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**To:** [Jamey Ayling](#)  
**Cc:** [Debbie](#)  
**Subject:** CU-23-00003 Fowler Creek Guest Ranch - Primary Concerns and Comment  
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October 18, 2023

Mr. Jamey Ayling

Planning Manager, Kittitas County Community Development Services

**Concern:** Risk Assessment - loss of human life and property

Let me first thank you for extending the comment period for 2 additional weeks.

This has given my wife and time to understand and research the subject proposal in detail.

**Background:**

We first moved into our Granite Creek Cabin on August 12, 2017. That night, as we looked north toward the Stuart

Range, we noticed some strange lights in the mountains just 15 miles away. The next day we saw smoke in that general area.

The lights turned out to be exploding tree tops. As you might recall, this was the start of the Jolly Mountain lighting

initiated fire which lasted nearly 3 months. Over 36,000 acres burned,

Cle Elum was on evacuation notice, Teanaway property was damaged, but fortunately no loss of life.

The fire was finally out by November 2nd.

[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jolly\\_Mountain\\_Fire](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jolly_Mountain_Fire)

Just over a year later, on November 8, 2018, a fire broke out in Butte County, California, near the small town of Paradise,

later called the Camp Fire. It wasn't contained until November 25th. 85 lives were lost, 18,000 structures burned

to the ground and over 155,000 wooded acres gone. One of the worst fires in US history.

Butte County and the State of California are still being sued in court. **Primary cause:** PG&E power lines sparked

in extreme draught conditions. Only one-way in/out of Paradise, California and surrounding area. Roads jammed

with traffic, emergency fire could not respond fast enough due to jammed access roads before the major firestorm started.

[Camp Fire \(2018\) - Wikipedia](#)

## **Granite Creek Response**

Because the Camp Fire location had similarities to our location: remote mountain terrain, lightning storms,

BPA power line fields, draught conditions, single access and entry (via FSR 4517, Fowler Creek, and Westside roads)

5 Granite Creek property owners took action. We looked for 2-3 Emergency Evacuation alternatives if FSR 4517 or Fowler Creek

Road was blocked by fire, trees, or traffic. Three emergency alternatives were identified, mostly on level 2-3 roads that could

reach Woods and Steel road to the east or Little Creek or Big Creek exits to Westside or Nelson roads to the north or west.

The Granite Creek Emergency Plan 2019 was reviewed by KCFD7 Chief John Sinclair and the Kittitas County Sheriff's

Department, and presented to the community on June 15, 2019. The Chief was very concerned as he inspected FSR 4517,

with Dave Ewing, his Battalion Commander. His comment "GC residents should discuss with the Forest Service or DNR to "harden""

FSR 4517. This means to clear all trees and burnable vegetation within 30 feet of each side of the asphalt roadway. The road

is too narrow to have KCFD7 pump trucks go up with resident vehicles evacuating. At that time, he said he could not approve

our emergency alternatives, and our primary plan was to call 911 or Kittcom, then shelter in place until help comes.

I would be happy to send you a copy of our June, 2019 plan.

### **Guest Ranch Concern:**

If this land use proposal is approved, with new density and traffic, with large RVs with trailers allowed, there is a great

deal of additional risk which needs to be assessed by CDS, not just for residents, but to the future of Kittitas County if the

worst case happens like the Camp Fire. You considering the addition of up to 30 RVs, most equipped with

propane tanks, plus 10 cabins, B&B, and Ranch House. There is no question for those who live here, that FSR 4517

or Fowler Creek Road and even Westside Road currently can't handle evacuation from a fire from any source such as

lightning, Powerline sparks, propane tanks, campfires, or firearms used by hunters during the season. In the event of an emergency for fire

or medical, the likelihood of a large RV obstruction on these roads could mean disaster. The traffic choke points

especially that are vulnerable: 1. Intersection of FSR 4517 and Fowler Creek/Pasco Roads (right where this development

is located). 2. Intersection of Fowler Creek Road and Westside Road. 3. Intersection of Westside Road with

Zrebiec Road. 4. Intersection of Westside Road with Nelson Road across from Sun Country GC. We fear many

will not make it, especially at night or under poor weather conditions. KCFD7 Station 73 at I-90 Exit 78 might as well

be 100 miles away if the access roads are blocked.

### **Conclusion:**

As a retired senior Project Manager for Boeing, I know that **90% of project or planning management** is really

**risk management.** I would recommend that at least 2 members of CDS visit our location, about 30 miles from

Ellensburg off Exit 78, and do a detailed risk assessment before any approval is given to this Guest

House proposal to proceed. The Development Planning Department in Butte County, California clearly did not do an

adequate risk assessment and is still paying the price. I hope Kittitas County does not make the same mistake.

Thanks for your time and understanding of our highest priority concerns.

Roger and Debbie Greene

401 FSR 4517-117 @ Granite Creek

Cle Elum, Washington