



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Region 1

200 East Broadway
P. O. Box 7669
Missoula, MT 59807

File Code: 1570 (215)
Route To:

Date: October 24, 1997

Subject: White Pine Creek Timber Sale, Appeal #97-01-00-0109, Clearwater National Forest

To: Appeal Deciding Officer

This is my recommendation on disposition of the appeal filed by Gary MacFarlane on behalf of Friends of the Clearwater; Alliance for the Wild Rockies; The Ecology Center, Inc.; the Inland Empire Public Lands Council; Idaho Sporting Congress; Northern Rockies Preservation Project; Idaho Conservation League; and Clearwater Biodiversity Project protesting the Clearwater National Forest Supervisor's Record of Decision (ROD) for the White Pine Creek Timber Sale on the Clearwater National Forest.

The Forest Supervisor's decision adopts Alternative G. The decision will implement harvest of approximately 9.1 MMBF from 800 acres. Approximately 515 acres will be treated by prescribed burning. About 2.9 miles of short-term road will be built, 7.5 miles of long-term road built, and 16.2 miles of road reconstructed. About 2,000 feet of stream will be improved.

My review was conducted pursuant to, and in accordance with, 36 CFR 215.19 to ensure the analysis and decision are in compliance with applicable laws, regulations, policy, and orders. The appeal record, including the Appellants' objections and recommended changes, has been thoroughly reviewed.

SUMMARY

You allege violations of the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Forest Management Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the Clean Water Act. You request the ROD be reversed.

An informal meeting was held, but no resolution was reached. Interested party comments were received from the Resource Organization on Timber Supply; Bennett Lumber Products, Inc.; and Gerry Snyder.

FINDINGS

My recommendation is based upon the following evaluation:

Clarity of the Decision and Rationale

The decision is clearly stated early in the ROD. The rationale for the decision is understandable although, on the whole, the clarity of the ROD could have been improved, especially in the areas of issue development and comparison of alternatives.



Critical mitigation, design and monitoring requirements are clearly identified in the ROD. The monitoring plan in the EIS is easy to understand. Maps and diagrams are appropriate and legible.

I find the decision and rationale are well documented and demonstrate the decision is reasoned and informed

Purpose of the Proposal and Comprehension of Benefits

The purpose and need is clearly stated in the decision document but could have been more specific to the location. The relationship between the purpose and need and the Forest Plan is stated initially and carried throughout the ROD.

The no-action alternative was given full consideration and would not meet the purpose and need of the project. The effects of the no-action alternative are very well documented in the EIS. The ROD could have been strengthened by bringing this discussion forward.

The benefits of the selected alternative are stated in the rationale for the decision. The ROD documents how public comments were used in making the decision.

I find that the decision demonstrates and supports the need for, and the benefits of, the proposed action.

Consistency with Policy, Direction, and Supporting Information

The project is consistent with Forest Plan goals and direction. The decision document clearly displays the tie between the project purpose and need and ecosystem management principles. Also, ecosystem management principles are referenced throughout the documents.

A good logical connection is made between the Forest Plan and the desired conditions discussed in the ROD. The decision document also ties the selected alternative to forest health and the findings of the Interior Columbia River Basin Ecosystem Assessment (CRB).

The discussion of the alternatives was clear and understandable. The selected alternative was modified to respond to issues raised by the public and information on late successional forests provided by the CRB. Effects of the selected alternative are summarized by issue.

I conclude that the proposal is consistent with regulation and laws, agency policy and Forest Plan direction.

Effectiveness of Public Participation Activities and Use of Comments

This project went through three comment periods as it was revised and changed, but the public was contacted each time. Numerous mailings, legal ads, open houses and field trips were made. The Tribes and State and federal agencies were contacted.

Issues raised during scoping were used to formulate alternatives. However, because of the convoluted history of the project, the link between individual public comments and issues is difficult to track.

The rationale for selecting issues for detailed review is stated in the ROD and the EIS. The Draft EIS lists issues which were not given detailed review.

Apparently a content analysis was used, since the project file contains code sheets from the process. Responses to comments reference changes in the project which were made as a result of public comments.

I conclude that the public involvement process was effective, appropriate in scope and responsive to the public.

Appeal Issues

The appeal record was reviewed with respect to the Appellants' issues. Analysis and documentation were adequate and in compliance with appeal points raised. It was determined that the Forest Supervisor complied with law, policy, and regulations pertaining to the appeal points raised.

RECOMMENDATION

I recommend the Forest Supervisor's decision be affirmed and the Appellants' requested relief be denied.

/s/ J. Doug Glevanik

J. DOUG GLEVANIK
Reviewing Officer
Director, Ecosystem Assessment and Planning