



File Code: 1570-1 (215/217)

Date: March 20, 2007

To: Appellants of the Gallatin National Forest Travel Management Plan Record of Decision

In October of 2006, Rebecca Heath, Forest Supervisor for the Gallatin National Forest, issued a decision to revise existing travel and access management direction for the Gallatin National Forest. As a public interested in, and involved in the public involvement process for the Gallatin Travel Plan, you appealed her decision and provided evidence and rationale as to why you believe the Forest Supervisor's decision should be reversed. Each of you provided a wide range of issues in your appeals and supporting information relating to your issues.

Ranotta McNair, Forest Supervisor on the Idaho Panhandle National Forests and Appeal Reviewing Officer (ARO) for this project, and I have reviewed your appeals and the issues raised. We have reviewed the record and have found that the analysis and decision adequately address the issues raised. The ARO prepared a summary which shows how the Forest has responded to the issues raised. The intent of the responses are not to provide an in-depth review of each issue raised, but rather to document that the Forest Supervisor has made a reasoned decision, has complied with all applicable laws, regulations, and policy, and has issued a decision which is consistent with the overall mission of the Forest Service.

I agree with the ARO's recommendation to support the ongoing public involvement process the Forest has gone through. As a result, I am forwarding my decision and a copy of the ARO letter to all of the appellants, including those appellants who resolved their appeals, and those who were dismissed due to lack of comment during the comment period. I will also forward the summary of responses to the appeal issues later this week. The document is over 100 pages long and is currently being finalized.

My review of your appeals was conducted pursuant to, and in accordance with, 36 CFR 215.18 and 36 CFR 217.13 to ensure the analysis and decision is in compliance with applicable laws, regulations, policy, and orders. I have reviewed the appeal record, including your arguments, the information referenced in the Forest Supervisor's February 16, 2007, transmittal letter, and the ARO's analysis and recommendation.

Based upon a review of the references and citations provided by the Forest Supervisor and the ARO, I find the objections were adequately considered in the Record of Decision, Final Environmental Impact Statement, and project file. I find the Forest Supervisor has made a



reasoned decision and has complied with all applicable laws, regulations and policy, and is consistent with the overall mission of the Forest Service. I affirm the Forest Supervisor's decision to implement the Travel Plan Record of Decision. Your requested relief is denied.

I also agree with the ARO's recommendation and include the following instructions where I believe the Forest Supervisor can clarify some of her rationale in the ROD.

1. Cabin Creek Wildlife Recreation Management Area.

Instructions: Review the ROD and Detailed Description of the Decision (Cabin Creek Travel Area Table pp. 40 and 41) and clarify motorcycle and ATV use.

2. Main Boulder Travel Planning Area.

Instructions: Review the ROD and Detailed Description of the Decision and explain the rationale for changing the restrictions on the Grouse Creek Trail #14 and the Green Mountain Trail #94.

3. Tom Miner Travel Planning Area.

Instructions: Review Tom Miner-Rock TPA and provide rationale for the snowmobile use restriction north of the South Rock Creek Road, and rationale for no longer grooming the road for snowmobiles.

4. ROD: Section IX. Implementation.

Instructions: Implementation of the Travel Management Plan will be a process which will be ongoing over many years. Although the FEIS and ROD refer to implementation in numerous places, the overall discussion of how the Plan will be implemented is missing. Prepare a summary which identifies the overall process for implementation of the Travel Management Plan ROD.

5. Access Management.

Access needs, where there are insufficient rights or no existing rights, are identified in Table I-3 Forest Access Objectives in the Detailed Description of the Decision document. As identified in some of the appeals, this has led to concern with adjacent landowners over what rights currently exist or do not exist. While access rights are a very complicated issue, it would be helpful if the Forest Supervisor identified the process she expects to use to clarify some of the identified access needs. This could be included in the implementation section previously discussed. It would be important to ensure that adjacent landowners are also informed of the process.

My decision constitutes the final administrative determination of the Department of Agriculture [36 CFR 215.18(c) and 36 CFR 217.17(d)].

Sincerely,

/s/ Kathleen A. McAllister

KATHLEEN A. MCALLISTER

Appeal Deciding Officer (36 CFR 215)

Appeal Reviewing Officer (36 CFR 217)

Enclosures

cc:

Appeal Reviewing Officer

Responsible Official

Forest Coordinator

Appellants who resolved their appeals

Appellants dismissed due to lack of comment