



File Code: 1570
Date: March 8, 2022

Dear Objectors:

This letter is in response to objections filed on the Wildfire Adapted Missoula (WAM) Environmental Assessment (EA) and Draft Decision Notice released by the Missoula District Ranger. 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 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 issues including compliance with NEPA and NFMA, wildlife and fisheries including Threatened Endangered and Sensitive Species, watershed, riparian, water quality, old growth, invasive plants, soils, travel management, wilderness, fuels and fire, climate change, roadless areas and economics.

OBJECTION RESOLUTION MEETING

I conducted a resolution meeting on Monday, January 31, 2022, that was attended by the following objectors.

- Chet Crowser of Missoula County
- Tom Partin of American Forest Resource Council
- Jeff Juel of Friends of the Clearwater
- James Burchfield of Lolo Restoration Committee
- Steve Kimball of Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

We discussed a number of objection points related to the proposed action including roads, the Wildland Urban Interface, home ignition zones, carbon sequestration, and fire ecology. I heard concerns about aspects of the proposed action as well as support for proposed activities. I appreciate the objectors' interest and participation in the project, the resolution meeting, and the objection process itself.

RESPONSE TO OBJECTIONS

As specified at 36 CFR 218.11(b), this is my response to your objections to the Environmental Assessment, draft Decision Notice, and project record. As a result of my review of objections and the resolution meeting, I am instructing the responsible official to complete the following steps before signing the decision.

1. Address the relevance of literature submitted by objectors during the 30-day comment period in relation to the Wildfire Adapted Missoula project.
2. Ensure the project Biological Assessment tiers to the Forest level reconsultation on grizzly bears and incorporate any relevant Terms and Conditions from that effort.



3. Clarify the old growth definition used in the analysis and tie the disclosure of effects to this definition.
4. Modify the decision by dropping the addition of road 53143 to the National Forest System of roads and leave the road off the system consistent with the previous decision to decommission it.
5. Address the comments related to the effects on the unroaded areas adjacent to inventoried roadless areas.

CONCLUSION

Upon incorporation of these instructions the responsible official may sign the Decision Notice for this project. 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,

CAROLYN P UPTON

Forest Supervisor

cc: Allen Byrd, Barbara Cisneros, Olga Troxel, Crystal Stonesifer, Greg Gustina