

**BEFORE THE OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL FORESTER
REGION ONE – USDA FOREST SERVICE**

Objection Reviewing Officer

Arne Boveng)	
Objector)	
)	
v.)	NOTICE OF OBJECTION
)	PURSUANT TO
CHIP WEBER)	36 CFR 218
FLATHEAD FOREST SUPERVISOR)	
Responsible Official)	

DECISION OBJECTED TO:

Crystal Cedar Project Draft Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact (hereafter
Crystal Cedar, Project, Planning Process, DN and FONSI)
Hungry Horse – Glacier View Ranger District
Chip Weber, Flathead Forest Supervisor, November 14, 2019.

OBJECTOR:

Arne Boveng

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Arne Boveng

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Date-12-28-2019

I object to FNF attempting to proceed with the Crystal Cedar project without considering Nordic ski trails. Nordic ski trails were the original objective of the trail system developed there in the 1980s. I am dismayed at FNF statement that resolving user conflicts is outside the scope of this project. In fact, I hold accountable the FNF for creating winter user conflicts in the first place, by promoting multiple use on the trail systems in Flathead County that were originally developed and groomed specifically for Nordic skiers. It is the Nordic skiers who have had to move aside and allow more recent forms of winter recreation to develop on the ski trails, thus sharing the groomed trails with snow shoers, dog walking parties, fat-tire bike riders and from time to time, motorized vandalism. And now, you refuse to help sort out these user conflicts?

I too, enjoy many forms of winter recreation but it pains me to see Nordic skiing pushed out of the public projects because of your lack of enthusiasm for creating a workable solution to the conflicts you mention.

OBJECTION

The Crystal Cedar DN and FONSI does not comply with procedural and substantive requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Members of the public submitted comments in the scoping and draft EA stages requesting Nordic ski trails be analyzed in the Crystal Cedar Planning Process. The FNF is obligated to analyze issues identified through public comment submitted in a timely fashion and within the project purpose. Nordic ski trails are consistent with the first purpose stated in the Crystal Cedar Scoping Document released October 15, 2018 which was to “Provide sustainable trail-based recreation opportunities close to local communities that are compatible with other resources”(Crystal Cedar Scoping Document page 1). Despite meeting the project purpose requirements, FNF staff elected instead to ignore public comments requesting investigation of Nordic ski trails in the Crystal Cedar Planning Area. FNF staff failed to provide defensible evidence supporting their internal decision not to analyze Nordic ski trails.

Members of the public participated in the Crystal Cedar planning process in good faith. The NEPA process is the only opportunity for the public to have a voice in management of our public forests. Intentionally omitting legitimate issues identified by the public is a clear procedural violation of NEPA.

Because of the procedural violations, the Crystal Cedar EA omitted the required objective investigations requested by the public. The FNF’s draft DN and FONSI lacks the substantive

analysis requested by the public. As a result, the draft DN and FONSI is not supported by documents in the administrative record of this NEPA proceeding.

REASONS FOR OBJECTION

I object to the proposal because the FNF did not consider my earlier comments made, to please consider Nordic ski trails.

I object to FNF's refusal to help resolve user conflicts on this trail system, instead bowing to the easier "majority rules" tactic.

RELIEF

The draft DN and FONSI fails to consider public requests to investigate Nordic trails in the Crystal Cedar Planning Process. The FNF must restart the Crystal Cedar Planning Process. The new environmental review must include an objective investigation of Nordic ski trails in the Crystal Cedar Planning Area. Objective analysis must include a comprehensive examination of conditions and opportunities in the planning area including inventory of the existing trail and road network, evaluation of other recreation activities in the planning area, FNF proposed timber harvests, potential parking areas, access roads and wildlife resources. The FNF should be required to develop a range of Nordic ski trail alternatives designed, in part, to mitigate potential conflicts with other users and avoid negative effects on other resources.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

CONCLUSION

Developed Nordic skiing opportunities are limited in the Flathead Valley. Demand for the current Nordic ski opportunities exceed the parking capacity at trailheads. The population in the Flathead Valley is projected to double in the next 10-years. Rising temperatures will likely result in the closure of Nordic ski trails on the Whitefish Golf Course. This likely closure along with a doubling of the population will lead to increasing demand for a decreasing number of parking spaces to access Nordic trails.

Creating new Nordic ski opportunities on adjacent FNF lands requires an environmental review planning process. The universe of locations on the FNF where Nordic ski trails could be developed is limited due to seasonal wildlife closures. The Crystal Cedar Planning Area was identified in the new FNF Forest Plan as an area for focused recreation development. The Crystal Cedar Project Environmental Assessment (EA) is the logical process for the FNF to evaluate Nordic ski opportunities.

The FNF must not approve the Draft DN and FONSI for the Crystal Cedar EA. The FNF violated NEPA procedures by failing to evaluate issues raised in a timely fashion by the public. The FNF unilaterally elected to eliminate issues raised by the public from analysis in the Crystal Cedar NEPA process but failed to substantiate their decisions with supporting evidence. The Crystal Cedar Environmental Analysis must be restarted with a fair and objective evaluation of public comments. The new process must include an objective evaluation of Nordic ski trails. The FNF should engage the Nordic ski community early in the process.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ATTACHMENT A:

ATTACHMENT B: