



July 20, 2023

Lisa Timchak

Objection Reviewing Officer

Northern Regional Office

Attn: Selway Saginaw EA

26 Fort Missoula Road

Missoula, MT 59804

**Subject: Objection to Selway Saginaw Vegetation Management Project #56912 - Deferral of Intermediate Commercial Harvest and Proposed Road Removal in Old Growth Areas**

Dear Lisa:

Sun Mountain Lumber would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide comments during the Objection Period for the Selway Saginaw Vegetation Management Project #56912.

We are writing to formally express our objection to the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest's decision to defer intermediate commercial harvest of 2,417 acres of old growth areas as part of the Selway-Saginaw Vegetation Management Project.

While we understand the forest's concerns regarding old growth preservation, we believe that the deferral of intermediate commercial harvest in these areas could have significant repercussions. This decision, if implemented, might set a concerning precedent for inactivity in areas of old growth, which may ultimately jeopardize the health and longevity of our forest ecosystems.

As responsible stewards of our natural resources, it is vital to acknowledge that old growth areas face their share of threats, primarily from insects, disease, and fire. Active forest management, including intermediate commercial harvest, plays a crucial role in mitigating these risks and maintaining a resilient forest landscape. The decision to defer intermediate harvest could leave these old growth stands vulnerable and unprepared to face future challenges.

In light of this, we respectfully urge the planning team to reconsider the deferral of intermediate commercial harvest and ensure that a comprehensive approach is taken to balance conservation and active management. Instead of deferring the harvest, let us explore sustainable methods that allow for responsible harvesting while preserving the integrity of the old growth areas.

Additionally, we object to the proposed administrative removal of roads that could access areas for intermediate commercial harvest. The removal of these roads could impede the practicality of future treatments in the old growth area, making it difficult to address potential issues effectively. It is essential to consider the long-term consequences of such actions on our forest's overall health and ability to adapt to changing environmental conditions.

We request the following resolutions:

1. Return the deferred 2,417 acres of intermediate commercial harvest to the project plan, considering sustainable and ecologically responsible practices to protect the old growth stands.
2. Reevaluate the proposed administrative road removal and its potential impact on the practicality of future treatments. Preserve the access routes that are vital for active forest management and the safeguarding of the old growth area.

By integrating these considerations into the Selway-Saginaw Vegetation Management Project, we can collectively work towards a more balanced and sustainable approach that secures the health and resilience of our forests while upholding our commitment to conserving old growth areas.

We appreciate the efforts made by the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest to manage and protect our wilderness. It is my hope that through constructive dialogue and collaboration, we can find a solution that benefits both our ecosystem and the local community.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to a response and a positive outcome that will benefit our forests and communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sean Steinebach', with a stylized, flowing script.

Sean Steinebach on behalf of Sun Mountain Lumber