



File Code: 1950
Date: June 18, 2019

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The Idaho Panhandle National Forests has prepared an environmental assessment (EA), a draft decision notice (DN) and finding of no significant impact for the Grouse Bear Management Unit Compliance Project. The proposed action has been selected as described in the Grouse Bear Management Unit Compliance Project draft decision notice.

The legal notice announcing the draft decision is scheduled to be published in the newspaper of record, the Coeur d'Alene Press, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, on June 19, 2019. A copy of the draft decision and finding of no significant impact is available on the Idaho Panhandle National Forests website at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=47308>.

About the Project

The project is about 18 miles north of Sandpoint, Idaho. It is near McArthur Lake (Boundary County) on the east side of Highway 95 and northwest of Lunch Peak (Bonner County). The Grouse bear management unit is a patchwork of National Forest System lands, State of Idaho lands, commercial timber lands, and private property. The project area is located within portions of T58N R1E Sections 1, 12; T58N R2E Sections 2 thru 10, 15, 16, 17; T59N R1E Sections 1 thru 18, 20 thru 28, 33 thru 36; T59N R1W Sections 1, 2, 11, 12, 13; T59N R2E Sections 3 thru 11, 14 thru 23, 26 thru 35; T60N R1E Sections 1 thru 36; T60N R1W Sections 13, 23, 24, 25, 26, 35, 36; T60N R1E Sections 6, 7, 18, 19, 30, 31, 32, 33; T61N R1E Sections 26, 27, 33, 34, 35, 36; T61N R2E Section 31.

The selected alternative will store approximately 28 miles of roads, close approximately 3 miles of unauthorized roads and approximately 1 mile of unauthorized ATV trail, and re-route about 2 miles of road. The road storage and closures would improve grizzly bear habitat within the Grouse Bear Management Unit.

The roads that will be stored include approximately 0.2 mile of currently opened road. Road storage also includes about 7.7 miles of roads that are open for public motor vehicle travel from December 1 through March 31. The remaining miles of roads that will be stored are not open to public motor vehicle travel.

Pre-Decisional Administrative Review (Objection) Process

This decision is subject to the objection process pursuant to 36 CFR 218, subparts A and B. A written objection must be submitted to the reviewing officer within 45 calendar days following publication of the legal notice of the objection period in the Coeur d'Alene Press, which is the newspaper of record. It is the responsibility of objectors to ensure their objections are received in a timely manner (36 CFR 218.9(a)). The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection. Objectors should not rely upon time requirements provided by any other source.

Objections will only be accepted from those who have previously submitted specific written comments regarding the project during the scoping and opportunity for comment periods in accordance with §218.5(a). Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted specific written comments regarding the proposed project unless based on new information arising after the designated comment opportunities.

The objection must contain the minimum content requirements specified in §218.8(d) and incorporation of documents by reference is permitted only as provided in §218.8(b). It is the objector's responsibility to ensure timely filing of a written objection with the reviewing officer pursuant to §218.9. All objections are available for public inspection during and after the objection process.

The following address should be used for objections:

Objection Reviewing Officer
USDA Forest Service, Northern Region
26 Fort Missoula Road
Missoula, MT 59804

Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays.

Electronic objections must be submitted via an email to appeals-northern-regional-office@fs.fed.us. Please include "Grouse BMU Compliance Project Objection" in the subject line. Electronic objections must be submitted in MS Word (.doc or .docx) or rich text format (.rtf) or other format that can be read with optical character recognition software. The number for faxed objections is (406) 329-3411.

The objection must meet the content requirements of 36 CFR 218.8(d), and include the following information:

- The objector's name and address, with a telephone number or email address, if available;
- A signature or other verification of authorship upon request (a scanned signature for Email may be filed with the objection);
- When multiple names are listed on an objection, identification of the lead objector as defined in 36 CFR 218.2 (verification of the identity of the lead objector shall be provided upon request);
- The name of the project being objected to, the name and title of the responsible official, and the name of the national forest on which the project will be implemented;
- A description of those aspects of the project addressed by the objection, including specific issues related to the project and, if applicable, how the objector believes the environmental analysis or draft decision specifically violates law, regulation, or policy; suggested remedies that would resolve the objection; and supporting reasons for the reviewing officer to consider;
- A statement that demonstrates the connection between prior specific written comments on the particular project or activity and the content of the objection, unless the objection concerns an issue that arose after the designated opportunity for formal comment.

Incomplete responses to these requirements make review of an objection difficult and are conditions under which the reviewing officer may set aside an objection pursuant to 36 CFR 218.10.

When objections are filed, approval of project activities will not occur until the pre-decisional review process is complete and a final decision notice issued. A decision will not be signed until the reviewing officer has responded in writing to all pending objections, and all concerns and instructions identified by the reviewing officer in the objection response have been addressed. All objections are available for public inspection during and after the objection process.

Implementation Date

If no objections are filed within the 45-day time period, implementation of the decision may occur on, but not before the fifth business day following the end of the objection filing period.

Where to Get More Information

For more details, please refer to the complete EA and draft decision notice, along with supporting documentation, available on the Idaho Panhandle National Forests website (see website address above). For additional information, please contact Brett Lyndaker, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, at (208) 267-6723 or brett.lyndaker@usda.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jessie Berner". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

JESSIE BERNER
Sandpoint District Ranger

Enclosure