

Swan View Coalition Nature and Human Nature on the Same Path



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March 22, 2022

To: Via email to Chris Dowling, Michele Mavor, Jack Dittmann, Mark Ruby, Cory Davis
Fr: Keith Hammer
Re: Big Problems with the Krause Basin map and Google Poll!

We find the map included with the Google Poll for the Krause Basin Collaborative to be dishonest and the poll itself to be biased. This does great damage to the trust that is essential for this process to be productive.

The Poll

We filled out the entire poll, hit the submit button, and were immediately presented with a page saying “your response has been recorded,” along with an invitation to “submit another response,” (see Attachment A) which we did twice to try and trigger a rejection of our subsequent submissions. We never received a message that we had already submitted our response and were not allowed to submit repeat responses. (We left our second response totally blank and our third with only the first question answered, to see if we could trigger a rejection without unfairly skewing the poll results).

How many times can a person submit answers to this poll? Moreover, it appears that the respondent remains totally anonymous, so how will the FS and Facilitator know how many times a person has submitted answers to the poll? What good is this poll if it is subject to all manners of abuse? Without a name attached to each poll response, how can the FS, the Facilitator or other members of the Collaborative ask questions of the respondent or otherwise seek clarifications?

Here are a few of the poll questions, by number, that show particular bias:

4. The map is inaccurate in its depiction of “authorized” and “user created” trails and gives the impression the FS is trying to portray its desired trail system rather than the current trail system authorized in 1988. See “The Map” section below for details. Also, the numbered “authorized” trails are so long and circuitous that the poll cannot capture which segments of those trails are being reported as used.

5. This question presumes motorized/mechanized use will remain in Krause Basin. There is no response available to indicate that eliminating motorized/mechanized use is a viable way to reduce conflicts.

Krause Basin is too small to divvy up the trails among different user groups and should be reserved for quiet, calm, slow-moving recreation and spiritual renewal.

Motorized/mechanized users already have 1,400 miles of road to use on the Flathead National Forest, along with hundreds of miles of non-Wilderness trails. Moreover, the Flathead is already in the process of authorizing and building some 80 miles of new mountain bike trails under its new Forest Plan. Krause Basin deserves to be protected from becoming just one more overdeveloped recreation destination on the Flathead.

6. This question does not provide for a response that Krause Basin should be non-motorized and non-mechanized, but instead provides two options for it to be motorized ("July and August only" or "all non-winter months"). It fails to note that the second option would increase impacts to grizzly bear, while the revised Forest Plan does not allow for impacts to be increased above the baseline. This question, and the failure to ask what uses should NOT be allowed, shows bias towards increasing motorized use.

The Map

The poll map is not consistent with the map of authorized motorized routes found on page 16 of the 1988 Noisy Face Decision, which the Collaborative web site clearly states is "Current Krause Basin Management Direction." While we appreciate that the eastern portion of the map has been largely corrected to be consistent with the 1988 map, there are several trails in the western portion that the poll incorrectly calls "existing authorized motorized trails." We've attached (Attachment B) a version of the poll map to which we have added the five following annotations numbered in red text boxes:

1. This segment of Trail 902 is not an authorized trail on the 1988 map. We walked this newly cleared trail with FS Law Enforcement Officer Jack Dittmann on 12/18/20, he compared it to the FS map on his smart phone, he confirmed it is not an authorized trail, and he took photos of the fresh chainsaw dust and clearing work. Unlawful clearing of trails should not be rewarded by blessing them as "authorized."

2. This segment of Trail 902 is misidentified and largely does not exist. We can find no trail that leads essentially straight uphill to the "overlook turnout" on Peters Ridge Road. The 1988 trail that ran from Krause Creek up to Peters Ridge Road was located on what the poll map has mislabeled "User Created" trails 04, 05 and 06. Much of this 1988 route had largely brushed in since 1988, but portions have been re-cleared since 2015, particular segment 04.

3. We've drawn here in lime green the rough location of old skid roads that have since 2015 been cleared with chainsaws. The poll map omits this User Created route.

4. Only the very first/south-eastern portion of Trail 901 (Road 5388Y) was authorized in 1988. That trail then left the old road, ran down through Olsen Creek and west to what the poll map calls User Created trails 02 and 03 at Trail Creek Road. The northern and western portion of old Road 5388Y were never authorized in 1988 and, in fact, 5388Y is designated closed to motorized vehicles with a year-round earth-berm. The west-most portion of Trail 901, which we have colored lime green, is in fact a User Created route cleared with chainsaw to connect Trail Creek Road with the end of Road 5388Y.

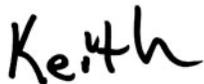
5. We have drawn in the User Created trail currently being used to connect the end of Peters Ridge Road with Road 5388Y, which has then been cleared with chainsaws to the west, but not to the south along Road 5388Y.

In summary, the FS has lied in calling trails “authorized motorized trails” on its poll map when they do not appear among the authorized trails on the 1988 map, which is still “current management direction.” The FS knows full well it must go through a public travel planning process to designate “authorized motorized trails,” which it has not done here. It appears instead to have jumped ahead of the Collaborative, Travel Planning and National Environmental Policy Act processes and made these determinations prematurely, which now skews the entire collaborative process with false information.

We understand that there should perhaps be some changes to the Krause Basin trail system to let some naturally revegetated trails stay that way and to in very limited circumstances consider a new trail segment. But the Collaborative and general public were not involved in the changes the FS just made to “authorized routes.”

Members of the Collaborative have instead been subjected to an online poll that is skewed and prone to manipulation and abuse. Collaborative members are being treated like lab rats being herded blindly around a maze and are being asked to respond to new information before the recording of the last meeting has even been posted to the Collaborative web page. We hope you will take immediate measures to mend these breaches in trust.

Sincerely,



Keith J. Hammer
Chair

Attachment A: Google poll request to “submit another response.”

Attachment B: Poll map KrauseBasinProjectFocusArea_03112022.pdf with Keith Hammer’s 5 annotations.

Krause Basin Recreation Survey 1B

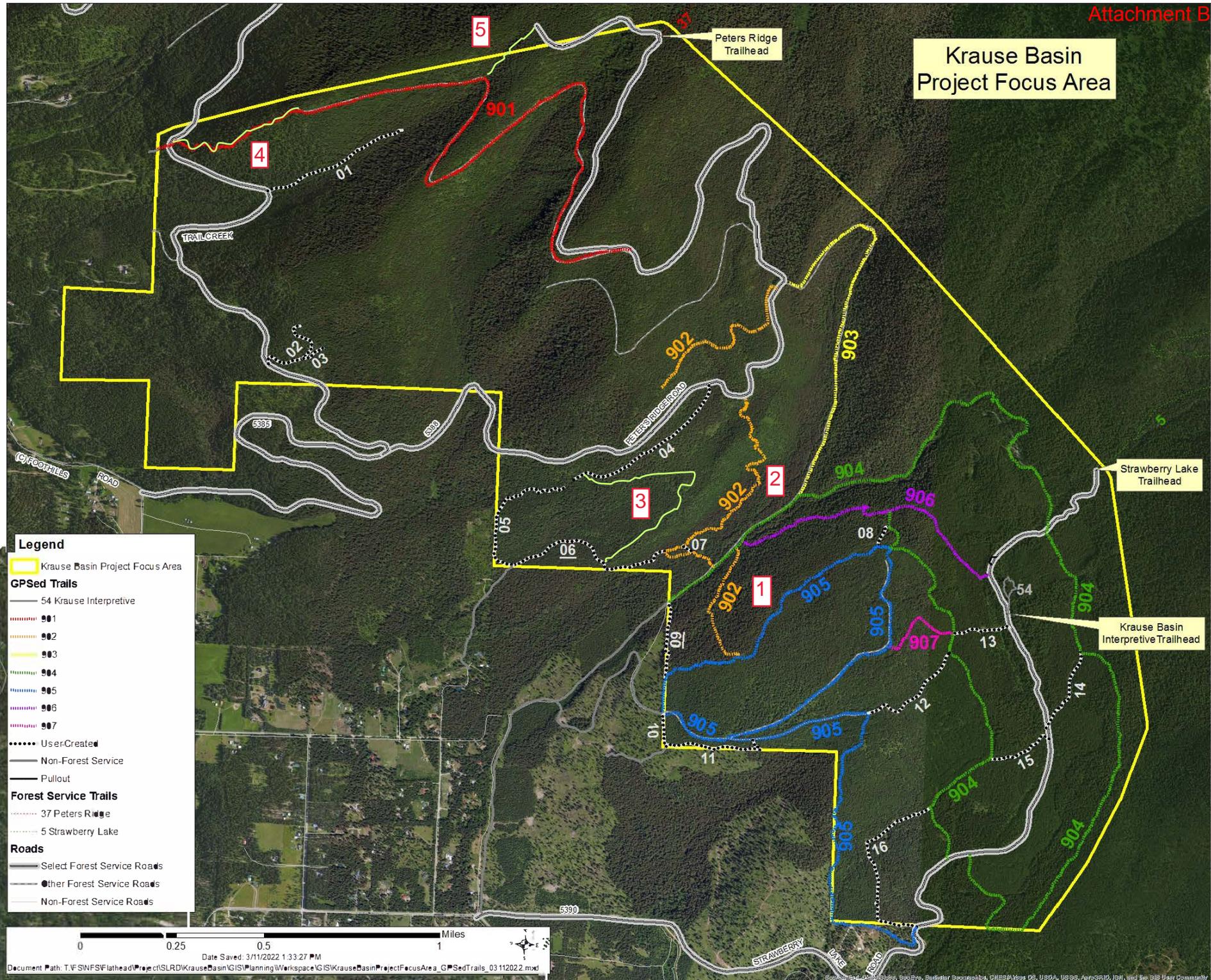
Your response has been recorded.

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Google Forms

Krause Basin Project Focus Area



Legend

 Krause Basin Project Focus Area

GPSed Trails

- 54 Krause Interpretive
- 901
- 902
- 903
- 904
- 905
- 906
- 907

User-Created

Non-Forest Service

Pullout

Forest Service Trails

- 37 Peters Ridge
- 5 Strawberry Lake

Roads

- Select Forest Service Roads
- Other Forest Service Roads
- Non-Forest Service Roads



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