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**File Code:** 1570  
**Date:** August 18, 2023

Dear Objectors,

This letter is in response to objections filed on the Bitterroot National Forest Plan Amendment 40 Environmental Assessment (EA) and Draft Decision Notice released by Forest Supervisor Matt Anderson. I have read your objections and reviewed the project record. My review of your objections was conducted in accordance with the administrative review procedures found at 36 CFR 219.56.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW PROCESS**

The regulations at 36 CFR 219 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 of objections, I considered issues related to the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Forest Management Act, climate change, wildlife, the Endangered Species Act, and vegetation management.

### **RESOLUTION OF OBJECTIONS**

Objection regulations at 36 CFR 219.57 (a) allow for parties to meet to discuss issues raised in objection and potential resolutions. I hosted an objection resolution meeting on July 7, 2023, attended by the following objectors:

- Michele Dieterich
- Michael Hoyt of Friends of the Bitterroot
- Jeff Lonn

Although we did not reach agreement on remedies, I appreciate the thoughtful discussion. We will highlight additional information in the final analysis and decision on several of the key points that were discussed. I sincerely appreciate the time and engagement from those who were able to attend.

### **RESPONSE TO OBJECTIONS**

As specified at 36 CFR 219.57 (b), this letter is my response to your objections. After my review of the EA, draft Decision Notice, 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. However, based on a thorough review of objections I am instructing the responsible official to complete the following.

### **Objection Review Instruction**

1. Change Guideline FW-GDL-VEG-01 for old growth to a Standard and update associated references throughout the Amendment accordingly.



**CONCLUSION**

Upon incorporation of this instruction, the responsible official may sign the decision notice for this project. My review constitutes the final administrative determination of the United States Department of Agriculture; no further review from any other Forest Service or United States Department of Agriculture official of my written response to your objection is available [36 CFR 218.11(b)(2)].

Sincerely,

LEANNE M. MARTEN  
Regional Forester

cc: Matthew A. Anderson, Kim Smolt, Danelle Highfill, Kristopher Cahoon, Katherine Cueno