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**File Code:** 1570  
**Date:** October 10, 2023

Dear Objector,

This letter is in response to objections filed on the Kaniksu Over-Snow Vehicle Use Designation Project Environmental Assessment (EA) and Draft Decision Notice released by the responsible official on the Idaho Panhandle National Forests. I have read your objection and reviewed the project record. My review of your objection was conducted in accordance with the administrative review procedures found at 36 CFR 218, Subparts A and B.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW PROCESS**

The regulations at 36 CFR 218.8 provide for a pre-decisional administrative review process in which the objector provides sufficient narrative description of the project, specific issues related to the project, and suggested remedies that would resolve the objections.

In my review, I considered issues related to the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Forest Management Act, the Endangered Species Act, climate change, vegetation, wildlife, and recreation.

### **OBJECTION RESOLUTION MEETING**

I hosted an objection resolution meeting on Wednesday, October 4, 2023, to permit objectors to discuss the issues they raised in objection and propose potential remedies. The meeting was attended by the following lead objectors as well as some co-signers to their filed objections:

- John Finney, North Idaho Working Group
- Preston Andrews, Kinnikinnick Native Plant Society
- Adam Rissien, WildEarth Guardians
- Denver Winslow, Local citizen and snowmobiler

The local leadership from the Idaho Panhandle National Forests and I appreciated the time and engagement from those who were able to attend. We will highlight additional information in the final analysis and decision on several of the key points that were discussed.

### **RESPONSE TO OBJECTIONS AS REQUIRED BY 36 CFR 218.11(b)**

After my review of the EA, draft Decision Notice, and project record, I find the responsible official provided an adequate analysis of issues raised and provided acceptable documentation showing compliance with applicable law, regulation, and policy. Even so, your objections identified some areas within the project record, EA, and draft Decision Notice that could be clarified or updated with clear connections and references to existing data and completed analyses. I have asked the responsible officials to ensure that those clarifications and updates are



made to the record. Additionally, I have asked the responsible official to bolster the noise impact analysis as it relates to OSV use, wildlife, and quiet recreation prior to finalizing and signing the decision notice for this project.

## **CONCLUSION**

My review constitutes the final administrative determination of the Department of Agriculture; no further review from any other Forest Service or Department of Agriculture official of my written response to your objection is available [36 CFR 218.11(b)(2)].

Sincerely,

DANIEL W MCKEAGUE  
Deputy Regional Forester

cc: Tim Galloon, Jessie Berner, Joseph Ford, Amy Torres, Kristopher Cahoon, Katherine Cueno