Northeast Washington Forest Coalition

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USDA Forest Service

Attn: Objection Reviewing Officer

210 14th Street, SW

EMC Mailstop 1104

Washington, DC 20250

RE: Interested Person Request regarding the Revised Colville Forest Plan

Submitted via email to objections-chief@fs.fed.us

The Northeast Washington Forest Coalition (NEWFC) is requesting Interested Person Status on objections to the following topics. The objection of interest and names of objectors are included.

Founded in 2002, The Northeast Washington Forest Coalition strives to demonstrate the full potential of restoration forestry to enhance forest health, public safety, and community economic vitality, by designing and implementing forest restoration and fuels reduction projects that highlight innovative approaches to forestry. We are a coalition of diverse stakeholders whose projects educate the public about the ecological and socio-economic benefits of restoration forestry and fuels reduction strategies that can be emulated in other regions of the country. Part of NEWFC’s continued success is the support among members for a wide range of forest issues on the CNF.

**Topic:** Grazing Standards in Riparian Areas

**Names of Objectors in whose objection we have interest in:**

* Washington State Cattlemen's Association, Public Lands Council, National Cattlemen’s Beef Association
* The Lands Council, Kettle Range Conservation Group, Western Watersheds Project
* Justin Hedrick
* Stevens County Commissioners

Although NEWFC does not have a collaborative agreement on grazing standards, we are interested in this discussion and the outcomes.

NEWFC provided comments on this topic in the Draft EIS comment period (p. 9).

*Overall, we’re appreciative of the improvements to the aquatic resource management from the proposed action in 2011. In particular, the Forest Plan’s improves clarity for Riparian Management Areas to maintain conditions in properly functioning areas and to restore conditions in areas that are not properly functioning. Since activities outside of riparian areas will directly affect aquatic and riparian resources, a similar standard should be established forest wide to ensure aquatic conditions do not decline.*

*We commend the Preferred Alternative stubble height standards that will result in reduced surface and rill erosion during peak runoff and storm events.  This is a win-win for producers and the environment: shrub-steppe ecosystems will be more resilient and resistant to invasive species incursions and forage nutrient qualities will improve with increased nutrient recycling, biodynamics of soil retention and soil creation.*

**Topic:** Roads

**Names of Objectors in whose objection we have interest in:**

* Pend Oreille County Board of Commissioners
* American Forest Research Council
* Washington State Cattlemen's Association, Public Lands Council, National Cattlemen’s Beef Association
* Stevens County Commissioners
* Conservation Northwest

NEWFC has collaborated to develop principles of agreement on roads management on the CNF. In general, NEWFC supports a functional transportation network for access because roads are required to accomplish forest treatments, provide recreational opportunities, provide forest commodities and are used in a variety of ways for fire suppression and prescribed fire on the CNF. We also agree that roads have ecological impacts to aquatic systems, soil, natural vegetation and terrestrial wildlife. Subsequently, NEWFC supports Best Management Practices (BMPs) for road construction, decommissioning and obliteration. In addition we also support a “no net gain” of system roads.

NEWFC provided comments on this topic in the Draft EIS comment period “NEWFC agrees on a Forest-wide policy of no net increase of roads” (p. 3).

The Northeast Washington Forest Coalition provided substantive formal comment during the planning process demonstrating the requester’s participation in the planning process.

* The Northeast Washington Forest Coalition filed both comment and objection to the CNF RLMP available at:
  + Objection: <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/Letter/1790947?project=45826>
  + Comment: <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/Letter/1245439?project=45826>

Sincerely,



Russ Vaagen

President

Northeast Washington Forest Coalition