



File Code: 1570
Date: January 10, 2022

Dear Objectors:

This letter is in response to your objections filed on the Mid-Swan Environmental Impact Statement and draft Decision Record of Decision released by Flathead National Forest Supervisor, Kurt Steele. I have read your objections and reviewed the project record. My review of your objections was conducted in accordance with the administrative review procedures found at 36 CFR 218, Subparts A and B.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW PROCESS

The regulations provide for a pre-decisional administrative review process of issues raised by objectors and suggested remedies that would resolve the objections. In my review I considered issues related to National Environmental Policy Act and National Forest Management Act compliance, the administrative review process, wildlife, Threatened and Endangered Species, watersheds, riparian areas, fisheries, vegetation and old growth, invasive plants, fuels and fire, wilderness (designated and recommended), roadless areas, roads/travel management, fuels and fire, climate change, and economics.

OBJECTION RESOLUTION

I hosted two objection resolution meetings on January 5, 2022. The first meeting was focused on objections other than wilderness issues and was attended by:

- Arlene Montgomery of Friends of the Wild Swan
- Andy Geissler of American Forest Resource Council
- Jeff Juel of Friends of the Clearwater
- Peter Guynn
- Jim Burchfield and Jon Haufler of Southwest Crown Collaborative
- Keith Hammer of Swan View Coalition
- George Nickas of Wilderness Watch
- Brent Morrow

The second meeting was focused on wilderness issues and was attended by:

- Co-objectors Chris Ryan, Jennifer Zbyszewski, and Kathy McAllister
- Kari Gunderson
- Kevin Proescholdt, George Nickas, and Dana Johnson of Wilderness Watch
- Andy Geissler of American Forest Resource Council
- Peter Guynn
- Zach Bashoor of Pyramid Mountain Lumber
- Brent Morrow

I heard concerns about various aspects of the proposed action as well as support for some of the proposed activities. I appreciate objectors' participation in the meetings and the time and effort they put into the process.



RESPONSE TO OBJECTIONS

As specified at 36 CFR 218.11(b), this letter is my response to objections to the environmental assessment, draft decision notice, and project record. Based on a thorough review of objections raised and what I heard at the resolution meeting, I am instructing the responsible official to do the following:

1. Lynx forest plan amendment – clarify the difference between the area analyzed in the FEIS and the specific acres included in the forest plan amendment.
2. Clarify how the forest plan standard for soil compaction is being met.
3. Watershed analysis - Estimate and disclose sediment delivery from log hauling so it is easier to compare to other project-related sediment-producing activities.
4. Minimum Road System - Correct the statement in the FEIS that states the forest-wide travel analysis identified the minimum roads system to clarify it did not identify the minimum road system.
5. Wilderness:
 - a. Disclose how activities proposed in the Mission Mountains Wilderness represent the minimum required for long-term protection of wilderness qualities.
 - b. Add an explanation clarifying what is meant by white bark pine seeding success.

CONCLUSION

The responsible official may sign the Record of Decision for this project after completing my instructions outlined above and when a biological opinion has been returned by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. My review constitutes the final administrative determination of the United States Department of Agriculture; no further review from any other Forest Service or United States Department of Agriculture official of my written response to your objection is available [36 CFR 218.11(b)(2)].

Sincerely,

KEITH LANNOM
Deputy Regional Forester

cc: Kurtis Steele, Joe Krueger, Chris Dowling, Michele Dragoo, Olga Troxel, Pamela Fletcher