



File Code: 1570
Date: December 5, 2023

Dear Objector,

This letter is in response to objections filed on the Final Hungry Ridge Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) and Draft Record of Decision (ROD) released by Cheryl Probert, Forest Supervisor, on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests. I have read your objection and reviewed the project record. My review of your objection was conducted in accordance with the administrative review procedures found at 36 CFR 218, Subparts A and B.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW PROCESS

The regulations at 36 CFR 218.8 provide for a pre-decisional administrative review process in which the objector provides sufficient narrative description of the project, specific issues related to the project, and suggested remedies that would resolve the objections.

In my review, I considered a variety of issues related to the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Forest Management Act, the Endangered Species Act, climate change, carbon storage, vegetation, and wildlife.

OBJECTION RESOLUTION MEETING

I hosted an objection resolution meeting on Monday, November 20, 2023, to permit objectors to discuss the issues they raised in their objections and propose potential remedies. The meeting was attended by the following lead objectors and interested parties:

- Harry Jagerman
- Tom Partin, American Forest Resource Council
- Jeff Juel, Friends of the Clearwater
- Tera King, Idaho Forest Group

The local leadership from the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests and I appreciated the time and engagement from all who were able to attend.

RESPONSE TO OBJECTIONS AS REQUIRED BY 36 CFR 218.11(b)

After my review of the Final SEIS, draft ROD, and project record, I find the responsible official provided an adequate analysis of issues raised and provided acceptable documentation showing compliance with applicable law, regulation, and policy. Even so, your objections identified some areas within the project record, SEIS, or draft ROD that could be clarified or updated with clearer connections and references to existing data and completed analyses. Of note, I have asked the responsible official to more clearly address how the Hungry Ridge project meets Executive Order 14072 direction to conserve old growth for carbon storage and more clearly explain the need to regenerate old growth stands prior to finalizing and signing the decision for this project.

CONCLUSION



My review constitutes the final administrative determination of the Department of Agriculture; no further review from any other Forest Service or Department of Agriculture official of my written response to your objection is available [36 CFR 218.11(b)(2)].

Sincerely,

DANIEL W MCKEAGUE
Deputy Regional Forester

cc: Cheryl Probert, Jeffrey Shinn, Jennie Fischer, Anjeleeca Tomayko, Kristopher Cahoon,
Emma Reinemann