

Rodger F. Miller

Objection Reviewing Officer
USDA Forest Service Northern Region
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Missoula, Montana 59804

Mud Creek Vegetation Project Objection

The responsible official of the aforementioned project is Matthew D. Anderson, Forest Supervisor. The project is to be implemented within the Bitterroot National Forest.

The architect and manager of the Mud Creek Project, within the West Fork Ranger District of the Bitterroot National Forest, will employ a "condition based phased approach" to implement

treatment methods within the project. The "condition based approach" gives the project manager license to determine treatment options without oversight, carte blanche. With this approach public opinion is ignored or disregarded. It also appears it is the project manager's goal to override, with asked for permission, the Forest Service guideline that open areas not exceed 40 acres.

The "Mud Creek Vegetation Management Project Draft" gives mention, on page 13, of aesthetic impact but never defines it.

That a project outcome of aesthetic desirability is achieved is a concern of my wife and me.

Old Growth is one of the most aesthetically pleasing attributes of the West Fork area of the Bitterroot National Forest; clearcuts and nature's clearcuts, burn scars, are not.

As stated within the "Mud Creek Project Final Environmental Assessment" on page 34; "Commercial and non-commercial treatments will be proposed within old growth stands". On page 6 of the "Mud Creek Vegetation Project" is stated; "I chose not to limit old growth treatment to non-commercial methods". This gives license to cut Old Growth.

Our hope for an aesthetically pleasing outcome in the Mud Creek Project is jeopardized by clearcuts. Shelterwood cuts would retain only 10% to 20% of full standing stock as is stated in "Mud Creek Project", appendix A, design features, page 4.

Aspects of clearcuts are integrated within shelterwood cuts, and much more so in seed tree cuts.

This would enable cutting of Old Growth. Seed tree cuts are an equivalent of "even aged silviculture methods", and basically clearcuts.

A shelterwood cut, if done with an aesthetically pleasing intent, leaving Old Growth trees uncut, as well as leaving a generous assortment of trees of varied ages, is a sought after outcome. The desired outcome of a healthy forest with reduced fire risk, without cutting of Old Growth is attainable.

No cutting of Old Growth, no clearcuts

Mother Nature has benignly allowed Old Growth trees to survive fires, logging and other mishaps; they are living history.

Mother Nature's decree that Old Growth Trees survive should be honored and respected by

letting them continue their survival, untouched,
uncut, as one of the most aesthetically pleasing
elements of the Bitterroot National Forest.

Rodger F. Miller ; Lead Objector
Patricia C. Miller

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No herbicide usage in Project