



August 22, 2017

Dear DCR,

On behalf of Friends of Peru State Forest, thank you for your help in making the Remembrance of the 75th Anniversary of the Garnet Peak Plane Crash in Peru, MA a success one week ago on August 15, 2017. We realize you were under time pressure to improve access. It is a challenging site, and it was a very special occasion. The event went well and was attended by at approximately 60-70 people from throughout the area. As a separate attachment I provided the text of my comments at the event.

As noted (at public hearing, March 2017; in extensive written comments (multiple documents) on the logging plan, submitted April 2017) the area surrounding the monument is a sensitive high priority habitat, it has extensive historical homesteads, and it is a very wet and rare high elevation environment on the mountain.

Please note that as a follow up to the event several critical issues need to be addressed ASAP.

Friends of Peru State Forest is alerting DCR about and requesting three things:

1. **Immediately replace the signs that say “no motorized vehicles.”** They were at the entrance to the trail to the monument and on these signs it was handwritten “respect this place” and the plane model number. They were there up through and during the day of the event (DCR granted a one-day variance to allow motorized vehicles). Now, as of a few days after the event, the signs are missing.

Replacing these signs is urgent – especially because the Berkshire Eagle published a photo of three vehicles driving up there on the event day and it could be taken as a legal activity. Similar signage should be placed at the entrance to the state forest on Curtin Rd. Driving on the historic roads and through the forest will not only impact the reverence that the military crash site and memorial deserves it will also destroy the historical and natural resources - rapidly – including the road built by the CCC.

2. **Immediately brush-in the new trail made for the event to allow hiking but impassable for motorized vehicles.** This is a sacred site and, as noted above, not a place for ATVs and other vehicles. Even if illegal (according to posted signage) if and when it is possible some people will break the rules.

Motorized access will destroy the rare high elevation wetlands and vernal pools, the habitats, the historical road built by the CCC, the integrity and setting of the historical homesteads, and the peace and the solitude that make the forest and the memorial of the plane crash a special place.

3. Vehicles were driving on the original trail throughout the summer; as the summer progressed the damage was getting worse and worse as ever larger vehicles were driving through the unprotected stream crossings and along the very wet trail, creating huge ruts. At least three stream crossings with DCR-built foot bridges have been severely damaged by driving heavy equipment on the original trail.

Recently major new additional trail sections were added to reroute the trail and avoid these areas; very rough additional stream crossings were installed on new sections of trail (made within the past ~3-4 weeks).

We assumed that the driving throughout the summer was related to preparing for the event and expected the damage will be fixed after the event. **If DCR was planning on making this new section of trail why is there so much damage to the other trail and all the stream crossings?**

4. At least two sections of a **historic stone wall** were destroyed and driven over on the new DCR trail. Debris has been piled over a lot of additional stone wall area. These historical resources need to be cleaned up and restored; the historic road, the intact stone walls, and the homesteads are a literal roadmap to the history of the area.

Please address these issues noted above and restore these areas according to DCR policy ASAP.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter, and thank you again for your efforts toward the remembrance event.

Respectfully submitted, on behalf of Friends of Peru State Forest,



Susan Masino

Member, Peru Historical Commission