

To: Objection Reviewing Officer
USDA Forest Service, Northern Region
26 Fort Missoula Rd.
Missoula, Mt. 59804

From: Susan Woods

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Re: Black Ram Project Objection

Dear Objection Reviewing Officer,

I am objecting to the Black Ram Project with the lack of a complete EIS and the decision of no impact. I previously commented via email to object to Black Ram, so the criterion of having commented before means that I can comment again now. I do not presently live in Montana. I have however spent a substantial part of the year in Montana during the course of the last 30 years and lived there off and on in the past. One area I spent time in was the area of the Black Ram Project, the Cabinet Mountains and the Yaak. The mountains do indeed have a huge amount of forest. As a result, there are healthy rivers and streams and wildlife. All of it is dependent on the survival of forests. The draft statement of no impact for Black Ram is neither accurate nor truthful.

The 95,000 acre clear cut would take out old growth and the succession growth of forest. It is a major part of the corridor of wildlife for migration and breeding, as well as denning and established territories for many animals, in

particular the important apex predator, grizzly bears. All would be seriously impacted by a 95,000 acre clear cut.

The Cabinet-Yaak area is a USDA/Forest Service recovery zone for the grizzly. A multitude of studies of grizzly bears in Montana demonstrate the bears with less food and a greater exposure to humans don't fare well. When animals have no food, encounters with humans can be destructive whether it is in person, on farmsteads or livestock predation. So cutting down a huge swath of necessary habitat is a giant impact. There are also other animals who will be impacted by loss of territory and access to food sources like wolverine, lynx, bobcats, cougars, deer, moose and elk and any hope of woodland caribou. A "finding" of no impact is a political statement not based in science, truth or fact.

Another problem with Black Ram is that because of climate change the project will begin a process of heating the area, making it difficult for a functional forest to reestablish with all the plants, trees and understory food sources presently there.

Starting in 1990, I worked three summers for the Forest Service on the Wallace Ranger District in north Idaho. Even then climate warming was well known and Forest Service policies were shifting because of warming on the forests. The Ranger I worked under as part of a crew of Stand Examiners emphasized in 1990 that in the near future the Forest Service would use forest practices to conserve snow for water resources, not timber. He was speaking from science. He was correct and prescient.

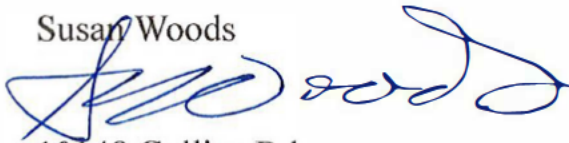
The problem is that USDA Forest Service is now being managed for political and financial goals and science is outlawed. The solution to forest fires is not cutting down all the trees. That's greed on behalf of corporations. And we become hotter. Standing forests in Montana are just as important as lungs of the

earth to all living creatures and humans as is the Amazon. So complete the science and do a complete and independent EIS.

Manage our forests from a long term knowledge that the forests belong to ALL Americans, thus called PUBLIC lands. The trees don't belong to timber companies. The Black Ram clear cut would be damaging public interests and its ownership, habitat for wildlife and increase fire danger to humans in the area. The public ownership must be served with a complete and independent EIS.

Respectfully submitted,

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