

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

District: Payette National Forest, Krassel Ranger District and
Boise National Forest, Cascade Ranger District

Project Name: Four Summit Challenge Multiyear Special Use Authorization

Responsible Official: Anthony Botello, Krassel District Ranger

Project Contact: Joshua Simpson, Recreation, Wilderness, and Trails Program Manager,
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Scoping Period: Comments requested by January 16, 2017

Submit Comments: Via webform on the project webpage

Project Webpage: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=50533>

Project Description:

For the previous seven years the 4 Summit Challenge (4SC) Committee has successfully planned and implemented the 4SC bike event. In the first six years the course began in Cascade and was an out and back that covered the two mountain passes along Warm Lake Road. The ride would start at the American Legion Hall in downtown Cascade and proceed down Main Street to Warm Lake Road. From there, cyclists choose to ride between 1-4 summits. The ride included Big Creek Summit and Warm Lake Summit descending to Landmark. At Landmark, or a summit of choice, cyclists turn around and returned to downtown Cascade.

In anticipation of road construction during the summer of 2016 on Warm Lake Highway, the 4SC Committee needed to find an alternative route for the 2016 event and proposed using the South Fork Salmon River Road (Payette National Forest National Forest System Road (NFSR) #674 and Boise National Forest NFSR#474). However, for such a route to be viable, the road needed to be closed to motor vehicle access and traffic during the event. Therefore, the 4SC Committee submitted a permit to the US Forest Service (USFS) to request this road closure to ensure a safe experience for the cyclist/participant. The USFS permit was approved and the event was a huge success with no major incidents mostly due to proper planning and the road closure.

Due to this success, the 4SC Committee is requesting a multi-year special use authorization from the USFS to continue the use of this route along with the road closure. The event would begin on the last Saturday of July every year under the permit, at 7:30 am and conclude at 4:30 pm. The necessary road closure would need to be in place from 0600-1500 during the event. Cyclists would enter onto the road, proceed over Big Creek Summit to the South Fork Salmon River Road, and continue along the South Fork Salmon River Road to Reed Ranch, which is the turn-around point. This intersection would serve as the final turn around for the cyclists. As in previous years, cyclists may choose to turn around and return to the beginning of the route at any point during the ride. See the map in Figure 1.

The ride is fully supported and assisted by the city of Cascade, Valley County Sheriff, and Idaho State Police, area ambulance services, Valley County Road Department, and many of Cascade's non-profit organizations. The ride would include 4 full-rest stops, all supplied with food and drink at key locations along the course. Aid stations would include portable toilets and trash collection, high energy snack, water and sports drinks, and first aid and emergency medical support. The ride provides Sport and Gear and Tech Support. Four aid stations would be staffed along the route and are proposed at the following

locations: Big Creek Summit, the intersection of Warm Lake Road/South Fork Salmon River Road/Knox Ranch, Poverty Overlook, and the turn-around point—Reed Ranch on South Fork Salmon River Road.

Purpose and Need:

The purpose of this project is to authorize the issuance of a 5 year special use event permit (2017-2021) that authorizes the event to occur and to authorize a closure of the South Fork Salmon River road for one day, each year in July while the event takes place. This project helps fulfill Forest Plan direction to ensure that recreation operations, under or being considered for special use authorizations, provide opportunities, facilities, and services that respond to a demonstrated public need while mitigating conflicts with other uses and resources, where possible. Design features will be considered in the analysis and included in the terms and conditions of the permit to avoid or minimize undesirable impacts to Forest resources and visitors in compliance with applicable laws, policies, and regulations.

This project is being evaluated as a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act as provided for in as 36 CFR 220.6(e)(15): *Issuance of a new special use authorization for a new term to replace an existing or expired special use authorization when the only changes are administrative, there are not changes to the authorized facilities or increases in the scope or intensity of authorized activities, and the applicant or holder is in full compliance with the terms and conditions of the special use authorization.*

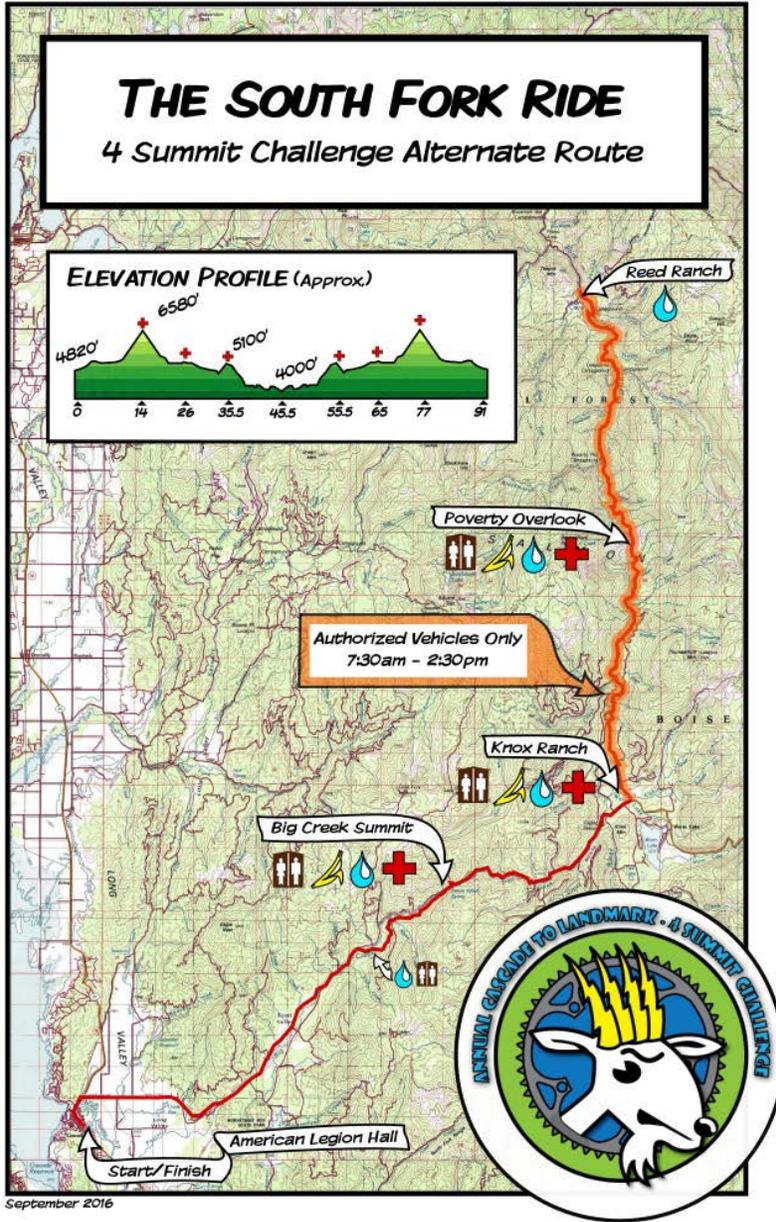
As a categorical exclusion there are no additional designated public comment periods for this project so this “scoping” phase is the best opportunity for public input.

Project Area:

The Payette National Forest is analyzing the full extent of this project including those portions that occur on the Cascade District of the Boise National Forest and has been delegated the lead. The event occurs along the South Fork Salmon River corridor on FS Road #674/#474 from the Warm Lake Road turn off all the way through to the confluence with the East Fork South Fork Salmon River. The legal land description is as follows: T15N R6E sec. 1,2; T16N R6E sec. 1, 2, 11, 14, 23, 26, 35; T17N R6E 2,11,14,23,24,25,36; T18N R6E 15, 22, 23, 26, 27, 35; Valley County, Idaho; Boise Meridian.

Commented [DSJ-1]: Are we not authorizing the event along the Warm Lake Road from hwy 55 to the South Fork Road?

Figure 1. Four Summit Challenge Route Map



Commented [DSJ-2]: This map doesn't show all the way to the confluence, nor the forest boundary, scale bar, north arrow, legend, etc. The underlying image is hard to read. Is this the map you want to use for public scoping?

Commented [SJT-3R2]: It doesn't need to show all the way to the confluence, it doesn't go that far...it is only going to Reed Ranch (turn-around). If it would make you more comfortable to have a map with all those bells and whistles we can provide that.