. On August 6, 2010, a contract was awarded for the sites before MP20. This contract was stopped by the prior litigation involving these projects. Thereafter, on October 13, 2011 all sites were given time extensions through September 30, 2013 for the reasons set forth in that memorandum. The importance of the road to the Forest Service and the environmental considerations attendant to the road repair was deemed to be sufficient to justify warranting retention of these projects. b. See answer to 3.a. above.</p> <p>Response 4 a. The FHWA emergency relief program has two categories of repairs; emergency and permanent. In one sense all projects are emergency repair projects as this is an emergency relief program. Accordingly, sometimes the terms are not used with the precision one may like. All work contemplated in the EA would be classified as permanent repairs. b. The project is developed as permanent repairs because the work is defined to be permanent repair work under the definitions found at Appendix A to the ERFO Disaster Assistance Manual.</p> <p>Response 5 a. Emergency/temporary repairs were completed at MP 14 to remove stranded vehicle after the 2003 flood so temporary access was restored to Downey Creek Bridge (MP20.9) prior to the November 2006 storm.</p>

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		<p>Road 26 is not “essential” to travel? Comment 6 The EA states “[t]he Forest Service submitted the new road damage sites for ERFO funding and was granted an extension” for the 2003 damaged sites. a. Was the Forest Service the initial applicant for the use of ERFO funds for repairs to Road 26 with respect to the 2003 damaged sites? b. When did the Direct Federal Division Engineer issue his or her Affirmative Finding pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 125 with respect to the repairs to Road 26 at the 2003 damaged sites? c. When was the Forest Service’s application for ERFO funds submitted? d. If the Forest Service was the initial applicant for use of ERFO funds for repairs to Road 26, under what authority were these funds transferred to FHWA to undertake the proposed permanent repairs? e. Has FHWA made any application to utilize the ERFO funds for repairs to Road 26 at sites that were damaged in the flood events of October 2003 and in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007? f. If FHWA made any application to utilize the ERFO funds for repairs to Road 26 at sites that were damaged in the flood events of October 2003 and in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007, did the Direct Federal Division Engineer issue a new Affirmative Finding? g. If the FHWA made any application to utilize the ERFO funds for repairs to Road 26 at sites that were damaged in the flood events of October 2003 and in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007, when was this application submitted? h. When was the Forest Service granted an extension for the 2003 damaged sites, and how long was this granted extension for use of ERFO funds? i. Has FHWA requested an extension to utilize the ERFO funds for repairs to Road 26 at sites that were damaged in the flood events of October 2003 and in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007, and if so, how long was this granted extension for use of ERFO funds? j. If FHWA made any application to utilize the ERFO funds for repairs to Road 26 at sites that were damaged in the flood events of October 2003 and in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007, was this application for emergency repair or permanent repair relief funds? k. Did the Forest Service submit semi-annual status notifications to the Direct Federal Division Engineer pursuant to 23 CFR 668.215? l. Has FHWA submitted semi-annual status notifications to the Direct Federal Division Engineer pursuant to 23 CFR 668.215? m. When did the Forest Service notify the Direct Federal Division Engineer of its tentative intent to apply for emergency relief for repairs to Road 26 at sites that were damaged in the</p>		<p>1. Emergency repairs were completed after the November 2006 storm to gain access past MP 6. b. No. Restoring essential travel is a justification for emergency repairs but the need for essential travel does not compel emergency repairs. Essential travel may also be restored with permanent repairs. Response 6 a. Yes. The federal land management agencies are the applicants under the ERFO Program (Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads Disaster Assistance Manual (April 2004), Chapter 1, paragraph 1.2.). b. A positive finding letter was sent October 30, 2003. c. The Forest Service requested funds for the October 2003 storm damage on April 26, 2004. d. Under 23 U.S.C. 125(e), FHWA may expend funds either independently or in cooperation with any other branch of the Government. Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads Disaster Assistance Manual (April 2004), Chapter 2, paragraph 2.9, describes the process for the federal land management agencies to request assistance from the Federal Lands Highway Division. e. No. The application was made by the Forest Service. f. See answer to 6.e. above. g. See answer to 6.e. above. h. The damage from the October 2003 damage was granted a time extension on Jan 12, 2010. The time extension was through 9/30/2010 for sites before MP20 and 9/30/2011 for sites past MP 20. On October 13, 2011 all sites were given time extensions through 9/30/2013. i. The Forest Service requested an extension and Western Federal Lands Highway Division supported that request by memorandum dated September 29, 2011. On October 13, 2011 all sites were given time extensions through September 30, 2013. j. The request described in 6.i. was for permanent repair funds. k. No. 23 CFR 668.215 requires semi-annual status updates for</p>

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		<p>flood events of October 2003 and in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007? n. Did the Forest Service make a field report of overall damage after the flood event of October 2003? o. Did the Forest Service make a separate application for the use of ERFO funds after the flood events in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007? p. Did FHWA make a separate application for use of ERFO funds after the flood events in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007? q. If FHWA did make a separate application for use of ERFO funds after the flood events in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007, when did it notify the Direct Federal Division Engineer of its intention to apply for emergency relief for repairs to Road 26? r. If FHWA made a separate application for use of ERFO funds after the flood events in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007, did it make a field report of overall damage after the flood event in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007? s. If FHWA made a separate application for use of ERFO funds after the flood events in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007, did it prepare a detailed site inspection of the damage to Road 26 to provide to the Direct Federal Division Engineer? t. Did the Direct Federal Division Engineer elect to make a site inspection of the damage to Road 26 after the flood events in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007? u. Did the Forest Service prepare a detailed site inspection of the damage to Road 26 to provide to the Direct Federal Division Engineer after the flood event of October 2003? v. Did the Direct Federal Division Engineer elect to make a site inspection of the damage to Road 26 after the flood event in October 2003? Comment 7 23 CFR 668.203(b) defines “Betterments” as “[a]dded protective features, such as, the relocation or rebuilding of roadways at a higher elevation or the extension, replacement or raising of bridges, and added facilities not existing prior to the natural disaster or catastrophic failure such as additional lanes, upgraded surfacing, or structures.” There is no reference to Betterments in the EA. a. In the Suiattle River Road Project, does FHWA intend to incorporate any Betterments aimed at preventing future recurring damage to Road 26? b. If FHWA does intend to add any Betterments to the Suiattle River Road Project, what Betterments does it intend to add? Thank you for considering these comments. [redacted] President North Cascades Conservation Council</p>		<p>projects constructed by applicant forces. These projects were not being constructed by applicant forces. As required by the ERFO Disaster Assistance Manual (April 2004), chapter 2, paragraph 2.13(a), the Forest service submitted annual Disaster Repair Status/Closeout Reports.</p> <p>l. No.</p> <p>m. The Forest Service provided notice on October 24, 2003 for the October 2003 damage and November 21, 2006 for the November 2006 damage.</p> <p>n. The Forest Service prepared DSRs for the sites and they submitted a Program of Projects.</p> <p>o. Yes.</p> <p>p. No.</p> <p>q. See answer to question 6.p.</p> <p>r. See answer to question 6.p.</p> <p>s. See answer to question 6.p.</p> <p>t. Yes, but only to the damage at MP 6.</p> <p>u. Yes.</p> <p>v. Yes, all sites were inspected.</p> <p>Response 7</p> <p>a. No. Betterments are only eligible when clearly economically justified to prevent future recurring damage (23 CFR 668.209 (f) (3)). Under the ERFO program, betterments analysis is tied to added cost issues. When it is not practical and economical to repair a damaged element to its pre-existing condition, replacement highway facilities may be approved without being considered to be a betterment (23 CFR 668.209(d)). This is because such replacement represents the lowest cost to repair the road or bridge. Relocation on the Suiattle River Road Project was approved because the initial cost to relocate was less expensive than the cost to repair on the original alignment. Relocation had the added benefit of not being as susceptible to damage in future flood events.</p>

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370.	04/20/12 email with attached MSWord documents and PDF	<p>Pilchuck Audubon Society offers the following comments on the Suiattle River Road Project EA, WA FS ERFO 071-2023. We are pleased that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has withdrawn its Categorical Exclusion (CE) and issued an Environmental Assessment (EA) for this project, which has attempted to address some of our past concerns. However, we feel that this EA falls short in adequately evaluating the environmental impacts of rebuilding the Suiattle River Road. Comment 1: Throughout this document, the effects of resuming automobile traffic on the reopened road are not considered; only the effects of construction itself are evaluated. The impact of thousands of vehicles per year should have been included under noise, air and water pollution; as well as wildlife impacts, noxious weed introduction, waste-dumping, littering, and human-caused fire risk—all of which would be increased by restoring motor vehicles to the Suiattle Road (see EA pp. 57-58, 81, 110, 148, among others). Comment 2: While we appreciate that two action alternatives were presented in the EA, the FHWA failed to examine other far less environmentally damaging—and less expensive—alternatives. The justifications given for dismissing alternatives 4 and 5, which would have decommissioned the final 4 or 2 miles of road, respectively, were specious to say the least. Deferring this decision to the jurisdiction of the US Forest Service, which was involved with preparing the EA, is circuitous logic at best. The EA states (p. 26) that alternative 4 would not provide foot and stock access, because the FHWA chose not to include a foot/stock bridge in this design. As described in our proposal below, removing the fill at Downey Creek is not incompatible with construction of a foot/stock bridge. In addition to discarding less environmentally-damaging alternatives, the FHWA EA also failed to adequately address the following issues. Comment 3: Spotted Owl The project area is designated critical habitat for the northern spotted owl. Yet the EA dismisses the effects of removing “eight acres of foraging and dispersal habitat” (p.127), four acres of which would be irreplaceable old growth forest. The FHWA notes that Section 7 consultation with FWS occurred for the removal of one acre of old growth forest at MP 14.4 prior to 2006 logging. As further noted (EA, p. 127), “additional trees were removed at this site in 2010...” In fact, more than one acre of trees was felled here, without additional</p>		<p>b. No betterments are approved.</p> <p>General Response: See response to comment numbers 370, 376, 388, 398 and Appendices G and F.</p> <p>Response 1: The effects of resuming automobile traffic are discussed in Alternative B and C with the key issues identified in the EA on pages 21 to 23. These issues were identified through both tribal consultation and public scoping</p> <p>Response 2: The EA includes a range of alternatives considered, but eliminated from detailed study, as described starting on page 24 of the EA. These alternatives represent a range of alternatives studied by the ID Team and considered by the Responsible Official. While a Forest Service employee assisted in preparing the EA, the EA is a FHWA document to guide FHWA in its decision process. Any Forest Service decision would entail another process review. The focus of this FHWA review is to determine what action should be taken, if any, to repair the road under the ERFO program. While a decision to select Alternatives B or C practically may foreclose certain potential Forest Service decisions relating to the road, a decision to select A or C does not foreclose future Forest Service decisions relating to those portions of the road not repaired under those alternatives. FHWA is not seeking to use circuitous logic, but is respecting its role as a non-land management agency and focusing its decision on its Congressionally given authority to manage the ERFO program. A selection or non-selection of Alternative C will not be based on whether or not the Forest Service is willing to consider converting the remainder of the road to a trail, but rather on the purpose and need for the project and the evaluation of impacts under the various alternatives. Alternative 4 and 5 were discussed in the EA and the A-EA in sections 2.1.4 and 2.1.5 of the EA).</p> <p>Response 3: The amount of mature forest to be removed with the</p>

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		<p>FWS consultation. Noise disturbance for the owl is expected to affect 1,150 acres under Alternative B (EA, p. 127), with 12 – 52 acres of “mature forest” affected! It is incomprehensible that this degree of impact could be considered insignificant.</p> <p>Comment 4: a. The EA proposes to mitigate this noise impact by restricting work windows “when possible” (p. 127). This vague language renders the mitigation measure useless. Comment 4: b. The assertion (p. 128) that the proposed removal of forest “is comparable to disturbances...from fire, wind events and root rot pockets” disregards the reality that unlike these disturbances, trees would not merely fall to the ground but would be <i>removed</i>, along with all the other vegetation, topsoil, mycorrhizal fungi and other organisms; and to top it all off, a road would be built through its center, along which motor vehicles would travel regularly. It’s not the same thing at all. Comment 4: c. The FHWA analysis (p. 125) implies that spotted owls in the Suiattle drainage have already been displaced by barred owls—neglecting the fact that this is possible only because the spotted owl population has been significantly weakened by loss of habitat. Thus, remaining habitat has become even more critical, making preservation of the little that still exists much more important, not less so. Comment 5: Marbled Murrelet The EA states (p. 129) that no marbled murrelet surveys have been done in the area in ten years. Comment 5 a.How can any assessment of impacts to this species be made without recent data? The project area is designated critical habitat for the marbled murrelet, and both action alternatives propose removing four acres of that habitat, and producing noise disturbance extending over 31 acres of murrelet habitat. In fact, the FWS Biological Opinion (EA, p. 153) granted “incidental take” of both spotted owl and marbled murrelet due to harassment from noise, which in itself indicates that these effects are significant. Comment 5b. The proposed mitigation measures (EA, p. 43) do nothing to protect incubating birds from noise effects. At the very least, all noise-generating activities should be prohibited (all day) during the entire nesting period. Comment 5c. And again, the analysis failed to consider ongoing automobile noise once the road is reopened. Furthermore, these alternatives would remove an additional four acres of potential future murrelet habitat in adjacent younger stands. Comment 5d And the EA (p. 131) dismisses the increase in edge effect that would occur with the action alternatives, without logical rationale—stating only that the</p>		<p>proposed repair is within the estimate of 5 to 6 acres consulted on with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, as discussed in the EA Wildlife section on pages 127 to 134.</p> <p>The consultation estimate for MP 14.4 removal of old forest was approximately 1 acre, and the tree removal at MP14.4 is consistent with that approximation. Trees were being felled and decked at MP14.4 in 2006 for the road relocation when the project was interrupted by the 2006 floods. Tree felling at MP 14.4 was re-initiated in 2010 after the 2009 CE was finalized and a contract by FHWA awarded. No additional tree felling at MP14.4 is anticipated.</p> <p>The EA describes on page 128 how five acres of mature forest removal represents a loss of less than 0.003 percent of the dispersal habitat, and less than 0.0001 percent of the potential nesting habitat in the Suiattle River drainage. The noise impacts affect more acres but this still is a very small portion of the dispersal habitat and potential nesting habitat in the Suiattle River drainage. In addition, the noise impacts are temporary and would be mitigated by the limitations set forth in the A-EA. Finally, the lack of evidence of spotted owls in the immediate area further lessens the level of significance of the noise impact.</p> <p>A discussion of critical habitat for spotted owls is included in the Change Sheet (Appendix G) following the FWS publication of a proposed rule (Federal Register/Vol.77, No.46/Thursday, March 8, 2012, at: http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-03-08/pdf/2012-5042.pdf) to revise designation of critical habitat for the Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended.</p> <p>Response 4 a:</p> <p>Noise disturbance to the northern spotted owl is discussed in the EA on page 127. Blasting (if needed) will occur during the late breeding season when owls and young are mobile and would be able to avoid the work site. The EA goes on to explain that rock fracturing with hydraulic equipment would be the first choice for rock excavation over</p>

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		<p>existing edge from the Suiattle River would negate the new edge effect on the upland clearcut. Comment 6 a. On p. 132 the EA makes a statement that is likely a typographical error, but even if so, raises serious questions about cumulative effects on both marbled murrelets and spotted owls: “Because the project would not change stand year-of-origin for past harvest, none of the action alternatives associated with the proposed project were found to not (sic) measurably add to the residual effects from those actions, or contribute to the cumulative effects in the analysis area.” Even removing the double negative, this assertion fails to explain why the current project’s proposal to “change stand year-of-origin” for these eight acres should not be considered cumulatively with previous and concurrent removal of old forest in the area. Comment 6b. Other Wildlife The EA notes (p. 133) that the reduced vehicle speeds and number of vehicles per day on gravel roads reduces impacts of roads on grizzly bears. Thus, reducing the design speed for the new sections of road by decreasing the footprint and avoiding large trees would also benefit grizzlies. C Alternative A would benefit grizzlies by reducing visitor numbers, and yet this benefit is not claimed for Alternative C, which would close the last four miles of road. Comment 7 This section of the EA also mentions that “There would be no change in vegetation status with any of the alternatives,” a statement that flies in the face of the fact of eight acres of forest removal. The wide cut zones planned would grow up with brush, providing forage for ungulates and thereby potentially affecting wolves. Comment 8: Although there are three known or historic bald eagle night roosts within the project analysis area and eagles are known to forage here (EA, p. 135), the EA asserts that they would be unaffected by the road reconstruction. Again, the effects of reopening the road to vehicle traffic are not evaluated on this protected species. The effects on harlequin ducks are unjustifiably dismissed in the EA (p. 135), and no mention is made of the wetlands (probably Class I) that would be destroyed by the reroute near its junction with the existing Suiattle Road.</p> <p>Geology/Soils Comment 9a It is interesting to note that the EA states (p. 58) that “Road repairs would...look similar to natural occurring slides frequently encountered along the river.” If this is indeed so, then these repairs would be expected to behave similar to slides, hence adversely impacting water quality and fish habitat. The EA acknowledges (p. 53) that there is a risk of slides from the</p>		<p>blasting. Mitigations are listed in the EA on page 127 for the northern spotted owl. These seasonal mitigations will be met unless safety conditions arise during construction (meeting OSHA regulations, etc.)</p> <p>Response 4b. – The EA discussion (page 128) on tree removal is in respect to the removal of standing trees from fire, root rot, or wind throw on owl dispersal and nesting habitat. The understory effects from natural loss of trees would not be the same as a cleared road route as noted in the comment.</p> <p>Response 4c – Page 125 of the EA described the numerous detections of barred owls suggesting the potential displacement or inhibition of spotted owls. This does not change appreciably the amount of habitat remaining in the Suiattle River drainage for spotted owls.</p> <p>Response 5: a. Assessment of marbled murrelets and habitat was made based on historic detections, modeling of suitable habitat and field reconnaissance. Regardless, since there has been a history of presence, consultation and mitigation measures are in effect assuming presence.</p> <p>Response 5b. Habitat suitability was assessed with Fish and Wildlife biologists in the field as described in the EA on page 130 and 131. Based on the lack of nesting platforms and felling of trees at MP 14.4 in the late season, the “may effect” determination was from noise disturbance. Mitigation measures and work windows will be implemented (see page 43 of the EA). These measures would limit noise disturbance to the murrelets that might be flying through or by the work areas to suitable nesting habitat.</p> <p>Response 5c. There is no indication in the literature of car noise being a deterrent to murrelet use of areas. A murrelet nest was monitored within audio and visual distance of Highway 101 on the Olympic Peninsula, and one of the first murrelet nest sites was discovered in a Ca. campground.</p> <p>Response 5d. The EA on pages 130 and 131 describe the incremental degradation of murrelet critical habitat with the loss of the trees in the</p>

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		<p>cutslope at MP 20.8 (site #6), but neglects to explain what will prevent these slides from proceeding into the Suiattle River itself, a very real and disastrous possibility. Indeed, a March 2009 report by S. K. Geotechnical performed for the USFS concluded that “shifting the road further into the unstable slope is <i>not</i> desirable, and would likely cause significant movement of the existing landslide.” This same report mentions the presence of an existing landslide in the proposed 12.7 to 13.8 reroute alignment, putting the new road there at risk of future failure. Presumably this is the location acknowledged in the EA (p. 111) to contain S-8 soils.</p> <p>Comment 9b Hydrologic effects are spuriously minimized in this section by the assertion that use of the old spur road (FS Rd 2670) avoids additional compaction of soils. But this road is already revegetated and functioning to absorb rainfall much more effectively than it will do once the road is rebuilt here. Comment 9c Furthermore, rebuilding this road will interrupt runoff that feeds the streams and wetlands draining into the Suiattle River. Comment 9d Here, a significant scientific controversy exists about the validity, integrity, and longevity of the proposed repairs to the Suiattle River Road. Geotechnical reports prepared by third party contractors SK Geotechnical and Herrera Associates suggest that FHWA’s proposed design for the road repairs are inadequate, and that the Suiattle River Road is likely to fail again in the near future, despite – or even because of – the proposed repairs. Indeed, internal Forest Service documents also disclose the instability of the current and proposed road alignment and repairs, and indicate that they are likely to fail again in the future. The EA fails to disclose this information and provide a reasoned explanation for why FHWA and the USFS have chosen design plans and mitigation measures that are unlikely to remain stable. NEPA places on the Forest Service an affirmative duty to disclose and analyze scientific information counseling against the action proposed by the agency or calling into question the expected environmental effects of a proposed action. 40 C.F.R. §§ 1502.9(b), 1502.24. See also, 40 C.F.R. § 1508.27(b)(4). The Ninth Circuit Court has repeatedly confirmed that NEPA does not allow an agency to simply disregard contrary science that is directly applicable to its proposal. The courts have also been clear that the only appropriate place to disclose and discuss a scientific controversy is in the body of the NEPA document itself.</p>		<p>relocated road route. This loss will not measurably impair the ability of the critical habitat unit to provide for the nesting and conservation of the murrelet.</p> <p>The consultation on TES species had been completed through both the Forest programmatic BA and stand-alone formal BAs with corresponding BOs from FWS.</p> <p>Response 6: a. The typography error of a double negative is noted. The statement should read “Because the project would not change stand year-of-origin for past harvest, none of the action alternatives associated with the proposed project were found to measurably add to the residual effects from those actions, or contribute to the cumulative effects in the analysis area”. The forest stand will continue to be the same age whether there is a road or a trail through the stand. The road acreage is so limited in scale and scope that it does not constitute a new stand.</p> <p>b. The EA explains on page 133 and 134 that with all alternatives, that core habitat for grizzly bears which is modeled as 1/3 mile from an open road or high use trail would not change. If there are grizzly bears in the area, Alternative A and C would likely have more bear diurnal use of the road due to more traffic as foot traffic and less motorized disturbance, while Alternative B would have more bear nocturnal activity or avoidance of motorized activity.</p> <p>Alternative C does not claim less disturbance of bears in the last 4 miles from visitors due to this distance being a popular hiking distance, and the likelihood of increase hiker use on this section of road to the Suiattle River trail destinations and Pacific Crest Trail.</p> <p>Response 7: There will be a change in approximately 8 acres from forest stand cover to road and the restoration on one mile of road obliteration. While this will provide localized shifts in habitat conditions, the change in vegetative status was calculated at the Bear Management Unit scale (Wildlife report in Project Record) where changes in vegetation of 8 acres do not register as a change in</p>

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		<p>Fish As noted in the EA (pp. 72-76), the Suiattle Road project area is critical habitat for the Puget Sound Chinook and bull trout, and essential fish habitat for Chinook, coho, and pink salmon. It also supports ESA-threatened steelhead, which spawn in Buck, Sulphur and Downey Creeks and are considered to be a depressed population. Up to 40% of the threatened Suiattle spring Chinook population spawns in the relatively silt-free waters of Downey Creek, near its juncture with the Suiattle River—and the Suiattle River Road. Comment 10 The previously mentioned slide at MP 20.8 threatens this critical spawning habitat, and further disturbing this unstable ground by moving the road into it would greatly enhance that risk. The EA also acknowledges that poaching is an issue because of the presence of the Suiattle Road and associated campgrounds; thus, reducing motorized access past Buck Creek would reduce this impact. The discussion of sedimentation in this section completely ignores the earlier mentioned risk of slides at MP 20.8, adjacent to the critical Chinook spawning grounds at the mouth of Downey Creek.</p> <p>Comment 11a: The proposed MP 12.7 -13.8 bypass fails to include fish-passable culverts for numerous streams it crosses that could, according to the <i>Wetland Delineation and Stream Assessment Report</i> prepared by Herrera Consultants Inc. for the FHWA (December 2008), support fish. Comment 11 b. Stream temperatures were not analyzed (EA, p. 103) because of assertions that they would not be affected by the project. In fact, removal of large trees and widening of the road clearing limits could certainly increase local water temperatures. Comment 11 c. Recreation Many of the arguments given for the necessity of motor vehicle access to recreation facilities (e.g. the Suiattle Guard Station and campgrounds) overlook the fact that these locations can easily be accessed with stock (or even USFS-driven all terrain vehicles) for maintenance, as was done (in the case of stock, at least) before the road existed. Similarly, the Suiattle Guard Station could be rented by hikers, bikers or equestrians, who would likely appreciate it even more than motorists since they could carry less weight but still have an “out-of-car experience.” If Alternative C were implemented, the vault toilets no longer accessible by motor vehicle could be removed and replaced by backcountry toilets, and the Downey and Sulphur Creek bridges would be maintained by the same methods as other trail bridges. This would not create the impediment represented by</p>		<p>vegetative status of areas of 120,000 acres. Road-side forage is expected to benefit localized ungulate numbers, but would not be sufficient to change the prey base for wolves.</p> <p>Response 8: The EA on page 135 discusses bald eagle and harlequin use of the Suiattle River drainage and project area and the reasons the proposed project would not have measurable impacts on these species.</p> <p>Response 9a – Risk of slides will continue in the Suiattle River drainage as described in the EA on pages 105 to 106. Both river erosion and slope instability will contribute sediment, wood and coarse material to the river. The consequences of the landslides are often depicted in negative terms, but flood and slide events contribute to recruitment of large woody material (EA, page 108) and spawning gravels. New fish redds were observed at the toeslope of MP 20.8 following the 2006 flood and slides.</p> <p>Response 9b. – The use of Road 2670 utilizes an already compacted site and will allow for the decommissioning of the current Rd 26 that is within an active floodplain.</p> <p>Response 9c. – The proposed designs for road repairs to drainage patterns are described in the EA in both the wetland and Riparian Reserve sections, On page 121, impacts to wetlands in the Riparian Reserve would be minimized with the road alignment shifted upslope reducing the amount of road segments crossing the riparian wetlands associated with the river floodplain.</p> <p>Response 9d. In the case of geotechnical reports, there is no scientific controversy over the environmental effects given the instability of the slope. There are successive environmental reports with differing conclusions based on the extent of information gathered at the time of the report. The USFS was not ignoring contrary scientific information. To the contrary, the USFS considered the report of SK Geotechnical Services, who provided an early opinion based on visual assessments (Dec., 2009) and based on its conclusions did a more in-depth analysis of the soil stability in the area. The USFS preformed additional site</p>

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		<p>the EA (p. 27). Comment 11d. The EA contends (p. 63) that access to the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) has been limited by decommissioning of the White Chuck Road (sic). In fact, the lack of PCT access via the White Chuck is due to the obliteration of the <i>trail</i> there, not the partial road closure (which in any case has not limited hiker access to the former trailhead). All consideration of recreation in the EA seems to presume that activities such as berry picking, hunting and fishing can be done from an automobile (pp.65-66). Although it may be possible to shoot a gun from a car, this is patently illegal and ought not to be promoted by the FHWA or USFS. Realistically, these activities require getting out and walking. Comment 11e. Shortening the road only increases the time required to access high elevation areas for these activities, but in truth <i>increases</i> opportunities to engage in them along the Suiattle River. Comment 11f The parking concerns raised on p. 67 of the EA under Alternative C are contrived and irrelevant. If this option were chosen, the USFS would convert the road to a trail and find a location for safe, adequate parking. The section on accessibility (EA, p. 68) completely ignores the issue of accessible <i>trails</i>. Many recreationists who use wheelchairs or have other mobility issues would benefit from the conversion of the relatively level Suiattle River Road to a trail. Comment 12a: Mitigation Measures We are concerned that the mitigation measures designed to ameliorate adverse effects of this project (EA, pp. 34 – 47) are not strong enough. The list is rife with “should”s and “would”s, all of which need to be changed to “shall.” Similarly, terms such as “if feasible” (p. 41), which render the direction meaningless, must be removed from the list. The mitigation measures also do not specify the frequency, intensity, or duration of monitoring, while acknowledging (p. 34) that this element is essential to the success of many of the measures. Comment 12 b. No mitigation is provided for loss of Late Successional Reserve (LSR). One way to do this would be to designate substitute habitat in the immediate vicinity of equal quality. If not available, greater acreage (5: 1 would be acceptable) of younger forest should be designated to replace the loss of LSR. This can be done with a Forest Plan amendment at the time the Decision Notice is issued, as has been done in the past. Comment 12 c.The EA (p. 117) lists the loss of 0.66 acres of wetland. It is not clear whether this figure includes wetlands that would be disturbed or filled by the MP 12.7 – 13.8 reroute. Nor does the EA specify the sites</p>		<p>reviews, and measurements and contracted for drilling equipment to bore core samples at the MP 20.8 site (2010). Based on the new information, the final slope assessment (USDA Forest Service, 2011) was that the proposed shift into the hillside was a reasonable alternative to maintain access and to limit disturbance to fish or habitat.</p> <p>Response 10: The consequences of the landslides are often depicted in negative terms, but flood and slide events contribute to recruitment of large woody material (EA, page 108) and spawning gravels. New fish redds were observed at the toeslope of MP 20.8 following the 2006 flood and slides. Fish poaching scenarios are depicted in the EA on page 77.</p> <p>Response 11a- The EA on page 80 explains that the tributary streams where crossed at the proposed repair sites (#1 to#5) are not fish bearing streams. The EA further discussed the proposed repairs to fish habitat in the EA on page 81 in which culvert replacements at site #1 to site #5 would be over 200 feet from the Suiattle in non-fish bearing streams. No fish passage culverts are needed in the current alignment of the proposed reroute from MP 12.7 to MP 13.8.</p> <p>Response 11b. Stream temperatures of the Suiattle are described in the EA on pages 103 and 104. Summer stream flow is predominately from glacial melt water</p> <p>Response 11c. What may be possible and what is likely actually to be utilized to a significant degree are different matters. While an ATV or stock access is possible, it is not likely to accommodate the number of uses that would use the site with vehicular access. If the purpose and need for the project were to limit the number of recreational users in the area, then alternatives to vehicular access may be appropriate. But the purpose and need of the project is to restore recreational access for a variety of recreational users. This is a High Need recreational area. The goal is much broader than simply providing access for those recreational users who want to hike. Accordingly, while providing stock or ATV access may benefit a segment of recreational users, it will</p>

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		<p>or sizes of compensation wetlands that would be created to mitigate this loss. Due to the high failure rate of such mitigation wetlands, there should be at least a 5:1 ratio of created: lost wetland area. Also, wetlands must be replaced by similar types. Northwest Forest Plan (1994 ROD) <u>Late Successional Reserve</u></p> <p>Comment 13: The National Forest portions of the Suiattle Road project are located almost entirely within Late Successional Reserve. The Northwest Forest Plan (NWP) Standards and Guidelines (p. C-16) provide this guidance for road construction in LSRs: <i>Road Construction and Maintenance - Road construction in Late-Successional Reserves for silvicultural, salvage, and other activities generally is not recommended unless potential benefits exceed the costs of habitat impairment. If new roads are necessary to implement a practice that is otherwise in accordance with these guidelines, they will be kept to a minimum, be routed through non-late-successional habitat where possible, and be designed to minimize adverse impacts.</i> Comment 14: a The Suiattle Road rebuild as currently designed, particularly at the sites where the road is to be rerouted through forest, does <i>NOT</i> meet these requirements. At the very least, the FHWA must reduce the road footprint in order to comply with the NWFP. . . <u>Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives</u> - Relevant objectives include the following: Comment 14 b Objective 1: <i>Maintain and restore the distribution, diversity, and complexity of watershed and landscape-scale features to ensure protection of the aquatic systems to which species, populations and communities are uniquely adapted.</i> This project would reduce the diversity and complexity of said features by eliminating eight acres of forest and building new road surface. Objective 2: <i>Maintain and restore spatial and temporal connectivity within and between watersheds. Lateral, longitudinal, and drainage network connections include flood plains, wetlands, upslope areas, headwater tributaries, and intact refugia. These network connections must provide chemically and physically unobstructed routes to areas critical for fulfilling life history requirements of aquatic and riparian-dependent species.</i> Comment 15: The proposed road reconstruction would interrupt drainage network connections with new road, equipped with inadequate culverts for passage of fish and other species. Removal of the road sections near Downey Creek would help to meet this objective, and could be accomplished without reopening the road to motor vehicles at that site.</p>		<p>foreclose many other users from one of the few remaining recreational areas of this type accessible to them in this immediate area.</p> <p>Response 11d. The EA on page 63 describes the damage to Road 23 that accessed the White Chuck Trail #643 and resulted in a decision to decommission the last 5 miles of Road 23. Trail #643 was heavily damaged by the 2003 and 2006 floods;, and at this time there is no funding to repair this trail.(See EA page 69).</p> <p>The FS and FHWA are not encouraging anyone to shoot from cars. FHWA acknowledges that many recreational activities require walking. It is not the fact of walking, but the distance of walking that limits many from the enjoyment of recreational activities. The goal is to expand access to recreational opportunities for more than simply the fit and hardy. Native American elders and other senior individuals, young families, those dealing with major life issues like cancer or other physically limiting conditions all must be considered when providing access to recreational activities.</p> <p>Response 11e. The EA on pages 59 to 70 describes recreational consequences of the proposed project or no action. The No action alternative results in visitor use in the upper Suiattle drainage starting from MP12.6, concentrating users from one start point. Alternatives B and C provide multiple start points for recreational activity at various trailheads, campgrounds, and dispersed use areas, resulting in a dispersal of users within the drainage.</p> <p>Response 11f. While providing access to recreational opportunities is a part of the A-EA, as previously explained FHWA and ERFO dollars are not involved in developing recreational facilities, including parking lots. Selection of Alternative C will not foreclose the development of such areas, but is rather simply a decision to be made by someone with the authority to address those issues.</p> <p>Response 12a: – Mitigation measures are written with a “should “or “would’ since the measures are for a proposed action. Until a decision is made, measures are what “would” happen. Decision documents</p>

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		<p><i>Objective 4: Maintain and restore water quality necessary to support healthy riparian, aquatic, and wetland ecosystems. Water quality must remain within the range that maintains the biological, physical, and chemical integrity of the system and benefits survival, growth, reproduction, and migration of individuals composing aquatic and riparian communities.</i> Comment 15 b This project would impair water quality by adding sediment not only during construction activities, but for the life of the reopened road. In particular, it would increase the risk of a major slope failure at MP 20.8 by moving the roadway into the existing landslide. Resumption of automobile traffic would contribute pollutants from vehicles (oil, gas, hydraulic fluids, etc.) as well as increased litter, waste dumping, and toxic waste—all of which would eventually enter the river. <i>Objective 5: Maintain and restore the sediment regime under which aquatic ecosystems evolved. Elements of the sediment regime include the timing, volume, rate, and character of sediment input, storage, and transport.</i> See discussion of sediment under Objective #4, above. Comment 15 c <i>Objective 8: Maintain and restore the species composition and structural diversity of plant communities in riparian areas and wetlands to provide adequate summer and winter thermal regulation, nutrient filtering, appropriate rates of surface erosion, bank erosion, and channel migration and to supply amounts and distributions of coarse woody debris sufficient to sustain physical complexity and stability.</i> This objective has already been flouted by the cutting of mature forest at MP 14.4. The proposed removal of eight acres of forest for the bypass route would also deviate from this objective. Comment 16a <u>Riparian Reserve</u> All of the National Forest road repair sites are located within Riparian Reserves. The EA states (p. 120) that “the reroute and road rehabilitation [alone] would affect approximately 380 acres [of Riparian Reserve].” The NWFP Standards and Guidelines for Roads Management in Riparian Reserves (p. C-32), stipulates: <i>RF-2, e. minimizing disruption of natural hydrologic flow paths, including diversion of streamflow and interception of surface and subsurface flow. g. avoiding wetlands entirely when constructing new roads.</i> These guidelines are violated by the planned MP 12.7 – 13.8 bypass route, which crosses a stream and wetland near its juncture with the existing Suiattle Road and interrupts hydrologic flow paths as it crosses the slope. RF-3 further requires:</p>		<p>include descriptions of measures that “will” happen. FHWA has every intent to meet the intent of the stated mitigation measures Response 12b. There are no LSR areas impacted by the proposed action. Response 12c – Wetland mitigation is part of the design of the proposed actions as described in the EA, pages 116 to 124. Wetland mitigation is supported by the surveys referenced in the EA on proposed actions, and on-going consultation with the Corps of Engineers on appropriate ratios for wetland creation or enhancement options. The wetland mitigation plan would be finalized when there is a decision made on the proposed action and final design plans clarify wetland impacts. Response 13: The project is not located in LSR’s as discussed in the EA. See page 18 for a map of the merged land allocations on National Forest lands in the Suiattle River drainage. Response 14a: – Alternative B and c would reduce the road footprint with the utilization of Road 2670 as part of the proposed Road 26 reconstruction, and the decommissioning of approximately 1 mile of road. Response 14b. The EA describes how the proposed actions would meet Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) objectives on pages 86 to 88. See page 86 for how the project would meet Objectives 1 and 2. Response 15 - The EA describes in Section 3.7 to 3.10 how the proposed repair will meet fisheries and hydrologic concerns. Moving the road farther from the Suiattle River in two locations will reduce impacts to the river from the use of the road. Response 15 b. The EA describes how the proposed actions would meet Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) Objectives 4 and 5 on page 87. Pollutants from vehicles are not an expected toxic waste based on the volume of traffic on gravel forest roads, especially with the shifting of the road upslope from the river in the proposed alternatives (See page 87 of the EA, ACS Objectives 4 and 5)..</p>

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		<p><i>b. prioritizing reconstruction based on current and potential impact to riparian resources and the ecological value of the riparian resources affected. c. closing and stabilizing, or obliterating and stabilizing roads based on the ongoing and potential effects to Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives and considering short-term and long-term transportation needs. Comment 16 b These guidelines would best be met by complete decommissioning of the Suiattle River Road. Of the alternatives presented in the EA, Alternative C would best meet these objectives by avoiding further disturbance of the slide at MP 20.8—while still meeting the perceived transportation needs. RF-5 (p. C-33) specifies: <i>Minimize sediment delivery to streams from roads. Outsloping of the roadway surface is preferred, except in cases where outsloping would increase sediment delivery to streams or where outsloping is unfeasible or unsafe. Route road drainage away from potentially unstable channels, fills, and hillslopes.</i> Removing ditch lines along the proposed bypass would help to meet this requirement, while reducing the road footprint.</i></p> <p>Comment 17 Key Watershed As noted in the EA (p. 5), the Suiattle River is a Key Watershed, invoking the following Standards and Guidelines (p. C-7): <i>Outside Roadless Areas, reduce existing system and non-system road mileage. Key Watersheds are highest priority for watershed restoration.</i> Both these criteria would best be met by decommissioning as much of the Suiattle River Road as possible.</p> <p>Comment 18 a Wild and Scenic Rivers Act The proposed action violates the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Section 7(a), which “prohibits departments and agencies of the United States from assisting in the construction of any water resources project [within the bed and bank of a wild and scenic river] that ‘...would have a direct and adverse effect on the values for which such a river was established.’” According to the Suiattle Watershed Analysis, Ch. 2, p. 101, “The Outstandingly Remarkable Values for which the Skagit River system was designated under the Wild and Scenic River Act include fishery and wildlife resources and scenic quality.”</p> <p>Comment 18b It is indisputable that rebuilding and maintaining roads on the river bank, and bridges in the river bed, has direct and adverse effects on these values. Furthermore, for the reasons discussed earlier the proposed action does not, in fact,</p>		<p>Moving the road farther from the Suiattle River in two locations will reduce impacts to the river from the use of the road.</p> <p>Response 15c - The EA describes how the proposed actions would meet Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) Objective 8 on page 87. While upslope forest stands would have trees cut, the EA explains that road shift out of the river floodplain allows for restoration of the composition and diversity of plant communities in the sections of road to be decommissioned.</p> <p>Response 16 a– The proposed activities effects to the Riparian Reserve are described in the EA on pages 119 to 124. On page 121, the EA explains that impacts to Riparian Reserves would be minimized with the road alignments located upslope, reducing the road segments crossing riparian areas associated with the Suiattle River ad tributary streams. The upslope stream crossings are where the streams are in more confined channels than the current location of Road 26.</p> <p>Response 16 b. comment noted</p> <p>Response 17 – comment noted</p> <p>Response 18a – The EA on pages 57 to 59 describes the Skagit Wild and Scenic River (W&SR) environmental consequences of alternatives. None of the proposed repairs would threaten the free flowing characteristics of the Suiattle River and the visual characteristic would be retained.</p> <p>Response 18b – The EA on page 58 explains that the Suiattle roadway and views with the action alternatives would be similar in character to pre-flood condition and scenery would not be appreciatively altered beyond the local construction sites. Page 59 of the EA describes the</p>

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		<p>succeed in meeting the following Goals listed in the EA (p. 6): <i>Goal H: Protect and maintain wildlife habitat (1983, Vol. II, p. 6). Goal I: Protect and enhance fish habitat (1983, Vol. II, p. 6). Goal N: Protect or improve present water quality (1983, Vol. II, p. 6).</i> Nor these directives cited in the EA (p.6): <i>Fisheries Management Direction R&S 3: Priority will be given to all management decisions that protect or enhance existing fishery values (1983, Vol. II, page 53). Water Quality Management Direction R&S 4: Place special emphasis on protecting streamside vegetation (1983, Vol. II, page 54). Water Quality Management Direction R&S 5: Give priority to protection of water quality in cases of conflict between water quality and other resource uses. Prevent alteration of natural channels or stream banks that would significantly affect (1) the free-flow of water, (2) the appearance of the stream, (3) fish habitat, or (4) water quality (1983, Vol. II, p. 54).</i></p> <p>Comment 19a Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads (ERFO) We question the legality of using ERFO funds for this project. Inadequate justification has been given for extension beyond the two-year time period following the flood event required for initiation of repairs. Comment 19b Furthermore, several of the proposed repairs represent “betterments,” requiring a cost-benefit analysis which has not been performed.</p> <p>Comment 20 Pilchuck Audubon Society Proposal Pilchuck Audubon Society requests that the FHWA and USFS issue a full Environmental Impact Statement, or at least a new EA, that fully evaluates the above issues. The new analysis should include a thorough examination of the alternatives 4 and 5 that were previously dismissed. While we feel, as we have stated on numerous previous occasions, that the environment would benefit most from complete decommissioning of the Suiattle River Road at the current 12.6 MP washout, we do understand that there are other constituencies involved in this decision. Comment 21a As a compromise position, we would support the adoption of Alternative C as described in the EA, <i>with the following essential modifications. 1. Reduce the footprint of road re-routes at the washouts preceding MP 19.</i> The impact of felling three to four acres of old-growth Douglas-fir forest (eight acres total, including younger forest) for the extensive re-route from MP 12.7 - 13.8 could be reduced by half if road clear zones were</p>		<p>proposed repairs as consistent with the protection clause of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and the Forest Plan.</p> <p>Response 19a - The EA provides a history of efforts by the USFS and FHWA to undertake the repairs in a timely fashion on pages 1 and 2. Road 26 was under contract for repairs in 2006 following the 2003 flood (fiscal year 2004). While the 2006 repair contract was active, the floods of 2006 resulted in loss of access for the contractor, and therefore the USFS contract was terminated. Road repairs following the 2007 event (events are identified by fiscal year) were again under an active repair contract in 2010 until litigation brought by NCCC, PAS and Mr. Lider in 2011 resulted in the termination of the FHWA repair contract. Extensions for emergency relief funds were requested and granted due to the extenuating circumstances explained above.</p> <p>Response 19b -Not every change in location is a betterment. Some changes are made because it is not possible to replace at the same location, either because of changes in topography or because of legal impediments. Such changes are not betterments (23 CFR 668.209(d). No betterments are approved for this road</p> <p>Response 20 - The preliminary assessment of impacts of the repair/no repair options was viewed as not having significant effects or cumulative impacts. An EIS is required when there are significant impacts which the responsible official (Brent L. Coe, Acting Director of Project Delivery, Western Federal Lands Highway Division) would determine.</p> <p>Response 21a – Elements of the described modified Alternative C have been discussed in the field with FHWA and USFS staff (April 2012). The following items have been identified as potential elements to adjust in a final construction plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce clearing limits of re-route, especially along existing Road 2670 • Permit sharper turns such as the location at the junction of Road 26 and 2670

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		<p>decreased from 70+ feet to 28 feet. A 28-foot clear zone would still permit seven feet of clearing on either side of the 14-foot wide road surface. Permitting sharper curves and a lower design speed would also save old-growth forest, critical habitat for marbled murrelets and spotted owls—while improving the scenic quality of the drive. Large trees could be retained by routing the road around them—as was done long ago with the “Crooked Mile Road” near Granite Falls, built around huge cedar trees, thus generating the curves that gave it its distinctive name and scenic character. In addition to preserving wildlife habitat and improving scenic quality, these changes would reduce erosion and improve slope stability by maintaining greater vegetative cover. Comment 21b The loss of old growth forest habitat could possibly be avoided altogether if the MP 12.7 - 13.8 reroute were to rejoin the existing Suiattle Road sooner. This option should be thoroughly evaluated by engineering staff. Comment 21c The planned re-route at MP 12.6 should be reconsidered. The new route into the old growth-forested hillside above the river entails steep up-and-down grades, extensive felling of old-growth trees, and large, ugly (and potentially unstable) cut-slopes due to the steep sidehill. The FHWA should investigate the possibility of reconstructing the road on the current alignment with engineered features which would support it on bedrock above the river’s ordinary high water mark. Comment 22 2. Remove the causeway across the Downey Creek floodplain at MP 20.9. As mentioned previously, the Downey Creek delta into the Suiattle River is a critical area for spawning of ESA-listed Puget Sound Chinook. The current road causeway approach to the Downey Creek bridge hinders the natural functioning of this delta by preventing Downey Creek from migrating across its natural floodplain. The causeway should be removed as described in Alternative B, while preserving pedestrian, horse, and cyclist access to the Downey creek bridge span, which could be achieved with a relatively inexpensive trestle-type or other pedestrian/stock bridge. This would be far less expensive than the automobile bridge proposed for this site. Comment 23 3. Following completion of the above work and the creation of an adequate parking and turnaround trailhead area beyond FS Road 2680, the Forest Service must permanently decommission the remaining portion of the Suiattle Road. This would reduce the risk of slope failure at MP 20.8, as well as reducing erosion at other sites.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retaining large cedar trees would be contingent on not only meeting grade and alignment, but location of other resource values such as wetlands. <p>Response 21b – The proposed modification for MP12.7 to 13.8 would retain Road 26 in a location vulnerable to future flood events and would reconstruct the road within identified wetlands and river floodplain.</p> <p>Response 21c - This modification of Alternative C includes portions of alternatives considered and not further developed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MP 12.6 - a retaining wall in the remnant roadway was considered at another site to avoid moving into the slope. While the location of the wall might be outside of the ordinary high water mark, the construction of the wall would involve equipment within the wetted channel. The wall would be more expensive than moving into the slope, and the wall has the potential to become a hardened feature in the terrace if the river migrates toward the wall. Minimal realignment at MP 12.7 to 13.8 would not move the road out of the active river channel. Pages A-1 to A-5 of the EA Appendix A provide a Suiattle Road History which includes historic flood damage sites. MP12.8 to MP 13.4 has suffered channel and road encroachment from flood waters in 1980, 1990, 1996 and 2006 ERFO events. The EA on pages 51 to 54 provides assessment of risk of future washouts. This modified Alternative C would retain Road 26 between MP 12.9 and MP 13.4 within road locations which are adjacent to the active channel of the Suiattle River and identified at risk for washouts. This alternative would impact additional wetland area and would not provide any wetland enhancement with the removal of the current road from an active floodplain. FHWA would seek to minimize any visual and environmental impacts in the design and construction of a road at this location if a build alternative is selected.

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		<p>These changes would help to protect ESA-listed Chinook salmon, marbled murrelets and spotted owls, while enhancing the recreation opportunities for all. It would also save 1.8 million taxpayer dollars. Motorized access to the popular Green Mountain and Huckleberry Mountain trailheads, as well as to the popular Buck Creek campground, would be restored. The Downey Creek trailhead, terminus of the Ptarmigan traverse, would be reached by a 1.8-mile walk through the floodplain. After completing this demanding climbers' route, the small extra mileage on the road would be negligible. For those hiking only the Downey Creek trail, it adds a pleasant, easy 90 minutes to the day. Closure at MP 19 would preserve a portion of the Suiattle floodplain in an unmotorized condition for quiet recreation. This would add easy trail miles for "differently abled" recreationists, as this part of the road gains only 400 feet in approximately four miles. This section of road is close to the active river channel and at high risk of future washouts. Conversion to a walking route would obviate future repairs, significantly reducing costs to taxpayers.</p> <p>Comment 24 -We wish to incorporate (see Appendix F) by reference our appeal of the USFS 2006 Suiattle Road 26 Repair EA Decision Notice/Finding of No Significant Impact, filed May 10, 2006, which is attached to this letter. <u>2nd MSWord attachment</u>: 40-page "Appeal to the Forest Supervisor USDA Forest Service Region Six of a Decision of the District Ranger of the Darrington Ranger District of the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest" dated May 10, 2006 in the matter of North Cascades Conservation Council and Alpine Lakes Protection Society, and Pilchuck Audobon Society, non-profit corporations (Appellants) vs. Phyllis Reed, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Supervisor, Deciding Official.</p> <p>Comment 25 - We also wish to incorporate by reference the issues raised in the complaint filed April 19, 2011, which is attached to this letter. <u>PDF attachment</u>: 39-page Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief filed with the USDC for the Western District of Washington at Seattle captioned NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL, PILCHUCK AUDUBON SOCIETY, nonprofit organizations; and WILLIAM (BILL) M. LIDER, an individual, Plaintiffs, vs. FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION, an agency of the United States Department of Transportation; the WESTERN FEDERAL LANDS HIGHWAY DIVISION, a subdivision of the Federal Highway Administration; the UNITED</p>		<p>Response 22 –The removal of the Downey Creek approach embankment to the existing bridge is proposed in Alternative B. The replacement of this approach in modified Alternative C with a wood trestle stock bridge would raise the following concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wooden trestle bridge would typically be of treated wood which is not recommended in an area with sensitive fish habitat. • The trestle bridge would need secure footings in an active overflow channel in order to provide safe passage. Safe from scour.and safe from debris passage, from wind throw- blow down • The expense of the bridge with secure footings and replacement bridges is not to be taken lightly <p>The inconvenience for access with the loss of the bridge, and the time it takes to plan and replace a bridge in the supposedly "rare event when a flood washes it out" is also of concern.</p> <p>Response 23 - Comment noted. See alternatives 4 and 5 on pages 26 and 27 of the EA. These options are not precluded from future USFS decisions</p> <p>Response 24 – Responses to comments incorporated by reference from the appeal of the USFS 2006 Suiattle Road 26 Repair EA Decision Notice/Finding of No Significant Impact, filed May 10, 2006, can be found int Appendix F.</p> <p>Response 25 The comments raised in the 2011 Complaint have been fully addressed in the responses to similar comments made by submitters to the EA found in this document and in Attachment F. –</p>

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		STATES FOREST SERVICE, an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture, Defendants, Civ. Case No. 11-CV-666.		
371.	04/20/12 email	Support for Alternative B I support opening the road for access to hikers	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
372.	04/20/12 email with attached MSWord documents and PDF	<u>Email:</u> Fwd: Final comments submitted Please note, I am submitting these on behalf of [redacted] (Pilchuck Audubon) because she is unsure whether her previous transmission was received <u>This entry is a duplication of number 370.</u>		See response to comment numbers 370, 376, 388, 398 and Appendices G and F.
373.	04/20/12 email	Please please restore this road. I hiked Green Mountain about 18 years ago. It was the most awesome hike and has remained one of two of my all time favorites. It was so beautiful! The flowers in the meadow were as high as my shoulders and leaned over the trail to where I could barely see my hiking boots. It made me giggle with excitement..the view and the flowers. And then a few years later when I returned after a road wash out, some park authority had come through the hiking trail and mowed the wild plants back to make the trail wider. It was ugly and sad. Please restore the road but don't go in and hack up what makes this particular trail beautiful and unique. Leave the trail wild but make it accessible. Thank you, I would really like to see this beautiful place again.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
374.	04/20/12 email	Thank you for giving the public to submit comments on the proposed repairs to the Suiattle River Road. I would like to express my strong support for Alternative C. I believe this Alternative represents the best compromise between use of resources and providing access to this area for recreation. Making repairs to the remaining 4.2 miles of the road would be very expensive. Closing the road beyond MP 19 would also provide the most feasible location for trailhead parking and pack stock unloading.	C	Thank you, your comment is noted.
375.	04/20/12 email	In support of Alternative B As an outdoor enthusiast, supporter of the America's Great Outdoors initiative and Pacific Crest Trail thru-hiker I strongly support Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. I believe the road should be repaired to the Suiattle River Trailhead for the following reasons: The Suiattle River Road and its access to seven trailheads, two car campgrounds serves hikers, backpackers,	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>climbers, family car campers, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. This road provides critical access to some of America's most wild landscapes and does so at a relatively low cost to recreationists; thereby embodying the spirit of the America's Great Outdoors and connects us to our region's recreation heritage. The loss of the Suiattle River Road would permanently reduce access to trails and campgrounds. Making maintenance of this previously established infrastructure more difficult and likely more costly. Reduction in access would likely have a permanent negative impact on the rural economy of the town of Darrington as it provides an array of services to recreationists desiring to access the trails and campgrounds reached via the Suiattle River Road. Additionally the network of trails accessed from the Suiattle River Road assist recreationists in vacating the backcountry and wilderness in the event of fire or other emergency. Repairing the Suiattle River Road would ensure, in the event of an emergency, more efficient evacuations from the backcountry. Due to the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003 and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail has become overused by equestrians, hunters, climbers and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the campgrounds have been overrun and deteriorated. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired to its end, the continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will further degrade the wilderness experience of people entering the Glacier Peak Wilderness from this trail. I also believe that Alternative B represents the most sound option from an environmental perspective. Alternative B calls for the wetlands area – which would be subject to further degradation under Alternative A – to be rehabilitated. Alternative B's relocation of the road further away from the river at the Huckleberry trailhead will help abate future washout threats. Likewise, Alternative C would result in the new construction of a large parking lot to be built somewhere in the vicinity of the Green Mountain Horse Pasture. By contrast, Alternative B would restore access to the existing trailheads at Downey Creek trailhead and the road end.</p> <p>Thank you for considering my support of Alternative B.</p>		
376.	04/20/12	Sierra Club Comments on Mar. 2012 Suiattle River Road Environmental	C modified	See response to comment numbers 370, 376, 388, 398 and Appendix G.

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	email	<p>Assessment Please find our comments attached as a Microsoft Word .docx file. MSWord attachment (comment letter dated April 20, 2012 from the <u>Washington State Chapter of the Sierra Club’s Snohomish Group</u>): On behalf of the Sierra Club’s 25,000 members in Washington State, I would like to provide comments on the above-referenced proposal. Many of our members use the Darrington District and enjoy its pristine roadless areas, Wilderness areas, wild and scenic rivers, wildlife, fish, and extensive trail system. The proposal has the potential to impact these interests of our members and the public. This is one of the best opportunities the Forest Service will have to “right-size” much of the road system in the Suiattle basin while restoring recreational access to the upper Suiattle River and Glacier Peak Wilderness. Comment 1 The past high road mileage has contributed huge volumes of sediment and pollution to the watershed over many years, has fragmented native wildlife habitat, and has limited options for backcountry recreation. The Suiattle River Road washed out in 1990 and was repaired, but then washed out again in 2003 and 2006. The washouts will never end in the upper part of the basin unless the road system is pulled back to a reasonable size. Alternatives Comment 2 We oppose Alternative B as continuing much of the status quo before the roads were washed out. Under B, the road east of the Green Mtn. turnoff has a high probability of washing out again, and the Forest Service will have to spend yet more millions of taxpayer dollars to fix them again, without solving the real problems and addressing the real recreational, access, and environmental needs of the watershed. Future road washouts threaten endangered Chinook salmon runs on the Suiattle. Comment 3 Furthermore, the EA does not include a true range of alternatives as required under NEPA. We strongly support the closure of the Road 26 at the Green Mountain turnoff (FS Road 2680), as proposed in Alternative C. Thank you for publishing this alternative in the EA. By closing Road 26 at the Road 2680 junction, there will be no need to construct an expensive and elaborate vehicle crossing of the shifting alluvial fan at Downey Creek, and the strong run of endangered Chinook salmon in Downey Creek will be protected. There is much spectacular old growth forest along the road segment above the Green Mountain turnoff that makes for a delightful walk, horse ride, bike ride, or backpack. The topography allows a good parking lot to be created near the Green</p>		<p>Response 1 –The EA and supporting specialists’ reports to not support the ascertainment of pollution, vastly fragmented wildlife habitat or limited recreation options. The EA on page 103 describes water quality and that no impaired water listings are found for the Suiattle River. The EA on page 136 describes that approximately 70 percent of the Suiattle River drainage is in wilderness allocation which is un-fragmented wildlife habitat except for natural processes. In addition, much of the remaining areas of national forests lands in the Suiattle are within Late Successional Reserves and Congressionally designated Wild and Scenic River system so that greater than 90 percent of the Suiattle River is dedicated to management objectives that would support values of wildlife. The EA on page 2 and 3 describe the support of recreational opportunities provided by Road 26.</p> <p>Response 2 –The EA describes in the road section on pages 50 to 54, the risk of future washouts of the no action alternative and repair alternatives .</p> <p>Response 3 -The EA provides a range of alternatives including alternatives not within the jurisdiction of FHWA, the lead agency. Several of these alternatives were considered, but eliminated from detailed study, as described starting on page 24 of the EA. These alternatives represent a range of alternatives studied by the ID Team and considered by the Responsible Official.</p>

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		<p>Mountain turnoff to provide for recreationists who want to use the upper river basin. Parking here would add less than 2 miles to climbers’ access to the Downey Creek trail and the Ptarmigan Traverse—a trivial amount of level walking on a week-long alpine traverse. Similarly, adding about 4 miles of flat walking to backpackers’ hikes into the Glacier Peak Wilderness is not a big impact to most people, many of whom could take advantage of the existing Buck Creek Campground. In fact, the surrounding old growth forests along the road would be a draw unto themselves, expanding the land base available to backcountry non-motorized recreationists.</p> <p>Comment 4 We suggest that interpretive facilities be provided at this new trailhead to tell visitors about the dynamic nature of this river, watershed, and ecosystem. Furthermore, provisions should be made to turn the Buck Creek Campground into a walk-in campground accessible to hikers, bicyclists, and horse users. The parking lot, interpretive facilities, and campground provisions should all be added to Alternative C to make it a realistic, viable alternative that provides numerous benefits to the public while protecting forest and aquatic ecosystems. Prior to final decommissioning of the upper segment of Road 26, we strongly support doing whatever mechanical work is needed to stabilize roadbeds and fill slopes along the road upstream of the Green Mountain turnoff. Such stabilization measures should be added to Alternative C and in a final decision notice. Old Growth Forests</p> <p>Comment 5 - We strongly oppose the re-alignment of the Suiattle River Road in Alternatives B and C through pristine old growth forest upstream of Road 26 M.P. 12.6. The EA admits there would be removal of “eight acres of foraging and dispersal habitat” (p.127), four acres of which would be irreplaceable old growth forest. The EA (e.g. pp. 58, 131) waves off the impacts to the Northern Spotted Owl and Marbled Murrelet as inconsequential, but there is no analysis disclosed in the EA to justify this claim, other than that consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined the project “may affect, not likely to adversely affect” spotted owl populations. Regardless of the opinions of USFWS, USFS, or WFLHD on a few specific endangered species, the Northwest Forest Plan has broad, landscape-scale goals of maintaining species viability, Comment 6 and therefore <i>prohibits</i> logging of late-successional habitat in Late-Successional Reserves, especially when viable alternatives are available. Comment 7 With careful engineering design, such</p>		<p>Response 4 – The addition of recreational and interpretive facilities are outside of the purpose and need for flood repair and inconsistent with the use of ERFO funding. The EA on page 27 describes alternatives considered, but eliminated from detailed study.</p> <p>Response 5- Commented noted. The EA on page 128 is not void of analysis, as suggested, but provides the rationale for the conclusion that is reached.</p> <p>Response 6 –The project is not in LSR and does not remove old growth LSR trees. The EA on pages 18-19 provide a map of land allocations and description of the allocations.</p> <p>Response 7 – See response to comment numbers 370, 376, 388, 398 and Appendices G and F.</p>

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		<p>as presented by Bill Lider in his comments, most of the present road alignment can still be used and damage to old growth forests can be minimized. We also remain opposed to “freeway-like” design standards used by the WFLHD, similar to the repair of the White Chuck Road No. 23 in 2011. These design standards of long radius curves for higher speed driving are extremely damaging to the environment, remove excessive number of old growth and mature trees, and are not sustainable given the USFS’s limited maintenance budget. The proposed realignment tends to maximize impact to old growth forest and fractures potential Spotted Owl and Marbled Murrelet habitats; we support and echo the concerns of the Pilchuck Audubon Society in its comment letter. WFLHD’s experience with the Middle Fork Snoqualmie Road shows that a much narrower clearing limit, using tighter radius curves mostly on the existing alignment, is acceptable on a project such as this and best protects the environment. We do not feel that the Northwest Forest Plan’s requirements to protect late-successional forests and riparian areas have been met by the action alternatives presented in the EA. We also do not feel that the Forest Service and WFLHD can justify moving such long segments of the road away from their present alignment under the ERFO (Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads) betterment requirements when other, less costly and less environmentally damaging alternatives that keep the road largely in its current location are available.</p> <p>Wetland Impacts Comment 8 - The EA should have provided detailed maps showing the wetlands impacted and the proposed mitigation. High value Class I and Class II wetland mitigation should be accomplished at a ratio of 5 new to 1 impacted by this project, in accordance with generally accepted best management practices of critical areas as used by Snohomish County and other municipalities.</p> <p>Comment 9 - Many stream crossing are in suitable fish habitat as determined by the WFLHD consultants, yet culverts in these areas are not designed for fish passage. All streams with suitable fish habitat must have fish passable culverts installed in accordance with WAC 220-110 Hydraulic Code Rules and design requirements supplemented by Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife’s <i>Design of Road Culverts for Fish Passage</i>, 2003 edition.</p> <p>Comment 10 -Past Success We point to the closure of the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Road (beyond Dingford Creek) as a great success story, where</p>		<p>Response 8 - Page 104 of the EA lists the reports (Hererra 2008 and Hererra 2011) which document the wetland delineation for each repair site with wetlands. The EA on page 16 incorporates by reference these reports which present detailed information at each site, including the repairs at MP 12.6 to 13.8. The EA on pages 117 and 118 describes the process that was followed to address potential effects to wetlands from the proposed project. Pending an alternative selection, FHWA will continue to coordinate with the USACE and WDFW on this proposal.</p> <p>Response 9 - The EA on page 80 explains that the tributary streams where crossed at the proposed repair sites (#1 to#5) are not fish bearing streams. The EA further discussed the proposed repairs to fish habitat in the EA on page 81 in which culvert replacements at site #1 to site #5 would be over 200 feet from the Suiattle in non-fish bearing streams. No fish passage culverts are needed in the current alignment of the proposed reroute from MP 12.7 to MP 13.8.</p> <p>Response 10 - The EA addressed this alternative on p. 27 and explained why it was considered but not analyzed in detail. Alternative C was developed within the guidelines for use of funds for Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads (ERFO). The intent of the ERFO Program is to pay the unusually heavy expenses to agencies that</p>

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		<p>Forest Service staff made the wise decision to close the upper few miles of the road and turn it into a trail, despite the miles that were added to Wilderness access upstream. The added miles of easily accessed lowland and roadless area trail opportunities have been a boon to recreation in the area. The Suiattle River Road segment that we recommend for closure in this letter can become a similar success story.</p>		<p>manage road systems, for the repair and reconstruction of Federal roads to pre-disaster conditions. The pursuit of a new parking lot, and decommissioning Road 26 with a road to trail conversion would not be appropriate uses of ERFO funds. Those components would be a decision by the Forest Service outside the scope of this NEPA project and outside the scope of FWHA responsibility and ERFO funding. Alternative C does not preclude a future NEPA analysis and decision by the Forest Service to manage the last 4 miles of Road 26 with road decommissioning or in a road-to-trail option. This option would be a departure from the recent February 2, 2012 Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Suiattle Access and Travel Management Project. That decision documents the road status (open, closed, decommissioned, or road-to-trail) for the transportation system in the Suiattle drainage, including a decision to retain Road 26 as open to motorized vehicles to the terminus.</p> <p>The EA provides a range of alternatives including alternatives not within the jurisdiction of FHWA, the lead agency. Several of these alternatives were considered, but eliminated from detailed study, as described starting on page 24 of the EA. These alternatives represent part of the range of alternatives studied by the ID Team and considered by the Responsible Official. See response above.</p>
377.	04/20/12 email with attached MSWord letter	<p>I am responding in behalf of Darrington Area friends For Public Use in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle trailhead. The Suiattle River Road is access to 7 popular trailheads, including an access to the Pacific Crest Trailhead, 2 campgrounds which were always enjoyed by many people and the Suiattle Guard Station cabin rental also. This road is also a well known scenic drive allowing people of all abilities to enjoy the beauty of the Suiattle River, forest and surrounding mountains. With the loss of the White Chuck Road in 2003 and the road damage to the Suiattle River Road the only access to the PCT in the Darrington Ranger District was from the Sloan Creek Road, FS #49. This road has seen increased use of equestrian, backpacking and climbers and gathering through this one access. Since FS road 49 has been closed</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>we are seeing several cars parking at the barricade and along the soft shoulders of the road. Our group has been keeping an eye out for shoulder and ditch damage but this is an ongoing problem with inadequate parking. This is why we are against Alternative C. Alternative C would allow limited access with a large parking area at Green Mountain which will not accommodate the vehicles during peak season. Seeing the increased traffic on the Sloan Creek Road when it was still open is testament to this. You would find cars parked at each trailhead and it was not uncommon to see 4 to 6 cars at the North Sauk Trailhead and access to the PCT during summer and fall weekends. Seldom did we see shoulder parking and vehicle impact was dispersed rather than concentrated in one area. The Green Mountain parking area would have to be very large to accommodate visitors. It would also eliminate a large campground, and several popular day hikes and restrict who has public access. The Suiattle basin is also a significant area for our Sauk-Suiattle Tribe. We need to keep access open for gathering of foods and natural materials and to keep car travel possible so elders can come to these special places. The maintenance of trail upkeep would be very difficult and more expensive and impossible to open the campground. A little bit about Darrington Area Friends For Public Use, we just refer to us as "Friends". There will soon be a similar group like this for Granite Falls. We patrol forest service roads in the Darrington Ranger District, removing debris from roads and ditches and litter pick-up. We send our reports into James Mitchell and Peter Forbes. The Darrington Ranger Station has given us places to put larger garbage such as tires and garbage sacks can go in the dumpster. We plan to do a complete cleaning of the Mountain Loop Highway this summer. Not only do we work with the USFS, we are also set up to work with other governments.</p>		
378.	04/20/12 email	<p>Support of Alternative B I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. I believe the road should be repaired to the Suiattle River Trailhead the following reasons: The pre-damage Suiattle River Road accessed seven trailheads and two car campgrounds. It served hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car campers, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photographers, mushroom pickers, fishermen and promoted simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The closure of this road has been a serious loss for all of these</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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		<p>groups. Permanent closure of the Suiattle Road would mean permanent loss of access to some of the most beautiful land in the United States, as the trails would fall into disrepair and eventually disappear. Because of dwindling money to support our state's outdoor recreation, there would likely never be an opportunity to regain these trails and campgrounds if they are lost. Another consideration is that because we've already lost the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003 and lost the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail has become overused by equestrians, hunters, climbers and backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient and the campgrounds have been overrun and deteriorated. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired to its end, the continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will further degrade the wilderness experience of people entering the Glacier Peak Wilderness. I also believe that Alternative B represents the most sound option from an environmental perspective. Alternative B calls for the wetlands area – which would be subject to further degradation under Alternative A – to be rehabilitated. Alternative B's relocation of the road further away from the river at the Huckleberry trailhead will help abate future washout threats. Alternative C would result in the new construction of a large parking lot to be built somewhere in the vicinity of the Green Mountain Horse Pasture. In contrast, Alternative B would restore access to the existing trailheads at Downey Creek trailhead and the road end. Thank you for considering my support of Alternative B. "We are all travelers in the wilderness of this world, and the best we can find in our travels is an honest friend." — Robert Louis Stevenson</p>		

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379.	04/20/12 email	It has come to my attention that the Suiattle River Road is being assessed for repairs. I have gone over the three proposals for the Suiattle River Road, and have come to a decision. I choose option B, to fix the road until the Suiattle trailhead. Fixing the Suiattle River Road will be a very positive thing for many people. As a long time backcountry skier, hiker, and climber it would be very positive for myself. I would have a much easier and accessible way into the Glacier Peak area. One of the most beautiful areas in all of Washington. There are countless mountains I would be able to access if the Suiattle River Road were to be repaired. Fixing the road would also be a very positive thing for the people who live in the surrounding area. It would give them much easier access to a hiking area that has been closed for almost 9 years, and a much needed reprieve from the crowded hiking areas elsewhere. I'm sure that the local population would benefit greatly from having increased traffic and the financial jump that people like me would bring. I live about an hour from the Suiattle River Road turnoff. It takes me longer to get to Stevens Pass. The Suiattle River Road would bring me and many of my skiing friends an easy alternative to our spring and summer skiing adventures. I am very optimistic that option B will be chosen and that the Suiattle River Road is fixed.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
380.	04/20/12 email	I hope this is not too late to comment. My interest is in maintaining access for hikers and climbers to the areas that the Suiattle River road provides. I am in favor of Option B because even with the entire road open there is still no shortage of long valley bottom walking. It's not necessary to add the 4 or many more miles that would be part of the other options. I hiked out the Downey Creek after completing the Ptarmigan Traverse in 2006, and that only required a short road walk to where we could be picked up. Bachelor and Downey are a long walk out, and there's was no evidence at the time with better access that either of them was being overused at all. I am also in favor of option B because it opens up access to the maximum number of car campgrounds. I don't use these much, but they are important to a large category of people who cannot enjoy the forests without facilities like these.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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381.	04/20/12 email	I hope this is not too late to comment. My interest is in maintaining access for hikers and climbers to the areas that the Suiattle River road provides. I am in favor of Option B because even with the entire road open there is still no shortage of long valley bottom walking. It's not necessary to add the 4 or many more miles that would be part of the other options. I hiked out the Downey Creek after completing the Ptarmigan Traverse in 2006, and that only required a short road walk to where we could be picked up. Bachelor and Downey are a long walk out, and there's was no evidence at the time with better access that either of them was being overused at all. I am also in favor of option B because it opens up access to the maximum number of car campgrounds. I don't use these much, but they are important to a large category of people who cannot enjoy the forests without facilities like these.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
382.	04/20/12 email	As a long time climber/hiker obviously rebuilding the road to its previous end would seem to be ideal. However, in view of the high cost of building a motorized bridge across Downey Creek in this era of limited budgets plus the high probability of future washed outs of a motorized road in this area which is close to the river, it appears to me that alternative C is a practical compromise. Therefore, I recommend the adoption of ALTERNATIVE C.	C	See response to comment numbers 370, 376, 388, 398 and Appendices G and F.
383.	04/20/12 email	My friends and I would very much like to see repairs proceed on the Suiattle River Road right up to it's former end. This road provides access to some great outdoor areas and half of the Glacier Peak area. I think the wilderness qualities will remain intact, as they always were, with the road in place, because of the size of this drainage. Some of the best hiking and backpacking in the state would be accessible to us poor working stiffs who only have the weekends to go visit.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
384.	04/20/12 email	I would like to support Alt. B. This area is too important to the recreation public to not rebuild it and also Alt B will deal with the rehab of the Downey Creek out flow which will improve greatly the spawning habitat for Chinook and Bull Trout.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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385.	04/20/12 email	I have been hiking in the Suiattle area since the early 1960's, when the road was drivable almost to Milk Creek. I was very happy to be faced with a little inconvenience when the road-end was brought a bit downstream, and would be even happier if we did not have to wait for the next major and inevitable flood event to show up the pointlessness of trying to maintain vehicular access much past Buck Creek. I bicycled the road last fall to reach Downey Creek and hike to Cub Lake, on a Trailblazer stocking trip, a fairly rugged outing for a 69-yearold. In a few years I'm sure I won't be able to do it. Something for an oldster to moan about? Hardly. Closing a few road miles on selected wilderness-access routes creates -- not diminishes -- our hiking opportunities, particularly for older people and families. The upper Suiattle is a prime example, a wonderful river to walk or bike beside. I am certain that Sulphur Crk CG could become a very popular hike-in, with fees covering much of the maintenance costs, perhaps with volunteer help. I hope common sense will prevail here. I am far from championing closing every mountain road that experiences serious damage. But we should carefully assess the costs and benefits in each instance. To my mind, restoring car access past Downey Creek would be a huge mistake.	C	See response to comment numbers 370, 376, 388, 398 and Appendices G and F.
386.	04/20/12 email	Alternative C is the right way to go for many reasons: -lower cost to taxpayers now, and avoided future costs to rebuild again when future floods hit upper 4 miles. -adds 4 miles to low-elevation easy trail (old road) to the Suiattle trail. We need more easy trails for families. But I see some real problems with the repairs proposed in Alt C and B lower down. A lot of old trees will be cut and new roads built in formerly pristine old forest. Try to minimize the impact of doing this any way you can, by narrowing the new road sections (they don't need to be any wider than the old road), and aligning them so that the fewest old trees have to be cut down. I've driven and hiked from road 26 many times as a young man, and I look forward to being able to get as far as Green Mtn with my car. But the amount of money it will take to open the last 4 miles (half the overall cost of alt B), just isn't justified!	C	See response to comment numbers 370, 376, 388, 398 and Appendices G and F.
387.	04/20/12 email	I have read the EA and encourage you to go with Alternative B.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
388.	04/20/12 email	Please find attached my comments on the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Suiattle River Road Project WA FS ERFO 071-2023. These comments are		See response to comment numbers 370, 376, 388, 398 and Appendices G and F.

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		<p>submitted on behalf of the Conservation Committee of the Snohomish Group of the Sierra Club (WA State Chapter). Attached also is a copy of the comment letter from the Pilchuck Audubon Society. We wish to associate our Group also with the comments expressed in their letter pertaining to impacts upon wildlife, fish, and their habitat. Thank you for the opportunity for citizens to express comments based upon science and our experience as residents of the territory affected by the actions that will be taken on the Suiattle Road. Please keep me on your mailing list for this proposal. 1st MSWord attachment (comment letter dated April 20, 2012 from the <u>Washington State Chapter of the Sierra Club's Snohomish Group</u>): As Conservation Chair for the Snohomish Group of the Washington State Chapter of the Sierra Club and as an active member of several coalition groups that work on the restoration of watersheds and forests in those watersheds, I wish to comment on the Environmental Assessment (EA) that is due in to your office today. One of the coalitions on which I serve as a volunteer is the WWRI (Western Watershed Restoration Initiative). Our organization was established by an agreement of the Washington State Department of Ecology, Region 6 of the US Forest Service, and several leading conservation groups (The Wilderness Society, the Sierra Club, Wildlands CPR, et al.). We try to focus on the prevention of damage to our watersheds – the most cost effective way to protect our natural resources We support the “right-sizing” of roads so that damage to our streams, land, air, and wildlife will be minimized. From this perspective and as the Conservation Chair of the Snohomish Group of the Sierra Club (WA State Chapter), I wish to offer the following comments. The Darrington District of the Mount Baker Snoqualmie National Forest is in the territory of the Snohomish Group, so our members are deeply concerned about a number of issues related to the proposed reopening of the Suiattle River Road in its entirety. Sections of that road tend to wash out repeatedly. Comment 1 -To throw “good money after bad,” so to speak – to spend taxpayers’ dollars to fix a road that will have to be repaired again and again in future years with heavier rainfall (projected by the U. W. Climate Impacts Group of scientists and other scientific studies) and faster melting glaciers that flow into the Suiattle – is misguided, to say the least. We want to support wise expenditures of funds that come from the citizens of the U. S. Repeated repairs on the upper part of the</p>		<p>Response 1 – Comment noted.</p>

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		<p>Suiattle basin would not be supported by most taxpayers if they were aware of what is involved. Comment 2 Specifically, our members object to Alternative B because the road eastward of the Green Mountain turnoff is very likely to wash out again in the future, reducing access to recreationist. Furthermore, we oppose Alternative B because of our commitment to improve habitat for Chinook salmon runs on the Suiattle. Comment 3- In addition, the EA proposal fails to include the range of alternatives that NEPA requires. Regarding the closure of Road 26 (FS Road 2680), we support this action. Comment 4 Closure of the 2680 will save taxpayer dollars since there will be no need for vehicle passage over the Downey Creek alluvial fan that shifts periodically and endangers the Chinook salmon in that creek. For hikers and others who love this country, there is nothing to compare with seeing the important and magnificent Old Growth forest along the road above the Green Mountain turnoff. In addition to the value for recreationists, these Old Growth trees store massive amounts of carbon; this benefits our environment as little else can. We need to protect and preserve as much of our Old Growth forests as possible. Please keep the natural beauty and benefits of these trees so that recreationists now and long into the future can enjoy this area. Comment 5 Do not remove the eight acres of habitat as recommended in the EA. Four of those acres contain irreplaceable Old Growth trees. We believe that much better scientific analysis needs to be done to protect endangered or threatened species that inhabit this part of the forest. Comment 6 The EA is much too vague and needs to provide better science on this issue. In keeping with the Northwest Forest Plan there is a Comment 7 prohibition on logging in late-successional habitat in LSR's – especially when there are other viable ways to manage the forest. Comment 8 Another of our key concerns relates to the planning and designing of roads to accommodate fairly high-speed vehicles. The Forest Service has very limited funding for maintenance and appropriate design for new roads; therefore, it is responsible and sensible to plan for safer, more environmentally sustainable roads where roads are required. We concur with the opinions of the Pilchuck Audubon Society regarding the threats to the following wildlife species: Marbled Murrelets, Spotted Owls, grizzly bears, harlequin ducks, several species of endangered or threatened fish, and other species. Comment 9 Please consider the comment letter</p>		<p>Response 2 – See EA pages 53 and 54 for risk of future washouts for sites east of the Green Mountain turnoff. See EA, pages 79 to 80 for effects to Chinook salmon runs.</p> <p>Response 3 – A range of alternatives is described in Chapter 2, pages 24 to 33 of the EA.</p> <p>Response 4 - Comment noted.</p> <p>Response 5 – Comment noted.</p> <p>Response 6 – Effects to wildlife are described in the EA in Wildlife section on pages 124 to 139. The Biological Assessments prepared for consultation with FWS and the Wildlife Specialist's report assessing impacts to the Regional Forester's Sensitive Species and Forest Management Indicator Species can be found in the District files and Project Record at the Darrington Ranger District office.</p> <p>Response 7 – The project is not in LSR and does not remove old growth LSR trees. The EA on pages 18-19 provide a map of land allocations and description of the allocations.</p> <p>Response 8 – See Appendix G for recent USFS decision to shift Road 26 maintenance from Level 4 (moderate travel speed) to level 3 (typically, low speed, single lane).</p> <p>Response 9 – See response to Comments number 370.</p>

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		<p>from the Pilchuck Audubon Society as our statement, as well, of serious concerns related to the effects on wildlife from increased roads and traffic along the Suiattle and in the Suiattle River watershed. Our group urges the WFLHD and the USFS to adhere to the provisions of the Northwest Forest Plan as they pertain to watershed and riparian area health. Comment 10 Chapter 4: “Key Watersheds, Roadless Areas, and Watershed Analysis,” states: “Watershed analysis is required prior to management activities...” “Examples of activities that likely cannot occur prior to watershed analysis include salvage logging, thinning, prescribed burning, road construction or reconstruction, and hydropower development.” Comment 11 Furthermore, the NWFP allows for “no net increase in road density.” (p. 33, <u>Citizen Guide to the Northwest Forest Plan</u>, H. Michael Anderson, 1994) (highlighting mine)... We are aware of the requirements related to ERFO-funded road construction or reconstruction. The requirements have not been satisfied, so we request that no funds be expended unless the work to be funded is truly necessitated by emergencies and not to satisfy any particular user groups. Comment 12 - Furthermore, we notice that the EA fails to provide for required culverts to allow for fish passage in areas where the habitat is suitable for fish. We request that you adhere to WAC 220-110 Hydraulic Code Rules and design requirements as detailed in the WSDFW’s <u>Design of Road Culverts for Fish Passage</u> (2003). Comment 13 - As has been done in previous successful “road to trail” conversions, we urge you to consider converting the segment of Road 26 (USFS 2680) to a trail that would undoubtedly become a favorite area for hikers, backcountry horsemen, and others. This conversion would be financially, environmentally, and socially responsible and wise. Thank you for considering seriously these comments on the Suiattle Road Environmental Assessment. We look forward to your responses. Please keep me on your mailing list for this proposal so that I can keep our Snohomish members apprised of future developments. The comment then duplicates comment number 373.</p>		<p>Response 10 – Watershed analysis was completed for the Suiattle , see Appendix B-6.</p> <p>Response 11 – The EA describes on page 29 and 30, that the proposed action (Alt. B.) would result in approximately 1.6 miles of miles of road rehabilitation, and 0.6 mile of new road (MP13.4) for an approximate 1 mile of road reduction.</p> <p>Response 12- The EA on page 80 explains that the tributary streams where crossed at the proposed repair sites (#1 to#5) are not fish bearing streams. The EA further discussed the proposed repairs to fish habitat in the EA on page 81 in which culvert replacements at site #1 to site #5 would be over 200 feet from the Suiattle in non-fish bearing streams. No fish passage culverts are needed in the current alignment of the proposed reroute from MP 12.7 to MP 13.8.</p> <p>Response 13 – Comment noted. See EA page 27, for alternatives considered, but eliminated from detailed study. Alternative 5 describes decommissioning Road 26 and conversion of the road to a trail.</p>

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389.	04/20/12 email	I am an avid hiker and backpacker. Regarding the Suiattle road EA, I support alternative C as opposed to rebuilding the road to its former end, or alternately, closing the road even further back, though I realize this is not going to happen. I am adamantly opposed to rebuilding the last 4 miles of the road, and would much prefer to see that stretch accessible only by non-motorized trail. This passage of low valley hiking adds greatly to the overall experience of approach into the wilderness.	C	Thank you, your comment is noted.
390.	04/20/12 email	I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead the following reason (s): The Suiattle River Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) ROD states that 74 miles of road will be no longer available to the public for pleasure-driving, dispersed camping, berry picking, picnicking. I recognize the high cost of maintenance does not warrant keeping them open is high, and they are no longer needed. The Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads, 2 car-camp grounds, however, is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult, I volunteer with WTA and I would love to be able to work in this area. Page 3 of the EA identifies the Suiattle River Road as a “high need road” by The 2003 Forest-wide Roads Analysis or recreation and purposes. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient, and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing, which is good for fish and the tribes like it. Sincerely,	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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391.	04/20/12 email	As a long-time user of the wilderness of the North Cascades (30 years of climbing), I urge the Forest Service to pursue Alternative B, the complete restoration of the Suiattle River Road. It would reopen a wonderful region to backcountry users, and take pressure off of other local resources. Everyone from car campers to fishermen to backpackers to climbers would benefit. I did the Ptarmigan Traverse before the road washed out, a privilege unavailable to alpinists today, and the area is just amazing in its beauty and wildness. Access to this country is only possible if the Suiattle River Road is rebuilt to its end. Alternative B is environmentally sound, and has the support of virtually all the user groups of the area. The other alternatives benefit no one, by effectively closing off this unique area to public access. Thank you for your consideration.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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392.	04/20/12 email	As a supporter of recreation on our National Forests by way of climbing, backpacking and hiking, I strongly support the proposal known as Alternative C that would only restore the road to the Green Mountain Road junction – allowing for a foot/bicycle trail beyond. I realize there is similar, very strong support for Alternative B but I feel that option is too shortsighted – between the likelihood of a rebuilt road being washed out in the viable future at the river bend just before the Downey Creek Junction (MP 20.8), the number of trails already accessible by vehicular means and the lack of nice, old growth trails at low elevation to allow for getting out earlier than the summer months. There seems to be a prevailing sense of entitlement that wilderness areas should be easily accessible – which is a significant contradiction of sorts. I do not see the issue with the enjoyment of wild places having to come with a bit of physical toil in which to pay; an eight-mile roundtrip by foot or bicycle is not too much to ask by any means. The area along the Suiattle River Road between the Green Mountain turnoff and the Sulphur Creek campground are delightful and will be undoubtedly spoiled if a vehicle corridor is restored. I personally fully intend to take my 12-year old son on our bikes to camp at Sulphur Creek when looking for an alternative to the over-crowded, over-used car campgrounds scattered throughout our state. Please save the Suiattle Road and restore it – but only up to a point (the Green Mountain turnoff). I am confident that Alternative C presents the best opportunity to protect the environmental integrity of the area and provide critical access to valued recreational resources – for the longterm.	C	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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393.	04/20/12 email	I have hiked and camped many years near Glacier Peak and I am in support of Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be fixed all the way to the Suiattle Trailhead. The road and its access to trailheads, campgrounds, and fishing points is critical for users of the outdoors. I strongly believe that our backcountry is not just the preserve for fit 20-year-olds--the woods belong to all of us. By repairing this road, you will increase its safety and allow more people to enjoy our natural treasures. It is also important to note that this is not a new road, but merely repairing an existing road. With the loss of the Suiattle River road, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming overused. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience. I strongly support Alternative B Full Restoration of Road Access.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
394.	04/20/12 email	I support Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead. The Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads, 2 car-camp grounds, however, is critical for hikers, backpackers, climbers, family car camping, kayakers, equestrians, pleasure-drivers, hunters, berry pickers, photography, mushroom picking, fishermen and simple enjoyment of being outdoors. The loss of the Suiattle Road would make trail and campground maintenance extremely difficult. With the loss of the White Chuck Road and trail in 2003, and the loss of the Suiattle River road beyond its current closure at milepost 12, the North Fork Sauk trail is becoming over-used by equestrians, hunters, climbers, backpackers. The parking lot there is no longer sufficient, and the degradation of backcountry camps are testament to the impact of the closure of the Suiattle Road. If the Suiattle Road is not repaired, continued heavy use of the North Fork Sauk trail will degrade the wilderness experience that people hope to enjoy when they enter Glacier Peak Wilderness. While Alternative C does provide some access to 2 trailheads and one car campground, it does not include fixing the Downey Creek crossing, which is good for fish and the tribes like it.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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395.	04/20/12 email	On behalf of the Northwest Motorcycle Association and its over 1500 members, I wish to express our support for reopening the Suiattle River Road. Even though our organization is not directly affected by this, we strongly support expanding/restoring trail based recreational opportunities for everyone. There are much needed and appreciated recreational opportunities that are currently inaccessible. We recommend option B.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
396.	04/20/12 memorandum	The Town of Darrington supports Alternative B for the Suiattle River Road. This road should be repaired to the Suiattle Trailhead. The Suiattle River Road and its access to 7 trailheads and 2 car-campgrounds are critical for all forest user groups. Shortening or eliminating twelve miles will have an adverse effect on Darrington's economy and the quality of life as well. The increasing loss of access in the Darrington district of the last 20 years continues to degrade the environment from overuse in some areas and our own personal "forest experience" that folks have long enjoyed and expected from this ranger district.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
397.	04/20/12 email	Option B please.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
398.	04/20/12 email with attached PDF	<u>Email</u> : Suiattle River Road EA, Lider Engineering Supplemental Comments I would like to supplement my comment letter on the Suiattle River Road 26 EA with the attached letter dated April 20, 2012. Please include these comments and questions in the record for your response. Please confirm the timely receipt of these comments. PDF attachment (Lider Engineering Suiattle EA Review Supplemental Comments 20 April 2012): In addition to my comments submitted on April 18, 2012, I would like to submit the following supplemental comments and questions : Supplemental Comment 1 : 23 CFR 668.203 defines, in relevant part, "Catastrophic Failure," as "[t]he sudden failure of a major element or segment of a Federal road which is not primarily attributable to gradual and progressive deterioration or lack of proper maintenance. The EA states that the flood events of October 2003 and the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007 resulted in "partial and complete loss of portions of the road. . . ." The EA also stated "[f]lood waters eroded sections of the valley terrace on which Road 26 was located, resulting in partial and complete loss of portions of the road, and rendering the road impassible for motorized vehicle traffic." a. Is it the position of the Western Federal Lands		Response 1: a. No. 23 U.S.C. Sec 125. Emergency Relief funding is available for two types of damage; natural disasters over a wide area and catastrophic failures (23 CFR 668.205(a). The damage at each of the sites set forth in the EA was the result of a natural disaster over a wide area and not a catastrophic failure of a major element or segment of road (23CFR 668.203 (c)). b. See answer to question 1.a. above. Western Federal Lands Highway Division is not contending that the damage was caused by a catastrophic failure. c. See answer to question 1.a. above. Western Federal Lands Highway Division is not contending that the damage was caused by a catastrophic failure. Accordingly, "sudden failure" is not a term applied in this situation. d. No definition of "sudden failure" is provided by FHWA. Such term is not applicable to the damaged roads addressed in the Environmental

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		<p>Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration that the flood events, which resulted in “partial and complete loss of portions of the road . . .” constitute a “catastrophic failure” as defined in 23 CFR 668.203(c)? b. If the Western Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration contends that the “partial and complete loss of portions of the road constitutes a “catastrophic failure,” is it, in turn, stating that the “partial or complete loss of portions of the road” resulted from a “sudden failure of a major element or segment of the road?” c. Is it the position of the Western Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration that the erosions to sections of the valley terrace constitute a “sudden failure?” d. How does the Western Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration define “sudden failure?” e. To what extent is the erosion to sections of the valley terrace on which Road 26 is located that resulted in “partial and complete loss of portions of the road” attributable to “gradual and progressive deterioration or lack of proper maintenance” given that no repairs have been undertaken to-date? Supplemental Comment 2: 23 CFR 668.203(d) defines “Emergency Repairs,” as “[t]hose repairs, including necessary preliminary engineering (PE), construction engineering (CE), and temporary traffic operations, undertaken during or immediately after a natural disaster or catastrophic failure (1) to restore essential travel, (2) to protect remaining facilities, or (3) to minimize the extent of damage. The EA states that initial damage to sections of Suiattle Road were damaged in flood events in October 2003 and again in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007. The EA also stated “[f]lood waters eroded sections of the valley terrace on which Road 26 was located, resulting in partial and complete loss of portions of the road, and rendering the road impassible for motorized vehicle traffic.” a. When did the complete loss of portions of road 26 occur? Did this “complete loss” occur after the flood event of October 2003 or after the flood events in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007? b. If the “complete loss” occurred after the flood events of 2006 and 2007, did this “complete loss” occur because no emergency repairs to “minimize the extent of damage” were undertaken “immediately after” the October 2003 flood event? c. Did erosion of the valley terrace occur after the October 2003 flood event? If so, what measures were undertaken to “minimize the extent of damage” to ensure that there did not occur a</p>		<p>Assessment.</p> <p>e. Given the migration of the Suiattle River into the terrace the road was built on, the damage to the sites along Road 26 is caused by the natural disaster and not lack of maintenance.</p> <p>Response 2:</p> <p>a. Flood events in 2003, and 2006. Sites along the road had complete loss in the natural disaster of 2003. Additional sites had complete loss in the natural disaster of 2006 which led to additional complete loss at MP 6 in 2007.</p> <p>b. The only site that incurred a complete loss after the flood event of 2006 was MP 6 and this complete loss was not the result of a lack of emergency repairs.</p> <p>c. Yes. Erosion occurred during the 2003 and 2006 flood event. Valley terrace erosion during the 2006 flood caused only minor damage to sites damaged during the 2003 flood. The 2003 flood event was a 100 year flood event throughout the north end of the MBSNF. The intensity and timing of the flood were such that the only emergency actions were to save life and later (post flood) to secure stranded vehicles. Once the flood subsided, no further actions would have limited the damage. The scale of the damage was so significant throughout the area that the USFS focused on assessing the damage and working with Federal Highways to follow the EFRO process.</p> <p>d. Emergency repairs were undertaken at MP 6.0 to restore essential traffic. Emergency/temporary repairs were completed at MP 14 prior to the November 2006 storm to gain access to damage at MP 21.</p> <p>e. One the 2006 flood had subsided, no emergency repairs would have been effective in limiting the damage. After the 2006 flood event which also effected the region, the USFS focused on assessing flood damage and working with Federal Highways to follow the ERFO process.</p>

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		<p>“complete loss?” d. Why were emergency repairs not undertaken “immediately after” these flood events to “restore essential travel?” e. Why were emergency repairs not undertaken “immediately after” these flood events to “minimize the extent of any damage” and what damage has resulted of any failure to undertake such emergency repairs “immediately after” these flood events? Supplemental Comment 3: 23 CFR 668.205(b) states “[e]mergency relief work shall be given prompt attention and priority over non-emergency work.” Furthermore, 23 CFR 668.205(e) states “[e]mergency relief projects shall be promptly constructed. Projects not under construction by the end of the second fiscal year following the year in which the disaster occurred will be reevaluated by the DFDE and will be withdrawn from the approved program of projects unless suitable justification is provided by the applicant to warrant retention. The timing for emergency relief projects is reiterated in Section 1.13 of U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration’s Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads Disaster Assistance Manual. a. The flood events that resulted in the “partial and complete loss to partial portions of the road” occurred in October 2003 and the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007. Why can the Western Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration utilize emergency relief funds to undertake repairs for damage caused by flood events that happened nine and five to six years ago respectively and yet still comply with the requirements in 23 CFR 668.205 that “emergency relief work shall be given prompt attention. . .” and “shall be promptly constructed?” b. What suitable justification exists to warrant the Western Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration’s use of emergency relief funds to this emergency relief project for flood events that occurred in October 2003 and the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007? Supplemental Comment 4: The EA states that the “[d]amage from 2006 at MP 12.6 to MP 14.4 was analyzed in Categorical Exclusion for WA FS ERFO 2007(1)-20(17) Suiattle River Road <i>Emergency Repairs</i> Project (FHWA April 2010).” See EA at Page 1, ¶ 4 (emphasis added). The EA states that this project is now “being developed as a <i>permanent repair</i> through the Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads (ERFO) Program of the FHWA Public Lands Highway Program, which is financed by the Federal Highway Trust Fund.” See EA at Page 1, ¶ 6. a. Why was this</p>		<p>Response 3: a. The 2003 damage occurred in fiscal year 2004. Those repairs were commenced in fiscal year 2006, within the two years provided by 23 CFR 668.205(e). In fiscal year 2007, another natural disaster occurred blocking access to the 2003 natural disaster sites and leading to the termination of that contract. The Forest Service requested an extension for the October 2003 and November 2006 disasters on September 29, 2009. FHWA granted the request on January 12, 2010. The time extension was through September 30, 2010 for sites before MP20 and September 30, 2011 for sites past MP 20. On August 6, 2010, a contract was awarded for the sites before MP20. This contract was stopped by the prior litigation involving these projects. Thereafter, on October 13, 2011 all sites were given time extensions through September 30, 2013 for the reasons set forth in that memorandum. The importance of the road to the Forest Service and the environmental considerations attendant to the road repair was deemed to be sufficient to justify warranting retention of these projects. b. See answer to 3.a. above.</p> <p>Response 4: a. The FHWA emergency relief program has two categories of repairs; emergency and permanent. In one sense all projects are emergency repair projects as this is an emergency relief program. Accordingly, sometimes the terms are not used with the precision one may like. All</p>

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		<p>project initially developed as an “Emergency Repair” project? b. Why is this project now being developed as a “permanent repair” project?</p> <p>Supplemental Comment 5: The EA states, “the road repair contract for the 2003 flood sites was terminated due to lack of access.” See EA at Page 1, 7. 23 CFR 668.203(d) defines “Emergency repairs,” in relevant part, as those undertaken (1) to restore essential travel...” a. Why were no emergency repairs undertaken to “restore essential travel” along Road 26 after the flood events of 2003 thereby restoring access? b. Is Western Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration’s failure to undertake emergency repairs to “restore essential travel” indicative of the fact that Road 26 is not “essential” to travel?</p> <p>Supplemental Comment 6: The EA states “[t]he Forest Service submitted the new road damage sites for ERFO funding and was granted an extension for the 2003 damaged sites? a. Was the Forest Service the initial applicant for the use of ERFO funds for repairs to Road 26 with respect to the 2003 damaged sites? b. When did the Direct Federal Division Engineer issue his or her Affirmative Finding pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 125 with respect to the repairs to Road 26 with respect to the 2003 damages sites? c. When was the Forest Service’s application for ERFO funds submitted? d. If the Forest Service was the initial applicant for use of ERFO funds for repairs to Road 26, under what authority were these funds transferred to the Western Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration to undertake the proposed permanent repairs? e. Has the Western Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration made any application to utilize the ERFO funds for repairs to Road 26 there were damaged in the flood events of October 2003 and in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007? f. If the Western Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration made any application to utilize the ERFO funds for repairs to Road 26 there were damaged in the flood events of October 2003 and in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007, did the Direct Federal Division Engineer issue a new Affirmative Finding? g. If the Western Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration made any application to utilize the ERFO funds for repairs to Road 26 there were damaged in the flood events of October 2003 and in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007, when was this application submitted? h. When was the</p>		<p>work contemplated in the EA would be classified as permanent repairs.</p> <p>b. The project is developed as permanent repairs because the work is defined to be permanent repair work under the definitions found at Appendix A to the ERFO Disaster Assistance Manual.</p> <p>Response 5:</p> <p>a. Emergency/temporary repairs were completed at MP 14 prior to the November 2006 storm. Such repairs were undertaken to gain access to damage at MP 21. Emergency repairs were completed after the November 2006 storm to gain access past MP 6.</p> <p>b. No. Restoring essential travel is a justification for emergency repairs but the need for essential travel does not compel emergency repairs. Essential travel may also be restored with permanent repairs.</p> <p>Response 6:</p> <p>a. Yes. The federal land management agencies are the applicants under the ERFO Program (Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads Disaster Assistance Manual (April 2004), Chapter 1, paragraph 1.2.).</p> <p>b. A positive finding letter was sent October 30, 2003.</p> <p>c. The Forest Service requested funds for the October 2003 storm damage on April 26, 2004.</p> <p>d. Under 23 U.S.C. 125(e), FHWA may expend funds either independently or in cooperation with any other branch of the Government. Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads Disaster Assistance Manual (April 2004), Chapter 2, paragraph 2.9, describes the process for the federal land management agencies to request assistance from the Federal Lands Highway Division.</p> <p>e. No. The application was made by the Forest Service.</p> <p>f. See answer to 6.e. above.</p> <p>g. See answer to 6.e. above.</p> <p>h. The damage from the October 2003 damage was granted a time extension on Jan 12, 2010. The time extension was through 9/30/2010 for sites before MP20 and 9/30/2011 for sites past MP 20. On October</p>

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		<p>Forest Service granted an extension for the 2003 damages sites and how long was this granted extension for use of ERFO funds? i. Has the Western Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration requested an extension to utilize the ERFO funds for repairs to Road 26 there were damaged in the flood events of October 2003 and in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007, and if so, how long was this granted extension for use of ERFO funds? j. If the Western Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration made any application to utilize the ERFO funds for repairs to Road 26 there were damaged in the flood events of October 2003 and in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007, was this application for emergency repair or permanent repair relief funds? k. Did the Forest Service submit semi-annual status notifications to the Direct Federal Division Engineer pursuant to 23 CFR 668.215? l. Has the Western Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration submitted semi-annual status notifications to the Direct Federal Division Engineer pursuant to 23 CFR 668.215? m. When did the Forest Service notify the Direct Federal Division Engineer of its tentative intent to apply for emergency relief for repairs to Road 26 that were damaged in the flood events of October 2003 and in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007? n. Did the Forest Service make a field report of overall damage after the flood event of October 2003? o. Did the Forest Service make a separate application for the use of ERFO funds after the flood events in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007? p. Did the Western Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration make a separate application for use of ERFO funds after the flood events in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007? q. If the Western Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration did make a separate application for use of ERFO funds after the flood events in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007, when did it notify the Direct Federal Division Engineer of its intention to apply for emergency relief for repairs to Road 26? r. If the Western Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration made a separate application for use of ERFO funds after the flood events in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007, did it make a field report of overall damage after the flood event in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007? s. If the Western Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration made a separate</p>		<p>13, 2011 all sites were given time extensions through 9/30/2013. i. The Forest Service requested an extension and Western Federal Lands Highway Division supported that request by memorandum dated September 29, 2011. On October 13, 2011 all sites were given time extensions through September 30, 2013. j. The request described in 6.i. was for permanent repair funds. k. No. 23 CFR 668.215 requires semi-annual status updates for projects constructed by applicant forces. These projects were not being constructed by applicant forces. As required by the ERFO Disaster Assistance Manual (April 2004), chapter 2, paragraph 2.13(a), the Forest service submitted annual Disaster Repair Status/Closeout Reports. l. No. m. The Forest Service provided notice on October 24, 2003 for the October 2003 damage and November 21, 2006 for the November 2006 damage. n. The Forest Service prepared DSRs for the sites and they submitted a Program of Projects. o. Yes. p. No. q. See answer to question 6.p. r. See answer to question 6.p. s. See answer to question 6.p. t. Yes, but only to the damage at MP 6. u. Yes. v. Yes, all sites were inspected.</p>

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		<p>application for use of ERFO funds after the flood events in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007, did it prepare a detailed site inspection of the damage to Road 26 to provide to the Direct Federal Division Engineer? t. Did the Direct Federal Division Engineer elect to make a site inspection of the damage to Road 26 after the flood event in the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007? u. Did the Forest Service prepare a detailed site inspection of the damage to Road 26 to provide to the Direct Federal Division Engineer after the flood event of October 2003? v. Did the Direct Federal Division Engineer elect to make a site inspection of the damage to Road 26 after the flood event in October 2003? Supplemental Comment 7: 23 CFR 668.203(b) defines “Betterments,” as “[a]dded protective features, such as, the relocation or rebuilding of roadways at a higher elevation or the extension, replacement or raising of bridges, and added facilities not existing prior to the natural disaster or catastrophic failure such as additional lanes, upgraded surfacing, or structures.” There is no reference to Betterments in the EA. a. Under the Suiattle River Road Project, WA FS ERFO 071--2023, does the Western Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration intend to incorporate any Betterments aimed at prevent future recurring damage to Road 26? b. If the Western Federal Land Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration does intend to add an Betterments to the Suiattle River Road Project, what Betterments does it intend to add?</p>		<p>Response 7: a. No. Betterments are only eligible when clearly economically justified to prevent future recurring damage (23 CFR 668.209 (f) (3)). Under the ERFO program, betterments analysis is tied to added cost issues. When it is not practical and economical to repair a damaged element to its pre-existing condition, replacement highway facilities may be approved without being considered to be a betterment (23 CFR 668.209(d)). This is because such replacement represents the lowest cost to repair the road or bridge. Relocation on the Suiattle River Road Project was approved because the initial cost to relocate was less expensive than the cost to repair on the original alignment. Relocation had the added benefit of not being as susceptible to damage in future flood events. b. No betterments are approved.</p>
399.	04/20/12 email	<p>I’d like to add myself to those who wish to see the Suiattle River Road restored completely. This road is a very important access road to the W side of Glacier peak and many, many people could benefit from it’s use - especially the young, the elderly and all those who don’t have the time or the ability to add extras days to their itinerary to reach popular destinations inside the wilderness area. I am not against the principle of wise use, conservation, party size limits, leave-no-trace or other conservation principles... The Glacier Peak area can be protected and utilized at the same time. The road, although needing repair, is already in existence and represents a cost-effective access route for outdoor recreation and enjoyment. I support “Plan B”.</p>	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

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400.	04/21/12 email	In favor of opening Suiattle River Road! Option B seems like a good one. Any reopening is better than none. Improved access to existing trailheads will ultimately result in the preservation of our forests.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
401.	04/21/12 email	Please reopen the Sui! plan B looks like the way to do it right. I am a 57 yr old dude who wants to continue getting out in the wilderness areas. I want to finish my GP circumnavigation!!	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.
402.	04/21/12 email	As a Northwest Washington native, I spent time making many memories up the Suiattle River exploring, hiking and fishing some beautiful territory. Some of this was done even before there was a wilderness area defined in that portion of the National Forest. Through the years access to several trails into some of the most beautiful areas in the Glacier Peak Wilderness area and beyond was slowly lost step by step. First through lack of funding for adequate maintenance of USFS Roads and most recently due to years of debate over “procedures” required to do what should have been done as it would have in most any other location. This culminated after the 2003 flood event which did significant damage to that road and many others across the State. However, while significant, the repair that should have just been a matter of effective assessment and design to then seek funding became mired down in environmental debate. Significant erosion continued without ability to access sites for repair. This process was far more complex than many much more significant natural disasters across our nation. Hopefully we can avoid that process in the future on other USFS roads that have natural storm event damages. Please adopt Alternative B in the Environmental Assessment giving a better location to the road, repair to the damaged bridge crossings on Downey Creek and Sulphur Creek, and access back to the several key trailheads beyond Sulphur Creek. This will also open a segment of forest road that is one of the more beautiful in the Mt Baker Snoqualmie National Forest and that many in this generation have never seen and the rest of us miss. Current USFS personnel can effectively locate and design good forest roads in better locations than what was done back in the 1930’s and 40’s when this was originally done. Give them the Environmental Assessment approval so the real work can began on Alternative B with the funding that has been approved and before we pass another summer construction/maintenance season.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
403.	04/23/12 email	Option C preferred for Suiattle Road I fully support opening and maintaining the Suiattle River Road to its end. And maintenance of the trails it leads too, this is an absolutely prim area.	C	Thank you, your comment is noted.
404.	04/23/12 email	We have a place in Darrington. I've done the Green Mtn hike. I understand that road may be particularly tough to fix, but the one going to the Glacier Peak Wilderness entrance really should be renovated. People are more likely to appreciate and fund the outdoors if they get a chance to see it.		Thank you, your comment is noted.
405.	04/27/12 email	Option B repair the road to its end at milepost 23.0; Please restore the access road so all users can drive in and hike / equestrian riders can enjoy this beautifull area! I am a member of Washington Trails Association and Backcountry Horsemen of Washington.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.

	Date of Comment	Comment	Comment Summary and/or Alternative preferred (A, B, C)	Action Item and/or response
406.	04/14/14 (sic) letter	As long-time hikers, backpackers , climbers and nature lovers we can never forget the many beauties of the Suiattle River area and the trailheads leading to a myriad of beautiful mountains and vistas. However, with the wash-outs of the Suiattle River Road and lack of rehabilitation work, we have not been in the area for the past 8-10 years. We are very excited to learn that the Suiattle Road may be repaired to its historical end and so are firmly in support of Alternative B. Alternative B would relocate the road away from the river in certain areas, repair bridges and restore the road to the campgrounds at the end. The Suiattle River Road and its access to seven major trailheads and two car campgrounds serves a diverse array of family car campers, day hikers, backpackers climbers of Glacier Peak, long-distance hikers along the Pacific Crest Trail, kayakers, fishermen and horse riders. The loss of first the White Chuck Road and then the Suiattle River Road 10 years ago has led to great difficulty in accessing Glacier Peak for climbers in particular and greatly limited hiking and climbing opportunities. The reopening of this area for recreation will also take the pressure off ofthe south and west (North Fork of the Sauk) end trail approaches to the Glacier Peak area. We also believe that Alternative B represents the most sound option from an environmental perspective. Alternative B calls for the wetlands area -which would be subject to further degradation under Alternative A- to be rehabilitated which would help wildlife. Alternative B's relocation of the road further away from the river at the Huckleberry trailhead will also help abate future washout threats. Thank you the opportunity to comment on this Environmental Assessment.	B	Thank you, your comment is noted.