
Robert M. Sheets

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December 27, 2018

Objection Reviewing Officer, Regional Forester

Alaska Regional Office
PO BOX 21628
709 W. 9th Street
Juneau AK, 99802

Re: OBJECTION POWLLA, Tongass National Forest

Dear Sir,

I Robert M. Sheets, submit this objection to the Prince of Wales Landscape Level Analysis Project ROD and Final EIS on the grounds that there was a significant failure to appropriately acknowledge, review and respond to my comments. I contend that the Forest Service oversimplified or in some cases overlooked the issues I presented. When concern statements were developed from my comments, they did not accurately represent my comments and the responses given were inadequate and in some cases conflict with the text of the FEIS.

My comments on the DEIS were structured as a comment/concern statement followed by suggested mitigation. The following is an example of one comment I submitted, the Forest Service concern statement that was developed from that comment, the Forest Service response to the concern and how that response is in conflict with the EIS text.

Comment/Concern that I submitted:

Comments on the 2000810 and 2000813 roads:

These roads provides access to our property from the 20 road at mile 117. As far we can tell they have never had any maintenance other than mowing. Interestingly the last time these roads were mowed, it was done in November well after all the grass had died and fell over. At any rate, these roads are critical to us and they need maintenance. Requests we have made to the Forest Service regarding this have been generally ignored. The condition of these roads not only affects our access but also affects the value of our property. These roads being poorly kept by the Forest Service reduces our property value since it is a poor reflection on the adjacent land management practices. The 2000813 road is of particular concern. This road was

completely grown over and impassible 15 years ago. We opened the road at our own expense. The 813 is a system road that is supposed to be maintained. The 813 does not have enough surface to be graded and in its current condition, prevents us from accessing our property with heavy equipment. There is also a wood culvert that will eventually need replaced. There appears to be a harvest unit planned adjacent to our property. Access to this harvest area will require the 810 and 813 be reconstructed and properly maintained post-harvest, otherwise we will be left in worse condition than we already are. Again, this is a concern to us because of the examples that are being set on current timber sales where needed road expenditures appear to have been deferred.

We have in the past requested, obtained and also been denied rock permits from the existing pit along the 810 road. **We would like for the Forest Service to recognize how important making small amounts of rock available to individuals is to the economy of the island. Nearly every development on the island requires rock. Being isolated like we are, there is no other option for us if we cannot obtain Forest Service rock. Development of our own rock source is out of the question financially for a small project like a house pad or minor road maintenance.**

Suggested Mitigation:

*Reconstruct both roads as needed to fill in the holes and make a decent running surface that can be graded as need in the future. Replace the wood culvert on the 813 with a real one designed to last. Leave the road in a good condition that reflects responsible land management. Do not allow timber or road construction contractors to strip existing rock pits of all useable rock and not shoot adequate replacement rock. **Make small amounts of rock from Forest Service pits available to the public on a program similar to free use wood, where the Forest Service is dedicated to meeting demand.***

Forest Service Response:

Rock for public use (FEIS Response to Comments page D-78)

Concern Statement: Commenter wants contractors to develop extra rock for public use when developing rock quarries.

Forest Service Response: When quarries are developed it is for a specific purpose and funded accordingly. Contractors cannot be expected to bear the burden of developing extra rock for public use. Due to high cost, the Forest Service did not further develop a proposal to supply extra rock for public use, however, if Forest Service specialists determine a quarry has extra rock not

needed for government purposes, that rock may become available through the special uses program.

In the FEIS the Activity Card Page for Quarry Development page A-114 reads as follows:

Card 23 Activity

Quarry Development

Description: Clearing and blasting to produce rock for maintenance and construction of roads and other facilities. These quarries would be located adjacent to open roads and would provide a source of rock for a period of years. When feasible rock sources developed within an economical zone around private land or communities would develop extra rock for issuance under noncommercial mineral material permits. Quarries may also be developed by commercial users for sale purposes.

Objectives: Construction of roads, log transfer facilities, boat launches, recreation site pads, and other facilities require rock to stabilize and provide a base for construction. Provide economical rock sources accessible to private lands and communities to address non-commercial construction needs. Quarries should be sized so that additional rock will be available to support future activities where possible.

Conclusion

Being a landowner that is directly affected by this project, the ambiguity in the decision process as shown above, in combination with our past issues dealing with the Forest Service on simple requests like a rock permit, is particularly troubling. The value of our private property is contingent on access and the management of adjacent Public lands particularly the road system. The text above, being but a single example, clearly supports my contention that there were shortcuts taken in the response to comments and that even the Forest Service does not understand what is in the document. This clearly violates NEPA and the document is as a result, illegal.

The only relief I request is that the Regional Forester direct the Tongass Forest Supervisor to negotiate with me in good faith the mitigations measures I requested in my original comments on the DEIS.

Thank you for this opportunity,

Robert M. Sheets