



File Code: 1570
Date: November 1, 2021

Dear Objectors:

This letter is in response to your objections filed on the Mud Creek Environmental Assessment and draft Decision Notice released by Matt Anderson, Bitterroot National Forest Supervisor. I have read your objections and reviewed the project record. My review 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. I considered the following issues in my review: National Environmental Policy Act and National Forest Management Act compliance, monitoring, wildlife including Threatened and Endangered Species, watershed, fish, soils, vegetation including old growth, invasive plants, roads/travel management, special areas, fuels, fire, climate change, and economics.

OBJECTION RESOLUTION MEETING

I conducted a resolution meeting with objectors on September 23, 2021 that was attended by:

- Jim Miller of Friends of the Bitterroot
- Jeff Burrows and Dan Huls of Ravalli County
- Larry Campbell
- Jim Olsen
- Jeff Lonn

I heard concerns about aspects of the proposed action as well as support for proposed activities. I really appreciate objectors' participation in the meeting and the objection process itself.

RESPONSE TO OBJECTIONS

As specified at 36 CFR 218.11(b), this letter is my response to your 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. Ensure project design criteria are consistent with the lynx Biological Assessment to demonstrate project consistency with Northern Rockies Lynx Management Direction.
2. Ensure the implementation plan is consistent with the Biological Assessment to demonstrate consistency with Northern Rockies Lynx Management Direction.



3. Ensure project design complies with forest plan standards for Management Areas 1 and 2 for even-aged regeneration harvest openings.
4. Clarify project design criteria to ensure compliance with the forest wide snag retention standard.

Regarding other issues raised by objectors, my review found that the responsible official provided adequate analysis and acceptable documentation of compliance with applicable law, regulation, and policy.

CONCLUSION

After completing instructions outlined above and receiving concurrence from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the responsible official may sign the decision notice for this project. 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: Matthew Anderson, Michelle Norton, Danelle Highfill, Olga Troxel, Pamela Fletcher