



Via email: objections-pnw-regional-office@fs.fed.us

October 10, 2017

Reviewing Officer
Pacific Northwest Region, US Forest Service
Attn. 1570 Objections
P.O. Box 3623
Portland, OR 97208-3623

Re: Camp Lick Restoration Project Objection

Dear Objection Reviewing Officer:

Pursuant to 36 C.F.R. Part 218, the American Forest Resource Council (AFRC) files this objection to the proposed decision for the Camp Lick Project (Camp Lick). The responsible official is Steven K. Beverlin, Forest Supervisor. Camp Lick occurs on the Malheur National Forest (MNF).

Objector

American Forest Resource Council
5100 SW Macadam, Suite 350
Portland, Oregon 97239
(503) 222-9505

AFRC is an Oregon nonprofit corporation that represents the forest products industry throughout Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, and California. AFRC represents over 50 forest product businesses and forest landowners. AFRC's mission is to advocate for sustained yield timber harvests on public timberlands throughout the West to enhance forest health and resistance to fire, insects, and disease. We do this by promoting active management to attain productive public forests, protect adjoining private forests, and assure community stability. We work to improve federal and state laws, regulations, policies and decisions regarding access to and management of public forest lands and protection of all forest lands. The Camp Lick project will, if properly implemented, benefit AFRC's members and help ensure a reliable supply of public timber in an area where the commodity is greatly needed.

5100 S.W. Macadam Avenue, Suite 350
Portland, Oregon 97239
Tel. (503) 222-9505 • Fax (503) 222-3255

Objector's Designated Representative

Irene Jerome
408 SE Hillcrest Rd
John Day, OR 97845
(541) 620-4466
ijerome@amforest.org

Reasons for the Objection

The content of the objection below is based upon the prior specific written comments submitted by AFRC in response to scoping and to the Camp Lick Preliminary Environmental Assessment (PEA) which are hereby incorporated by reference.

1. AFRC objects to the length of the Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on the Camp Lick project. The Camp Lick Final Environmental Assessment (FEA) is 430 pages, which defies comprehension by itself given that the CEQ guidelines for EAs describe a concise streamlined document, and has only one action alternative.

The Camp Lick FONSI is 68 pages in length or approximately 15 percent of the length of the FEA. The FONSI is a regurgitation of the FEA, including very specific information such as Table 57 that gives actual burn block numbers and acres, specific details on operations in RHCA's and more that belong in the contract not in the FEA, let alone in the FONSI. As defined in the CEQ regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) an EA is a "*concise* public document that *briefly* provides sufficient evidence of analysis for determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact." 40 C.F.R. 1508.9 (a) (emphasis added). A FONSI should likewise be a concise evaluation of the significance factors applicable to the project and an explanation for the final decision.

2. AFRC objects to the decision to drop all commercial harvest from the RHCA's. Limiting treatment to non-commercial specifications will decrease the accomplishment of the Purpose and Needs of restoring the health of the forest, decreasing fire risk and contributing to the economic health of the local communities. Commercial treatments can be accomplished without degradation of the aquatic ecosystem.
3. AFRC objects to the decision to not remove commercial materials from aspen stands and meadows. Camp Lick has a negative net stumpage and net present value and removal of viable commercial materials from these areas has the potential to create a revenue neutral, if not a revenue positive, situation.
4. AFRC objects to the Camp Lick economic analysis which is incomplete and inadequate. The economics analysis indicates that as much as 20 percent of estimated 67,704 ccf commercial volume in Alternative 2 may be "green convertible biomass" (FEA Table 58). The merchantable sawlog material compared to non-saw material should be broken out to provide a better idea of the economic viability of the project.

Will removal of green biomass be subject to agreement? The economics analysis does not provide enough detail on how final figures were calculated. Was a weighted stumpage rate used that accounts for the green biomass if removal is required? If the Forest Service requires biomass removal, it will undercut the economics of sales under the project. Were skyline yarding costs broken out or weighted to account for the increased costs of utilizing that system?

The average volume of 6.5 ccf per acre (FEA p. 372) on the Camp Lick project is break-even at best for ground based logging and not sufficient for skyline yarding. If the average diameter breast height (dbh) of the material is small (less than about 14 inches) 6.5 ccf per acre is not viable for ground based logging. Skyline yarding requires approximately twice that volume or 11.0 ccf/acre and a larger average diameter per log. If appropriate ground based equipment is not approved for use on steeper slopes, such as feller bunchers to cut and bunch trees under skyline corridors, hand falling is required and costs rise more. The economics table indicates that it costs approximately \$24.27 per ccf for Forest Service sale prep and administration. Where are the planning costs accounted for? Stump to truck costs are given in \$/ccf however no units are assigned to log haul. Are haul costs \$/ccf as well?

5. AFRC objects to the analysis of undeveloped areas within the project area. In January 2015, the Forest Service released the final directives that implement the 2012 Planning Rule. These directives (FSH 1909.12, 70) supersede past directives for forest planning and describe the process used during Forest Plan revision to describe and define these areas. The directives clearly state that the Wilderness identification, evaluation, analysis and recommendation process occurs during forest plan revision not at the individual project level. FSH 1909.12, chapter 70 states that inventory of areas that may be suitable for inclusion in the NWPS shall occur during forest plan development and revision. The environmental analysis for this project should not include any detailed analysis of how it will impact undeveloped, roadless or potential wilderness areas including areas identified by interested parties, unless such areas have been previously inventoried under the RARE II process or identified during forest planning. The issues and concerns brought forth by the public concerning these points should be addressed by reference to the new planning rule, current regulations and handbook.
6. The FEIS refers to “areas identified in the DEIS as Lands with Wilderness Characteristics that do not occur within (overlap with) a PWA” and “considers these acres of land within the undeveloped lands analysis.” Such areas should not be analyzed for “undeveloped” characteristics apart from their inclusion in a PWA. The analysis violates NEPA and should be deleted from the FEIS.

The Ninth Circuit, in *Lands Council v. Martin*, 529 F.3d 1219 (9th Cir. 2008), held roadless areas must be analyzed to the extent they have attributes with “independent environmental significance” and have potential for designation as wilderness. *Id.* at 1230. Thus, there is no such thing as an “undeveloped” area outside a PWA that can be analyzed. Such areas may have attributes with independent significance, which will be captured in the NEPA analysis for project effects. But the Forest Service cannot,

consistent with its planning process, add a new step for so-called “undeveloped” areas that were already excluded from inventory as a PWA.

Resolution Requested

AFRC requests that the FONSI be rewritten as a concise summary. AFRC requests that commercial materials be removed from aspen stands, meadows and RHCAs. AFRC requests that the economics analysis be rewritten to accurately and clearly reflect the process used and provide sufficient information such as the costs of NEPA development and the units used for each separate item in the analysis. AFRC requests that the analysis of undeveloped areas be dropped.

Request for Resolution Meeting

Pursuant to 36 C.F.R. § 218.11, the objectors request a meeting with the reviewing officer to discuss the issues raised in this objection and potential resolution.

In the event multiple objections are filed on this decision, AFRC respectfully requests that the resolution meeting be held as soon as possible with all objectors present. AFRC believes that having all objectors together at one time, though perhaps making for a longer meeting, in the long run will be a more expeditious process to either resolve objection issues or move the process along. As you know, 36 C.F.R. § 218.11 gives the Reviewing Officer considerable discretion as to the form of resolution meetings. With that in mind, AFRC requests to participate to the maximum extent practicable, and specifically requests to be able to comment on points made by other objectors in the course of the objection resolution meeting.

Thank you for your efforts on this project and your consideration of this objection. AFRC looks forward to our initial resolution meeting. Please contact our representative, Irene Jerome, at the address and phone number shown above, to arrange a date for the resolution meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Travis Joseph". The signature is stylized with a cursive script.

Travis Joseph
President