



Meagher County , Montana

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS

OFFICE OF
BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

July 7th, 2020

Objections Reviewing Officer
USDA Forest Service, Northern Region
26 Fort Missoula Road
Missoula, MT 59804

Re: Notice of Meagher County Commissioners Objection to the Horsefly Vegetation Project Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest

Dear Objections Reviewing Officer,

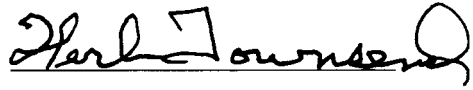
Pursuant to 36 CFR [sect] 218.8(d). the Meagher County Commissioners (MCC) hereby object to the Horsefly Vegetation Project (project), by the Belt Creek-White Sulphur Springs Ranger District of the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest. MCC objection is submitted as support for moving forward with the actions identified in Environmental Assessment (EA), Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and draft Decision Notice (DN) for the Horsefly Vegetation Project.

Connections to Prior Comments: MCC have submitted comments on the project during project development 4-19-18 and 12-10-18 and during scoping 2-2-20. These comments stated MCC support for the proposed treatments to reduce wildfire hazard, increases livestock grazing forage, and contributes timber products to the local timber industry. Treatment areas are identified in our Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). Treatments are within Highway 89 Corridor Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) area identified in the CWPP.

The project is not only important for the national forest system lands. but also, the neighboring private landowners and Meagher County Rural Fire Department (MCRFD). MCRFD is responsible for fire suppression on the private land adjacent to the project area and will benefit from the breaking up the continuity of the fuels will increase fighter safety when ignitions occur. Reasons for Objection: We are concerned that the treatments identified in Environmental Assessment (EA), Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and draft Decision Notice (DN) may be modified prior to the final decision and implementation. If changes are requested by another party, and if the final decision differs substantively from the treatments identified in Environmental Assessment (EA), Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and draft Decision Notice (DN). the outcome may not adequately reduce wildfire risk and the restoration balance. If the current analysis is not enough to support these changes, the project may not be implemented in a timely manner. As such we intend use the objection process to support the treatments identified in the draft Decision Notice.

The MCC formally requests to be included as an interested party in objection resolution for this project. As an interested party the MCC would like to be involved in objection meetings as an active participant in support of the implementation of this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Herb Townsend". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "H" and "T".

Herb Townsend, Vice-Chair