

March 29, 2016

Mr. Keith Lannom, Supervisor
Payette National Forest
500 N Mission Street
McCall, Idaho 83638

Supervisor Lannom,

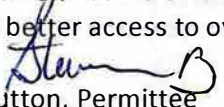
I am a permittee on Indian Mountain Allotment and a member of the Indian Mountain Cattle Association. I attended the information meeting at the Council Ranger District on March 8, 2016 and have reviewed the DEIS for the Middle Fork Weiser River Restoration Project. After reviewing the document I noted several items that may need further clarification. Monitoring, road decommission and elk management are particularly concerning.

The document mentions some coordination with permittees on some actions that may effect their grazing permits. It should be addressed throughout the document that the livestock permittees should be involved and coordinated with on any actions that may affect the grazing permit. This include the monitoring protocols, location of monitoring points and actions that involve road decommission, riparian restoration, wildlife management, stream temperature and upland vegetation restoration.

All roads that decommissioned that had been used in the management of livestock movement and facility maintenance should be coordinated with the permittees. There should be provisions that will allow the permittees to continue to have administrative access to continue to do proper management of facilities and livestock.

The elk management address the density of road and the decommission of road that would allow the elk population to increase and be a viable population. This document states that the IDFG will management the elk population and the FS would work closely with them. There is no mention of a target number on what the elk population will be. The concern is that the elk are a direct competitor to livestock for forage and water and that the management of the elk population is through hunting. With the decommission of road to protect the elk population and limit hunting access, the elk population appears to have no limitations on size of population and will have limited methods to control the population. This documents needs to address that when the elk population is affecting the existing livestock permits, that IDFG will be required to reduce elk population and some of the restricted access to hunting would have temporary exemption to allow better access to over populated elk numbers.

Sincerely;


Steven B. Sutton, Permittee
Sutton Livestock Co. Inc.

