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First name: Matt

Last name: Lottes

Organization: Neiman Timber Company

Title: Procurement Forester

Comments:

Neiman Timber Co., L.C.

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February 20, 2023

Thad Berrett - District Ranger

1415 Fort Street

Buffalo, WY 82834

Re: Pole Creek Vegetation Management Project

Dear Thad,

Neiman Timber Company (NTC) thanks you for the opportunity to comment on the Pole Creek Vegetation Management Project. We appreciate and support your efforts involved in implementing this project and others like it. We have been involved in numerous timberland management projects in the Bighorn National Forest and plan to continue such involvement. NTC supports this project's purpose of mitigating fire danger, enhancing wildlife habitat, and promoting overall forest health.

NTC supports the proposed commercial harvest of 9,000 acres. We do encourage that all acres identified for suitable timber production within the project area (37,000) are evaluated for commercial treatment needs and prioritized. NTC also supports the proposed precommercial thinning of 2,000 acres but asks that piling or mastication of thinned debris be considered where residual ground fuels could pose a risk for young residual stands in the event of wildfire. NTC supports the proposed prescribed burning and appreciates the noted considerations of weather and fuel conditions.

The scoping notice states multiple times that no commercial harvest or road building is proposed within inventoried roadless areas. For both wildfire risk mitigation and forest health benefits, which are highly important for the long term health of the project area and surrounding forest, we encourage that timbered areas

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within roadless areas be considered for commercial harvest. WUI thinnings within roadless areas are also proposed not to involve commercial harvest or road building. WUI thinnings in roadless areas are shown along the roadless area boundary and commercial harvest may be possible without road building via log forwarding equipment.

NTC appreciates the project 's recognition of the need for sourcing wood products. This project would help support the wood products industry both locally and regionally while caring for this public landscape. Maintaining wood products industries is critical in continuing to manage the Bighorn National Forest as well as other public and private forests.

Neiman Timber Company agrees with the need for this project and appreciates the opportunity to work with the Forest Service to develop the best possible project.

Sincerely,

Matt Lottes
Procurement Forester, Neiman Timber Company