



File Code: 1950

Date: May 18, 2018

Dear Friends and Neighbors of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests,

We are soliciting public comments on the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Grouse Bear Management Unit Compliance Project.

The project is located within both the Bonners Ferry and Sandpoint Ranger Districts of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests. It is about 18 miles north of Sandpoint, Idaho, east side of Highway 95 and northwest of Lunch Peak.

With this project we are proposing to manage roads within the Grouse Bear Management Unit to meet compliance with the Idaho Panhandle National Forests' Forest Plan. In order to meet compliance with the Forest Plan we propose to store approximately 28 miles of roads and close approximately 3 miles of unclassified roads. We also propose to re-route about 2 miles of Forest Road 280 away from Grouse Creek.

Approximately 0.2 miles of currently opened road is proposed for storage. About 7.7 miles of roads proposed to be stored are open for public motor vehicle travel from December 1 through March 31. The remaining miles of roads proposed for storage are not open to public motor vehicle travel.

We prepared an environmental assessment to determine whether effects of the proposed activities may be significant enough to prepare an environmental impact statement. The complete environmental assessment, along with supporting documentation is available on the Idaho Panhandle National Forests website at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=47308>.

Your comments are invited on the Grouse BMU Compliance EA and they will be used to help us refine our analysis and formulate a draft decision notice (DN) and finding of no significant impact (FONSI). We anticipate that a draft DN and FONSI will be available to the public this coming summer.

The Grouse Bear Management Unit Compliance Project EA documents the project's compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act including public involvement and tribal consultation on issues of national heritage.

Pursuant to 36 CFR 218¹, comments on the EA will be accepted for 30 days beginning the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice in the Coeur d'Alene Press. Only individuals or entities (as defined by 36 CFR 218.2) who submit timely and specific written comments (as defined by 36 CFR 218.2) about this proposed project during this public comment period will be eligible to file an objection to the draft Decision Notice during a 45-day objection period. The intent of the objection process is to allow the responsible official to collaborate with objectors resulting in a better, more informed final decision. The Grouse Bear Management Unit Compliance Project is a non-HFRA project and is subject to the objection process.

¹ 36 CFR Part 218 Project-level Predecisional Administrative Review Process



Other objection eligibility requirements are defined by 36 CFR 218.25(a)(3) and include name, postal address, title of the project, and signature or other verification of identity upon request and the identity of the individual or entity who authored the comments. Individual members of an entity must submit their own individual comments in order to have eligibility to object as an individual. A timely submission will be determined as outlined in 36 CFR 218.25(a)(4). It is the responsibility of the sender to ensure timely receipt of any comments submitted.

How to Comment:

Please use the enclosed form, call, write a letter, or send us an e-mail. Please submit site specific comments by *resource issue* so they can be readily identified, tracked and incorporated into project design.

Pursuant to 36 CFR 218 comments on this proposed project will be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice in the Coeur d'Alene Press. We anticipate publication of the legal notice on or around May 22, 2018. Specific comments should be focused on the proposed action and include rationale to help us understand your concern. Comments should be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and must include supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider (36 CFR 218.2).

The responsible officials for this project and the decision are Erick Walker, Sandpoint District Ranger, and Kevin Knauth, Bonners Ferry District Ranger. Please submit your comments to: Kris Hennings; Attn: Grouse BMU Compliance Project:

- by mail to Sandpoint Ranger District, 1602 Ontario Street, Sandpoint, ID 83864;
- by phone to Project Leader – Kris Hennings (208) 263-5111;
- by facsimile to (208) 265-6670;
- hand-deliver between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.
- Comments may also be submitted electronically to the following email address comments-northern-idpanhandle-sandpoint@fs.fed.us in one of the following formats: text or html e-mail, Adobe portable document format (pdf), or formats viewable in Microsoft Office applications.

The subject line must contain the name of the project for which you are submitting comments. For electronically mailed comments, the sender should normally receive an automated electronic acknowledgement from the agency as confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive an automated acknowledgement of the receipt of comments, it is the sender's responsibility to ensure timely receipt by other means.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names, addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection.

Sincerely,

Kevin S. Knauth
Bonners Ferry District Ranger

Erick J. Walker
Sandpoint District Ranger

COMMENT FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

My comments:

Please send me a copy of the draft and final decision information on the Grouse BMU Compliance Project

Please remove my name from the mailing list for the Grouse BMU Compliance Project

Return Comment form to: Sandpoint Ranger District
Attn: Kris Hennings, Project Leader
1602 Ontario Street
Sandpoint, ID 83864
FAX: 208-265-6670