

Administrative Appeals of Project Decisions

OBJECTIVES: Evaluate and disclose number and types of administrative reviews affecting Forest Plan implementation.

DATA SOURCE: Planning databases, Regional appeal records, project records.

FREQUENCY: As interest and data warrant.

REPORTING PERIOD: 2014-2015

INTRODUCTION:

The Northern Region has maintained records on the type, number, name, and disposition of appeals since the mid-1980s.

The monitoring results provided below are not meant to be a comprehensive study on the subject, and the information is clearly limited by the type and amount of information available.

In March of 2013, a rule revising 36 CFR Part 218 was published in the Federal Register and became effective. This expanded the use of the pre-decisional objection process originally used under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003 to include other projects and activities implementing land and resource management plans. Under this process, individuals and entities who have met certain requirements may file objections after an environmental analysis document is completed and before a decision is signed.

In order to file an objection, the individual or entity must have previously submitted timely and specific comments on the project of interest during the public comment periods, unless the objection concerns an issue that arose after the opportunities for public comment. More information on this process can be found at 36 CFR Part 218 Project Level Pre-decisional Administrative Review Process.

The Forest Service believes that considering public concerns before a final decision is made aligns with our collaborative approach to forest management and improves the likelihood of resolving those concerns, resulting in a more informed decision.

In FYs 2014-2015, the Bitterroot National Forest had several projects that went through the objection process.

Table 1 – Project Objections from 2014 to 2015

Project	Year	Number of Objections
Como Forest Health Project	2015	2
Darby Lumber Lands	2015	3
Bitterroot National Forest Travel Management Planning Project	2015	17

For all three projects that went through the objection process in 2015, the Objection Reviewing Officer provided instructions to the Forest. These instructions detailed work that needed to be completed prior to the Responsible Official signing the Final Decision. For detailed information, please visit https://www.fs.fed.us/objections/objections_list.php?d=0&r=110103.