USDA United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Nez Perce National Forest
104 Airport Road
Grangeville, ID 83530
208-983-1950
Clearwater National Forest
12730 Highway 12
Orofino, ID 83544
208-476-4541

File Code: 1950
Date: December 30, 2013

Dear Planning Participant:

The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests will be considering the attached project and conducting environmental analyses in the near future.

The Salmon District Ranger has made a preliminary assessment that this project falls within a category of actions listed in 36 CFR 220.6, thereby excluding it from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

To submit a comment on this proposal, please follow the instructions provided in the "How to Provide Comments" section.

Thank you for your continued participation in projects involving the Nez Perce – Clearwater National Forests.

Sincerely,

Rick Brazell

RICK BRAZELL
Forest Supervisor

Enclosures: Maps of Project Site

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How to Provide Comments

Please review the following proposal and submit your site-specific comments as described below so they can be included in our analyses for the project.

Written, facsimile transmitted, hand-delivered, and oral comments will be accepted for **30 calendar days following publication of a legal notice in the *Lewiston Tribune.*** The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for this proposal. One should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

If you have any questions or would like additional information regarding this project, please contact Linda S. Helm, Small NEPA Coordinator, Nez Perce – Clearwater National Forests, Kamiah, Idaho or call (208) 935-4285. Oral comments must be provided to her during normal business hours *via t*elephone or in person. Written comments should either be mailed or hand-delivered (between 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (PST), Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays) to her c/o Nez Perce – Clearwater National Forests, Supervisor's office, 104 Airport Road, Grangeville, Idaho 83530; or submitted *via* facsimile transmittal to her at (208) 935-4275, where they will be forwarded to the Kamiah office *via* electronic mail. Electronic mail comments should be submitted in rich text format (.rtf), Word (.doc) or portable data format (.pdf) to comments-northern-nezperce@fs.fed.us.

If you choose to comment on the proposal, please include the following: (1) your name, address, and (if possible) your telephone number, and organization represented (if any); (2) title of this project; and, (3) specific facts and relevant rationale concerning this project that you feel should be considered. **Please note that we will not respond to "boiler-plate" objections that are not specific to the particular project.** For appeal eligibility, each individual must either sign the comments or verify identity upon request. Additional information regarding how to comment can be found at 36 CFR 215.6.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names, telephone numbers, addresses, and electronic mail addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; **however, those who submit anonymous comments may not have standing to appeal** the subsequent decision pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the Agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentially should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the Agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality and the available options at that time (see 7 CFR 1.27 for further information).

Project Proposal

Salmon River Ranger District

Deadhorse Ridge Trail Reroute *(formerly identified as Deadhorse Bridge Construction)*

Legal Description: T26N R3E Section 3, Boise Meridian

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(1) *Construction and reconstruction of trails.*

Project History: The original project was intended to address only the construction of bridges on the Deadhorse Ridge Trail, and was scoped with that intent in mind; however, the project's proponent has decided that it is in the best interest of both the public and the Forest Service to rehabilitate the two existing ford crossings and reconstruct the Deadhorse Ridge Trail. Based on these changes, the Forest Service is withdrawing its proposal for the earlier project and proposing this new one.

Narrative Summary: The Salmon River District Ranger proposes to eliminate and rehabilitate the two stream crossings and to improve the Deadhorse Ridge Trail 301 which is open to motorized use by rerouting approximately 2,000 feet of the trail onto adjacent side slopes.

Background: Deadhorse Ridge Trail 301 and Telephone Ridge Trail 329 begin at the terminus of National Forest Road 354G. Both trails provide low elevation OHV access to the Nut Basin area. The proposed project is located within the boundaries of the Little Slate Creek Roadless Area in an area managed with a backcountry restoration theme under the Idaho Roadless rule. The project is consistent with the regulations at 36 CFR 294.26, "Other activities in Roadless Areas."

The two lower trail crossings of Deadhorse Creek by Trail 301 are improved fords. Rocks have been removed from the trail and placed downstream to slow stream flow. The stream banks at the fords have been cut to allow ATV passage, resulting in a widened stream channel.

Deadhorse Creek provides important habitat for Snake River Steelhead, Columbia River Basin Bull Trout, and resident Rainbow Trout (Redband). The stream fords negatively impact this habitat by widening the stream channel and removing stream side vegetation, resulting in reduced stream depth and stream bank cover, while increasing water temperature and turbidity.

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In addition, the current fords present a safety hazard to forest visitors as the crossing a fairly swift moving stream where footing can be unstable at higher water flows.

Roadless Issue: This project is proposed at the northeastern corner of the Little Slate Creek, Idaho Roadless Area. A roadless analysis is being prepared to evaluate the effects of the project on the Little Slate Creek Roadless Area.

Project Design Specifications/Equipment to be Used: The reroute will remove the lower two fords of Deadhorse Creek. The trail will be constructed to a Class 3 ATV trail standard with a 0-10 percent slope, 60-72 inch tread, and 10 foot radius switchbacks. The abandoned fords will be restored by placement of large rocks and woody debris along the affected stream banks in order to narrow the channel to more natural widths and increase water depth. The abandoned sections of trail tread will be scarified and covered with vegetative debris in order to hasten re-vegetation. Forest hydrology and fisheries specialist will assist in the design and implementation of all restoration activities.

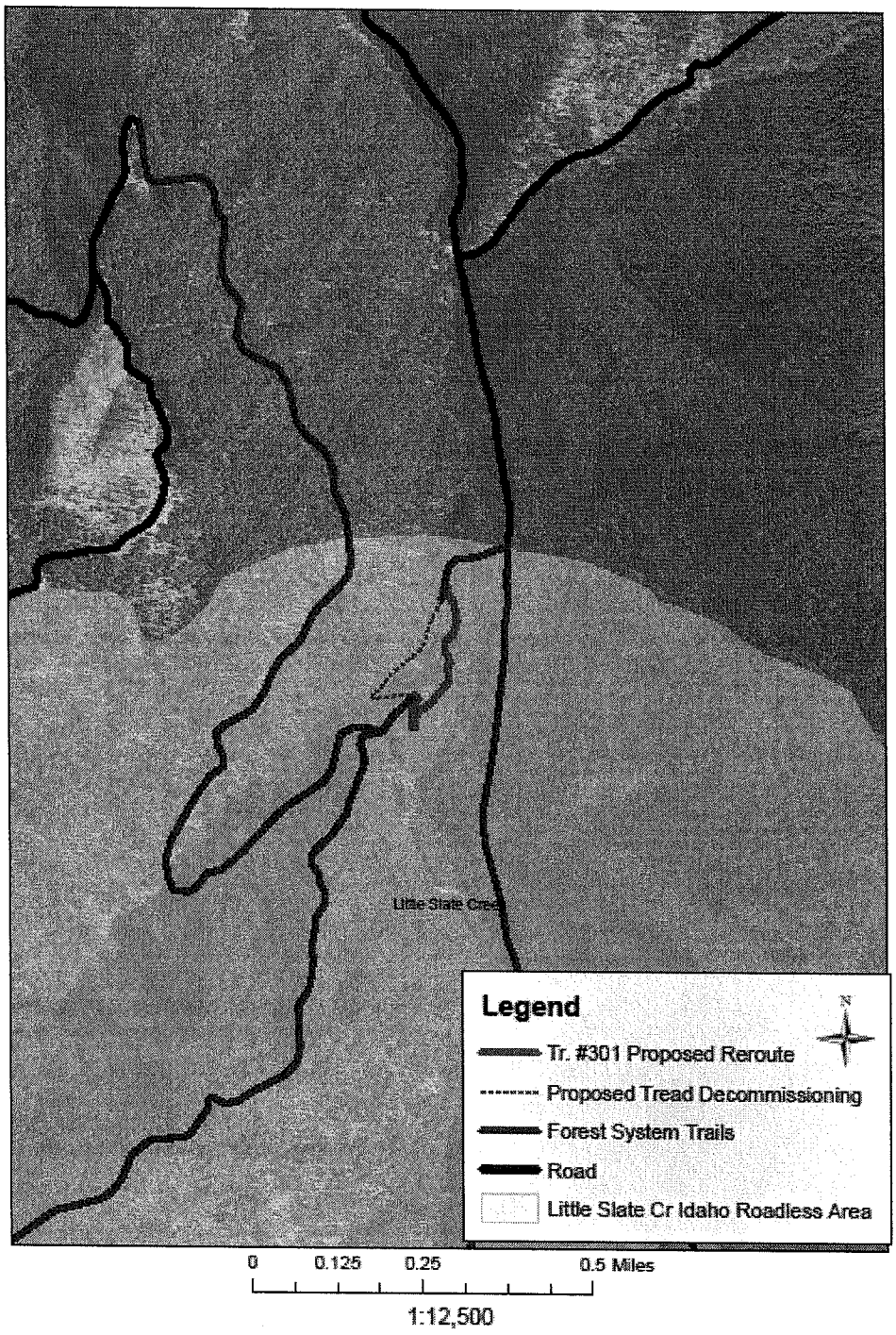
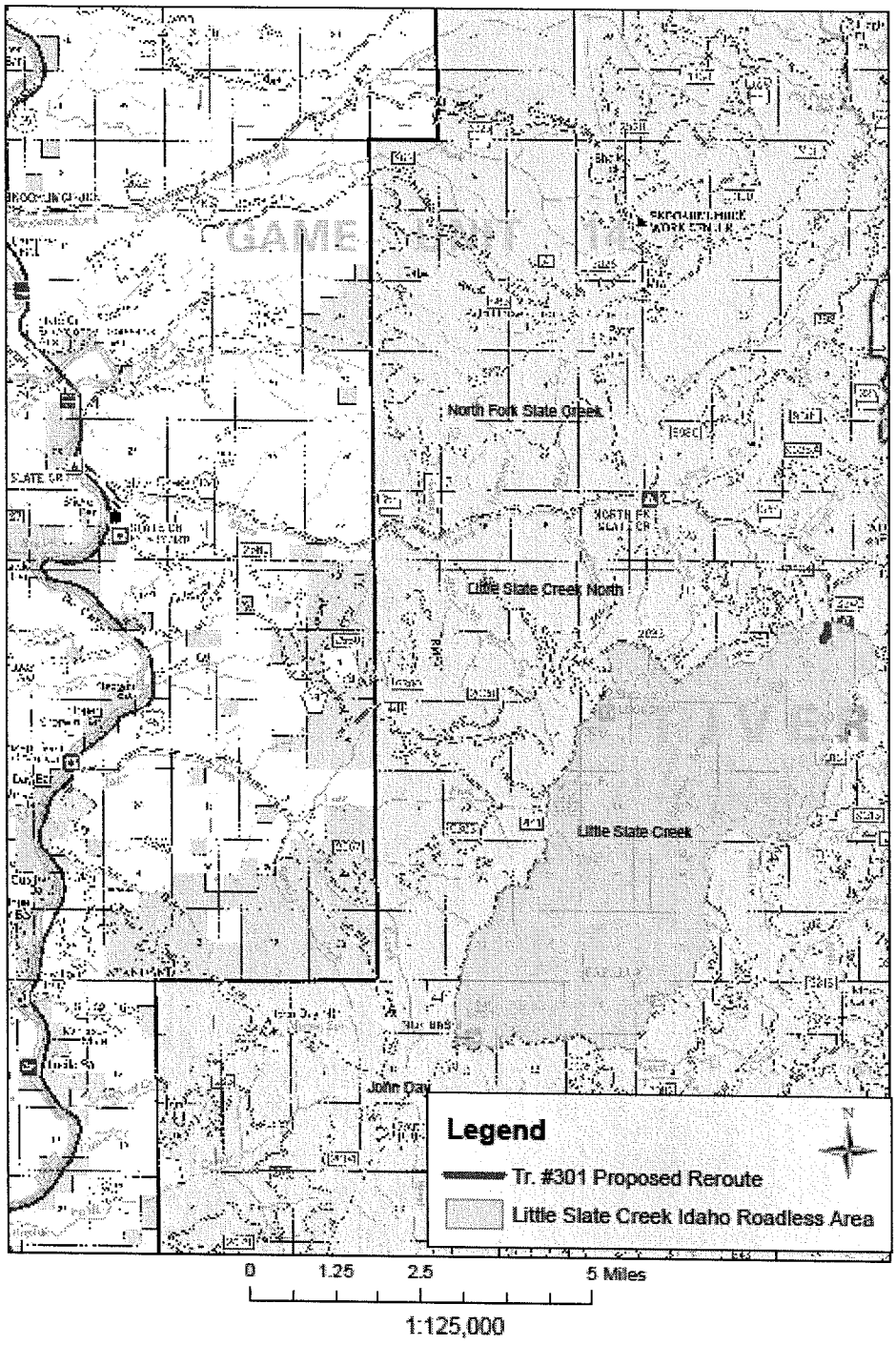
The reroute will be constructed by Agency personnel and members of the local ATV and motorcycle clubs. A small excavator, chainsaws, ATVs, and hand tools will be used in the construction.

All in-stream activities will take place between July 1st and August 15th of 2014 in order to minimize impact to the aquatic species of concern. This project is planned for implementation in 2014.

Goal: This project will improve habitat for the anadromous and resident fish populations by increasing cover and stream depth and reducing the turbidity and physical disturbance caused by ATVs and other Forest visitors. The new reroute will also provide a safer and more enjoyable recreational experience for Forest visitors.

Project Information: If you have any questions or would like more information regarding this project, please contact Josh Lattin at (208) 839-2108.

Deadhorse Ridge Reroute



Deadhorse Ridge Reroute