



File Code: 1570 (215)
#98-01-00-0012

Date: December 11, 1997

Sara Jane Johnson
Native Ecosystems Council
P.O. Box 125
Willow Creek, MT 59760

CERTIFIED MAIL-RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Dear Ms. Johnson:

This is my decision on disposition of the appeal you filed on behalf of Native Ecosystems Council protesting the Wisdom District Ranger's Decision Notice (DN) for the Big Dry Timber Sale and Ecosystem Management Project on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forests.

FINDINGS

Following is my evaluation of the objections raised in your appeal and your requested changes.

Scope of Decision

Decisions made in Forest Plans are subject to administrative review under 36 CFR 217 and are not subject to review in project or activity decisions [36 CFR 215.8(a)(1)]. These decisions are considered to be beyond the scope of the project-level decision, and the opportunity to challenge these decisions has been exhausted.

Similarly, Appellants may not request review of activities that are not "connected" to the project decision being challenged or ask that additional decisions be made that are not "ripe" for decision. Under NEPA, the Responsible Official has the discretion to propose actions and determine which actions warrant a decision and which do not. I have determined your objections are within the scope of the decision.

APPEAL REVIEWING OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

The Appeal Reviewing Officer has considered your arguments and the transmittal letter and recommends the District Ranger's decision be affirmed and your requested relief be denied.

DECISION

My review of your appeal was conducted pursuant to, and in accordance with, 36 CFR 215.17 to ensure the analysis and decision are in compliance with applicable laws, regulations, policy, and orders. I have thoroughly reviewed the appeal record, your arguments, the information referenced in the District Ranger's November 24, 1997, transmittal letter (copy enclosed) and the Appeal Reviewing Officer's analysis and recommendation (copy enclosed). The transmittal letter provides specific page references

to discussions in the Environmental Assessment (EA), the DN and project file which bear upon your objections. I specifically incorporate in this decision the appeal record, the references and citations contained in the transmittal letter, and the Appeal Reviewing Officer's analysis and recommendation.

Based upon a review of the references and citations provided by the District Ranger, I find the objections you raised are similar to the comments you made on the EA and your objections were adequately considered in the EA/DN. I agree with the Appeal Reviewing Officer's analysis and conclusions in regard to your appeal objections. I find the District Ranger has made a reasoned decision and has complied with all laws, regulation and policy.

After careful consideration of the above factors, I affirm the District Ranger's decision to implement Alternative 2 modified of the Big Dry Timber Sale and Ecosystem Management Project.

My decision constitutes the final administrative determination of the Department of Agriculture [36 CFR 215.18(c)].

Sincerely,

/s/ Kathleen A. McAllister

KATHLEEN A. MCALLISTER
Appeal Deciding Officer
Deputy Regional Forester

Enclosures (2)