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October 22, 2024

Via Email

Reviewing Office
ATTN: Administrative Review Staff,
USDA Forest Service, Eastern Region,
626 E. Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Subject: Objection, Buffalo Springs Restoration Project
objections-eastern-region@usda.gov

We write to you today to express our concerns regarding the recent release of the Draft Decision Notice (DDN) and Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI) for the proposed Buffalo Springs Restoration Project in Orange and Crawford counties in Indiana. We have followed the developments of this proposed action on the Hoosier National Forest. Our concerns for our health, our economy and infrastructure are as follows:

- Protecting roads, bridges, and other critical infrastructures from damaging Forest Service activities associated with the project.
- Promoting and protecting the vital water and natural resources and recreation components of our local economics,
- Recognizing the important contributions made by private landowners in producing high quality and high value wood products without undue competition from below cost timber sales from the Hoosier National Forest,
- Providing management assistance to private landowners to achieve conservation objectives,
- Coordinating management activities in the southern portion of the Hoosier National Forest with those in the northern half that are included in the new 3.5 million acre Southern Indiana Sentinel Landscape, and
- Determining the proper role for publicly owned forest land in a time of climate disruption and changing public attitudes.

Upon review of the FEA, DDN, and FONSI, we find great deficiencies in the agency's analysis of the significant impacts that this project will have on our home, our lives and our forests and object to this project at this point in its process. We feel it is of the utmost importance that further analysis of the potential impacts of this proposed project on the above items be conducted in a more thorough Environmental Impact Study. We also respectfully request that the agency delay this project until a new HNF Land and Resource Management Plan is created that guides the EIS and incorporates the new Old-growth amendment that the USFS is developing to protect our mature and old-growth forests. We thank you for considering this request and would be glad to speak with you to answer any questions you might have. We look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

*Mary Beth Gibbons, Protection Woods
{Name} as part of Indiana Forest Alliance
Objection*