

February 26, 2024

Doug Nishek  
Bonners Ferry Ranger District  
6286 Main Street  
Bonners Ferry, ID 83815

Dear Doug:

I am writing in support of the proposed Katkee Fuels Reduction Project on the Bonners Ferry Ranger District. The opportunity to take advantage of the Wildfire Crisis Strategy in implementing this project will provide much needed hazardous fuels reduction and vegetation management to the Katka Face.

I base my support on a long-time personal knowledge of the forest conditions within the area proposed for silvicultural treatments.

Fifty years ago, perhaps to this very date, I participated in pre-timber sale activities on the Katka Face Timber Sale. These included timber marking, cruising and harvest unit traverses. At the time, the Katka Road (both the Boundary County portion as well as USFS Road #314) were "pioneered-in" with completion in late 1974/early 1975.

This was an innovative project in several regards, including:

- The Katka Road benefitted both the county and Forest Service by creating access to private and federal lands across the Katka Face.
- The eastern terminus of the Katka Road allowed future access to proposed timber sales in the East Fork of Boulder Creek and North Creek drainages.
- The Leonia Bridge crossing the Kootenai River had been recently closed to vehicle traffic thus eliminating what had been the primary access to the mining district in the Boulder City area.
- A Forest Service landscape architect provided consultation on the layout of roads and harvest units within the Katka Face Timber Sale. The purpose was to minimize the visual impacts for travelers on US Highway 2. Where feasible, cutting units were situated on benches rather than steep slopes facing toward the highway. Moreover, cutting units were buffered with "hidey strips" (our name for them) along the Katka Road so that forest visitors would not directly encounter logging activity.

The Katka Face Timber Sale, conducted in the late 1970s, along with subsequent silvicultural activities has resulted in a mosaic consisting of treated stands alongside untreated forests. Moreover, timber stand improvement practices have been implemented in some of the previously harvested units and neglected or deferred in others.

A half century later, this contributes to a wide diversity of current forest conditions in which species diversity and stocking levels are less than ideal in many stands. These conditions also result in the forest health and hazardous fuels conditions described in the Scoping Document.

Using the authority of the Wildfire Crisis Strategy presents an opportunity to implement the Katkee Fuels Reduction Project.

While I have many specific comments relating to the Katka Face area and this proposed project, I will wait until the Environmental Assessment is prepared and submit them at that time. I also hope that access and weather conditions allow an opportunity for me to visit the area in order to offer site-specific comments.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

William Love, Certified Forester

[Redacted Title]

Email:

Telephone:

[Redacted Email]

[Redacted Telephone]