

# **Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Grouse BMU Compliance Project**

USDA Forest Service  
Sandpoint and Bonners Ferry Ranger Districts  
Idaho Panhandle National Forests  
Bonner County and Boundary County, Idaho

## **Introduction**

In May of 2018, the Grouse Bear Management Unit (BMU) Compliance Project Environmental Assessment was completed in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant Federal and State laws and regulations. The environmental assessment (EA) was made available for review and public comment for 30 days.

This decision notice describes my decision to proceed with the Grouse BMU Compliance Project, background information about the project, which alternative I selected, and the rationale supporting my decision. This document also includes my “Finding of No Significant Impact” (FONSI) to the human environment, which means no further environmental analysis is necessary in order to proceed with this project.

The EA and supporting resource reports are incorporated by reference in this document. The EA, resource reports, maps and this decision are all available to view or download from the Idaho Panhandle National Forest website at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=47308>.

## **Where the Project is Located**

The project area is the Grouse BMU, which is on the Bonners Ferry and Sandpoint Ranger Districts of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests (IPNF). It is about 18 miles north of Sandpoint, Idaho, east of Highway 95 and northwest of Lunch Peak. The BMU is within both Bonner County and Boundary County, Idaho.

## **Project Background**

The main purpose and need for this project is to meet compliance with Forest Plan standards for motorized access within the Grouse BMU. The 2015 Revised Land Management Plan (Forest Plan) for the IPNF retained direction from several amendments of the 1987 Forest Plan. The retained direction includes standards set for motor vehicle use within the Cabinet-Yaak and Selkirk Recovery Zones. This direction requires all grizzly bear management units to meet access management standards by 2019. Since the Grouse BMU currently does not meet these standards, open and total motorized road densities need to be reduced and grizzly bear core habitat needs to be increased in order to bring the BMU into compliance.

An additional need for action is to reduce road maintenance costs and reduce sediment in Grouse Creek by rerouting a section of the Grouse Creek Road (Forest System Road (FSR) 280) away from the creek. This section of the road floods occasionally, making it unsafe to drive and

expensive to maintain. It also washes sediment into the creek each time it floods which can affect bull trout spawning and rearing habitat downstream. Rerouting the section would reduce annual maintenance costs and help meet Forest Plan direction by reducing sediment in the Grouse Creek subwatershed. It would also provide more consistent access to residents and the public.

## **Decision and Reasons for the Decision**

Based upon my review of all alternatives, I have decided to implement the proposed action. The proposed action includes road storage, closure, and decommissioning. The proposed action also includes building and reconstructing approximately 2 miles of road in order to reroute a section of Forest System Road 280 away from Grouse Creek.

Approximately 28 miles of road will be stored within the project area. Approximately 0.2 miles of currently opened road is proposed for storage. Some 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.

The proposed action (see Figure 1, below) also will re-route a section of the Grouse Creek Road (Road 280) from the bridge over North Fork Grouse Creek to approximately the Wylie Knob trailhead. The reroute is approximately two miles in length, beginning east of the North Fork Grouse Creek Bridge and the junction with Forest System Road 4320. From this point the proposed route heads northeast through National Forest System (NFS) land, crosses private land, then returns to NFS lands and ends at the Wylie Creek Trailhead. In total the proposed reroute would require approximately 1.5 miles of new road construction and approximately 0.6 miles of road reconstruction.

The reroute also requires decommissioning approximately 1.4 miles of Forest System Road 280 along Grouse Creek. Decommissioning involves removing drainage structures, partially or fully recontouring the driving surface, and installing additional drainage, such as waterbars and swales, to stabilize the road and keep it from eroding. The decommissioned section of road will be made impassable to discourage illegal motorized use. Completion of the Grouse Creek Road re-route is anticipated in the next ten years. Approximately 0.3 miles at the east end of Forest System Road 280 will be converted to a trail to allow horse and non-motorized access through the meadow.

The proposed action will close approximately 3.1 miles of non-system roads. Road closure is similar to road decommissioning: the roads will be blocked with an earthen berm or a short section of recontouring to match the original slope of the land. Drainage structures such as culverts (if present) will be removed, and waterbars and relief swales may be added to restore natural drainage patterns.

Once the roads are closed they will no longer take away from grizzly bear core habitat or contribute to road densities. The non-system roads identified for closure are: 215UC, 2636UC, 2656BUA, 2656BUAA, 2686AUA, 2686AUB, 2686AUC, 2686AUD, and 729UV.

In addition, 1.3 miles of a user-created ATV trail will be closed with this decision. The unauthorized ATV trail crosses FSR 2236 on NFS land and connects a parcel of private land with a parcel of land owned by Molpus Timberlands Management. The ATV trail will be made impassable with this decision.

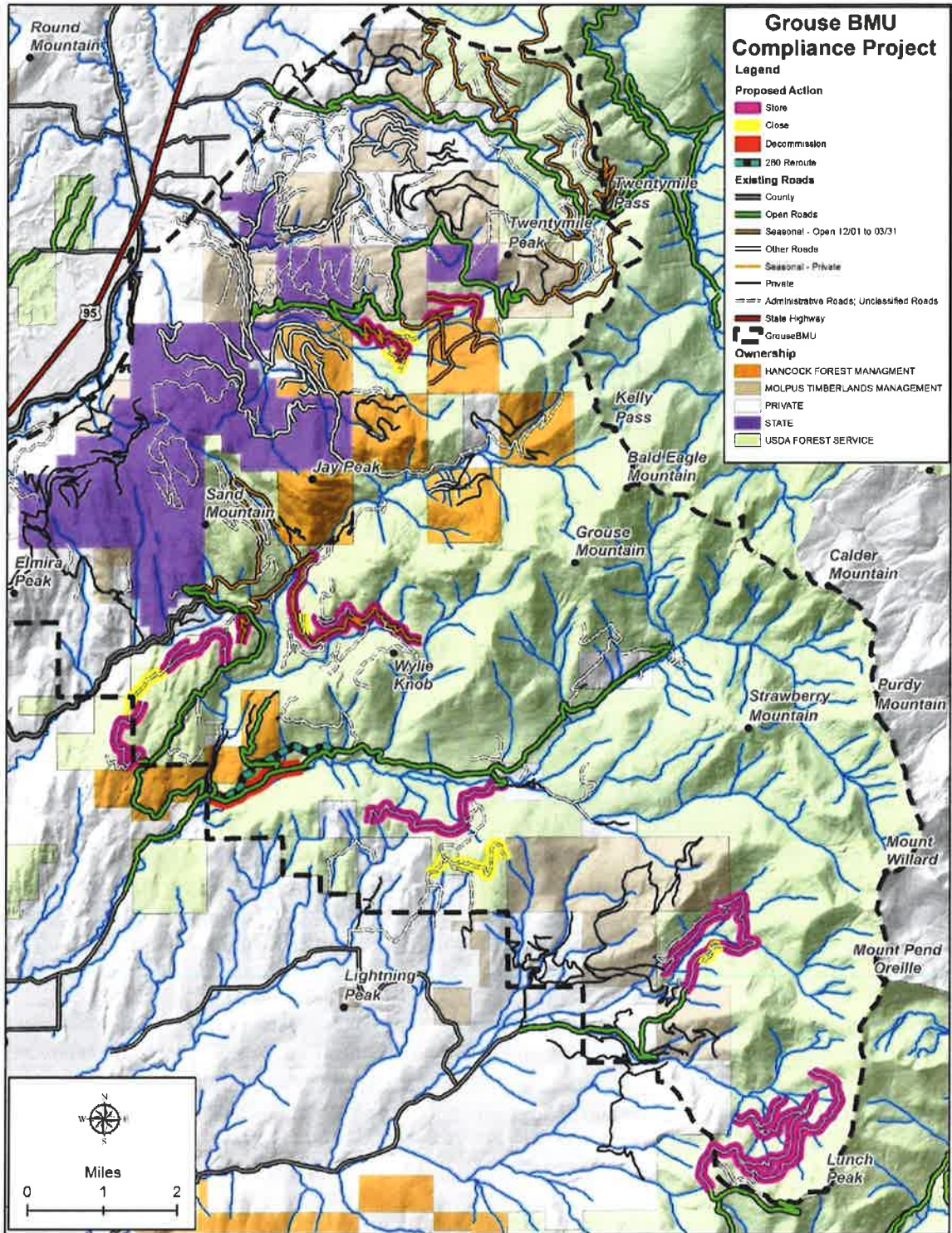


Figure 1. Proposed action

**Table 1. Summary of the proposed action**

Activity	Miles
Road storage	27.8
New road construction	1.5
Road reconstruction	0.6
Road Decommissioning	1.4
Retain and improve existing road	0.6
Non-system road closure	3.1
Unauthorized ATV trail closure	1.3

## Other Alternatives Considered

In addition to the proposed action, I considered one other alternative.

### No Action

Alternative 1 is the no action alternative. Existing approved management of the Grouse BMU project area would continue, but no other activities would occur.

The no action alternative was not selected because it would not meet the standards for wheeled motorized vehicle access and security guidelines outlined in the Forest Plan amendments for the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak grizzly bear recovery zones (USDA Forest Service 2011). Additionally, the no action alternative would fail to address the Grouse Creek road sedimentation issue, and would not be consistent with desired future conditions FW-DC-AQH-03 or FW-DC-AQS-05 related to aquatic restoration.

## Public Involvement and Scoping

To inform the public, interest groups, tribes and agencies of this project, we used different methods of communication. We listed the Grouse BMU Compliance Project in the Idaho Panhandle National Forests' Quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions, sent a letter of our proposal to interested parties, and posted information on our Forest Service internet site. We also discussed the project with the Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative collaborative group at a meeting on November 10, 2016.

The National Environmental Policy Act directs the agency to focus on a full and fair discussion of issues, and identify and eliminate from detailed study the issues that are not significant. The interdisciplinary team did not identify any key issues internally or from public comments that would lead to the development of substantive alternatives to our proposal. Please refer to the project file for a complete description of public comments we received and how we addressed them.

The Grouse BMU is unique because it is comprised of only 54 percent NFS lands. The rest is owned privately or is managed by the State of Idaho. Because of the irregular pattern of land ownership, many roads in the Grouse BMU provide access to land or structures that are not federally owned. This left us with very few road management options to meet the standards of the forest plan and access amendment. The lack of options meant that there were few, if any, alternatives to our proposal.

One other alternative was discussed in the early planning stages of this project. The difference between the proposed action and this possible alternative was storing Forest System Road 2670 and maintaining Forest System Road 215 as seasonally restricted. This idea was dropped because it would have reduced access for the Idaho Department of Lands, who has fire jurisdiction in that area of the Grouse BMU. Additionally, this alternative would have created another small isolated block of core habitat, rather than adding to a larger block of core habitat.

Due to the challenging nature of the Grouse BMU and limited decision space, no other alternatives were discussed.

## **Finding of No Significant Impact**

### **Context**

For the proposed action and alternative, the context of the environmental effects is based on the environmental analysis in the environmental assessment. Context means that the significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts (i.e. local regional, worldwide), and over short and long time frames. For site-specific actions, significance usually depends upon the effects in the local rather than in the world as a whole. This project is limited in scope and duration and both short and long-term effects are relevant (40 CFR 1508.27).

The activities included in the proposed action are similar to actions that have been implemented with other projects for many years on the Idaho Panhandle National Forests. The project's design features minimize and avoid negative impacts to the extent that such impacts are almost undetectable and immeasurable, even at the local level (EA Appendix A – Project Design Features).

As discussed in more detail below for the intensity factors of significance, the context of this proposal is largely limited to the locale of the project area. Even in a local context, this proposal would not pose significant short or long-term effects. The proposal's relatively small scale limits its effects on the natural resource values and uses. The analysis of potential environmental impacts related to project activities demonstrates that no aspect of the proposal would result in any significant impacts. The proposal is a site-specific action that does not have international, national, regional, or statewide importance. The physical and biological effects of the selected actions were analyzed at appropriate scales, such as within the project area, adjacent to the project area, or across a larger landscape. The analysis area differs for each resource and rationale for each analysis area is provided in individual specialist's report.

### **Intensity**

Intensity is a measure of the severity, extent, or quantity of effects, and is based on information from the effects analysis within the EA and the references in the project record. The effects of this project have been appropriately and thoroughly considered with an analysis that is responsive to concerns and issues raised by the public. The agency has taken a hard look at the environmental effects using relevant scientific information and knowledge of site-specific conditions gained from field visits. My finding of no significant impact is based on the context of the project and intensity of effects using the ten factors identified in 40 CFR 1508.27(b).

**1) Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that on the balance the effects will be beneficial.**

I considered the past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions in conjunction with impacts associated with activities as presented in the Grouse BMU Compliance Project EA. These impacts are within the range of effects identified in the IPNF Forest Plan. I conclude that the specific direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the proposed action are not significant and this action does not rely on beneficial effects to override any adverse environmental effects.

Impacts associated with my decision to implement the proposed action are discussed in the EA and are listed by resource topic (for example, “Effects to Terrestrial Wildlife” begins on page 11).

For some resources, implementing the proposed action would exhibit both beneficial and adverse effects, which were discussed in sufficient detail to enable me to make my determination. The environmental assessment focuses more effort on those resource areas where some type of predicted adverse effect(s) are anticipated and provides sufficient information to determine that this project will not have a significant impact (beneficial or adverse).

**2) The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.**

~~It is my determination the proposed action will not have significant effects on public health and safety. Warning signs will be placed in areas where activities may interfere with recreational and local traffic (EA, Appendix A, p. 43).~~

The proposed action was designed to minimize impacts to adjacent land owners and public access (to the extent feasible) while still meeting required Grouse BMU standards (EA, p. 7).

**3) Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.**

Core grizzly habitat is a special biological feature of the project area. The reroute of Grouse Creek Road (Road 280) will cause a temporary decrease in core habitat. However, the project is expected to result in long-term improvements to grizzly bear habitat by increasing core habitat and bringing the Grouse BMU up to the Forest Plan standards (EA, p. 23).

Road densities, especially within RHCAs, will decrease with the implementation of the proposed action. The decrease is due to the proposed road storage of 28 miles and approximately 3 miles of closure of non-system roads. Road densities within RHCAs would also be further reduced by the re-routed segment of forest road 280, which would move the road away from Grouse Creek (EA, p. 26).

No unique parklands, prime farmlands, cultural resources, or wild and scenic rivers are located in the project area.

**4) The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.**

Monitoring shows effects of similar projects are consistent with estimated effects of the proposed activities (see monitoring reports on the Idaho Panhandle National Forests website: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/ipnf/landmanagement/planning>). Effects of the proposed activities on the quality of the human environment are not highly controversial. This conclusion is based on the record that shows a thorough review of relevant scientific information; a consideration of responsible opposing views; and the acknowledgment of incomplete or unavailable information, scientific uncertainty, and risk. Resource reports document the use of the best available science for each resource. The project file includes relevant literature citations, science references, biological assessments, and monitoring results used in the project analysis to support this decision.

**5) The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.**

The planned actions are similar to actions implemented in other areas on National Forest System land and on state, county, and private lands. Effects will be similar to those of past actions. The analysis considered the effects of past actions combined with the estimated effects of the proposal (see the cumulative effects analyses in the individual resource reports). I conclude there are no unique or unusual characteristics of the area which have not been previously encountered or which constitute highly uncertain or unknown risks to the human environment.

**6) The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.**

The proposed management actions are similar to actions conducted in the project area, and in other areas of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests. The proposed action is not setting a precedent for future actions with significant effects. Management practices are consistent with the Forest Plan. Please refer to the Idaho Panhandle National Forests Monitoring Reports located at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/ipnf/landmanagement/planning>. The proposed action does not represent a decision in principle about future considerations.

**7) Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.**

The combined effects of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions were considered and are summarized in the cumulative effects analysis for each resource. Past actions considered in the cumulative effects analyses include those that contributed to the baseline conditions in the project area. There are no indications of significant cumulative effects to the environment (EA, pp. 12-37).

**8) The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant cultural or historical resources.**

No direct, indirect or cumulative effects to cultural resources are expected with implementation of the proposed action. All sites regardless of eligibility status are protected from potential “adverse effect” scenarios through avoidance, project design, and planning to

avoid possibility of intrusion into the site area by project activities (Cultural Resources Report, p. 8).

**9) The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act.**

The Grouse BMU Compliance project is expected to result in long-term improvements to grizzly bear habitat by bringing the Grouse BMU up to the Forest Plan standards. However, there would be short-term increases in Open Motorized Route Density during several phases of road storage; and a decrease in core, and Total Motorized Route Density increase, during the Grouse Creek Road (Forest System Road 280) reroute. Since the potential effects during project activities are not insignificant, discountable or completely beneficial, the implementation of the proposed action may affect, and is likely to adversely affect grizzly bears and their habitat (EA, p. 22). Any disturbance or displacement of bears from project activities would be temporary, and direct mortality (that can potentially be associated with roads that are open to the public) is not expected (EA p. 12).

Since project activities would take place from July 15 through August 31, when elevated water temperatures in Grouse Creek reduce the likelihood of bull trout presence, the potential for adult or juvenile bull trout to be present, displaced, injured, or killed is extremely unlikely. Additionally, the limited quantity of sediment produced by the activity would likely be unsubstantial and of no real consequence. As a result, the Project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect bull trout and bull trout designated critical habitat.

Project activities may temporarily displace Canada lynx if they are present in proximity to project areas when activities are occurring. However, activities would be ephemeral in nature and would occur in the road prism where vegetation has been previously degraded or removed. Therefore, effects to Canada lynx would be insignificant and discountable.

No other endangered or threatened species or their habitat is known to be located within the project area (EA, pp. 13, 27, and 34).

A complete biological assessment (BA) is provided within the project file for additional information. The BA determined that there would be no effect to woodland caribou, woodland caribou critical habitat, Canada lynx critical habitat, Kootenai River white sturgeon, Kootenai River white sturgeon critical habitat, water howellia or Spalding's catchfly. Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been completed for the project. The Service has determined that the project would not jeopardize the survival or recovery of the grizzly bear, and concurs with our determinations for bull trout and its designated critical habitat. The Service also acknowledges that the proposed project tiers to previous programmatic consultation for Canada lynx.

**10) Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.**

The proposed action meets Federal, State, and local laws for water quality and fisheries (Fisheries Report, pp. 11-12; Hydrology Report p. 5), invasive plants (Non-Native Invasive Plants Assessment, pp. 12-14), cultural resources (report, pp. 7-9), soils resource (Soils Report, pp. 11-13), and wildlife resources (Biological Assessment). Also refer to the project file.



## Conclusion

After considering the environmental effects described in the EA and specialist reports, I have determined that the proposed action will not have significant effects on the quality of the human environment considering the context and intensity of impacts (40 CFR 1508.27). Thus, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

## Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

Each resource report provides a section on how this project is consistent with the laws and regulations relevant to that resource. After reviewing each report and the EA, I find my decision to implement the proposed action complies with all applicable laws, regulations, and policies.

### National Forest Management Act (NFMA)

This project does not require any Forest Plan amendments. Project activities are consistent with the Forest Plan for the Idaho Panhandle National Forests and project-specific activities described in the NFMA (16 USC 1604 (i)).

**Other NFMA Requirements** - I have determined the proposed action is consistent with the following provisions of the National Forest Management Act:

- 1. Suitability for Timber Production: No timber harvest, other than salvage sales or sales to protect other multiple-use values, shall occur on lands not suited for timber production (16 USC 1604(k)).**

The proposed action complies with this request because no timber harvest will occur.

- 2. Timber Harvest on National Forest Lands (16 USC 1604(g)(3)(E)): A Responsible Official may authorize site-specific projects and activities to harvest timber on National Forest System lands only where:**

- a. Soil, slope, or other watershed conditions will not be irreversibly damaged (16 USC 1604(g)(3)(E)(i)).**

Features of the proposed action described in this decision and the EA will ensure that soil, water, and watershed resources will be protected (see the Hydrology section within the EA (pp. 26-27), the Soils section in the EA (pp. 33-34), as well as those respective reports for details.

- b. There is assurance that the lands can be adequately restocked within five years after final regeneration harvest (16 USC 1604(g)(3)(E)(ii)).**

The proposed action complies with this request because no timber harvest will occur.

- c. Protection is provided for streams, streambanks, shorelines, lakes, wetlands, and other bodies of water from detrimental changes in water temperatures, blockages of water courses, and deposits of sediment, where harvests are likely to seriously and adversely affect water conditions or fish habitat (16 USC 1604(g)(3)(E)(iii)).**

There will be no effects from timber harvest because no timber harvest will occur with the proposed action.

No detrimental changes in water temperatures or deposits of sediment are expected to occur from road decommissioning or the reroute of Road 280 (EA, pp. 26-33).

A short-term increase in sediment yield in certain streams would be expected from certain project activities, such as culvert removals and other activities associated with road storage or decommissioning, but the long term benefits to the fisheries resource would far outweigh these minor short-term impacts (EA, p. 28).

Standards and guidelines for aquatic resources from the IPNF Forest Plan, best management practices (BMP's), and design features would be applied to the proposed action to eliminate or reduce potential impacts to aquatic habitat (EA, p. 28).

**d. The harvesting system to be used is not selected primarily because it will give the greatest dollar return or the greatest unit output of timber (16 USC 1604(g)(3)(E)(iv)).**

The proposed action complies with this request because no timber harvest will occur.

**3. Clearcutting and Even-aged Management (16 USC 1604(g)(3)(F)): Insure that clearcutting, seed tree cutting, shelterwood cutting, and other cuts designed to regenerate an evenaged stand of timber will be used as a cutting method on National Forest System lands only where:**

**a. For clearcutting, it is determined to be the optimum method, and for other such cuts it is determined to be appropriate, to meet the objectives and requirements of the relevant land management plan (16 USC 1604(g)(3)(F)(i)).**

No timber harvest will occur with the proposed action.

**b. The interdisciplinary review as determined by the Secretary has been completed and the potential environmental, biological, esthetic, engineering, and economic impacts on each advertised sale area have been assessed, as well as the consistency of the sale with the multiple use of the general area (16 USC 1604(g)(3)(F)(ii)).**

No timber harvest will occur with the proposed action.

**c. Cut blocks, patches, or strips are shaped and blended to the extent practicable with the natural terrain (16 USC 1604(g)(3)(F)(iii)).**

No timber harvest will occur with the proposed action.

**d. Cuts are carried out according to the maximum size limit requirements for areas to be cut during one harvest operation, provided, that such limits shall not apply to the size of areas harvested as a result of natural catastrophic conditions such as fire, insect and disease attack, or windstorm (FSM R1 supplement 2400-2001-2 2471.1, 16 USC 1604(g)(3)(F)(iv)).**

No timber harvest will occur with the proposed action.

**e. Such cuts are carried out in a manner consistent with the protection of soil, watershed, fish, wildlife, recreation, and esthetic resources, and the regeneration of the timber resource (16 USC 1604(g)(3)(F)(v)).**

No timber harvest will occur with the proposed action.

**4. Stands of trees are harvested according to requirements for culmination of mean annual increment of growth (16 USC 1604(m)).**

No timber harvest will occur with the proposed action.

**5. Construction of temporary roadways in connection with timber contracts, and other permits or leases: Unless the necessity for a permanent road is set forth in the forest development road system plan, any road constructed on land of the National Forest System in connection with a timber contract or other permit or lease shall be designed with the goal of reestablishing vegetative cover on the roadway and areas where the vegetative cover has been disturbed by the construction of the road, within ten years after the termination of the contract, permit, or lease either through artificial or natural means. Such action shall be taken unless it is later determined that the road is needed for use as a part of the National Forest Transportation System (16 USC 1608(b)).**

No roads will be constructed for the purpose of timber harvest with the proposed action. Permanent road will be built to reroute a section of Road 280 away from Grouse Creek. In total the reroute would require approximately 1.5 miles of new road construction and approximately 0.6 miles of road reconstruction (EA, p. 7-8). The new road construction is needed to reduce road maintenance costs and reduce sediment in Grouse Creek (EA, p. 5).

**6. Standards of roadway construction: Roads constructed on National Forest System lands shall be designed to standards appropriate for the intended uses, considering safety, cost of transportation, and impacts on land and resources (16 USC 1608(c)).**

The permanent road construction associated with the reroute of Road 280 is needed to move the road away from Grouse Creek. A section of the road floods occasionally which makes it unsafe to drive and expensive to maintain. It also washes sediment into the creek each time it floods which can affect bull trout spawning and rearing habitat downstream (EA, p. 5). The new road construction is not expected to have adverse impacts to any resources within the project area (EA, pp. 12-37).

### Clean Water Act, Including State of Idaho Implementation

The proposed action would be consistent with the requirements of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act as amended by the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. §1251. Water temperature would not increase in the listed segments within the project area as a result of implementation of any alternative or any of the foreseeable actions. Streamside vegetation would be preserved and will continue to grow and mature thus providing additional shade over time. As a result of the proposed action, the net sediment reduction from the road prescriptions would progress toward the required sediment load reductions specified in the TMDLs for Grouse and Lightning Creeks (Hydrology Report, p. 6).

### Idaho Stream Channel Protection Act

The only stream channel alteration being proposed by alternatives of this project consists of removing culverts that prevent upstream fish migration. This is considered a beneficial alteration as the activity would allow the stream to function naturally and allow fish access to beneficial upstream habitat (Fisheries Resource Report, pp. 12-13).

### Executive Orders 11990 and 11988

All alternatives are consistent with these EO's regarding floodplains and wetlands. This project proposes no development within wetlands or floodplains (Hydrology Report, p. 6).

### Executive Order 12962 Recreational Fishing

The proposed action is consistent with Executive Order 12962 regarding aquatic systems and recreational fisheries. Short-term impacts may affect westslope cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, and brook trout individuals but would not lead toward a trend in federal listing that would prohibit harvest of these species. Long-term effects such as reduced habitat fragmentation achieved by replacing barrier culverts and net reduction in sediment as a result of road storage and decommissioning are expected to benefit westslope cutthroat trout survival and habitat and therefore maintain or improve recreational angling opportunities (Fisheries Resource Report, p. 12).

### Endangered Species Act

The Grouse BMU Compliance project is expected to result in long-term improvements to grizzly bear habitat by bringing the Grouse BMU up to the Forest Plan standards. The project would increase core habitat while decreasing Open Motorized Route Density and Total Motorized Road Density in the Grouse BMU. However, there would be short-term increases in Open Motorized Route Density during several phases of road storage; and a decrease in core, and Total Motorized Route Density increase, during the Grouse Creek Road (FSR 280) reroute. Since the potential effects during project activities are not insignificant, discountable or completely beneficial, the implementation of the proposed action may affect, and is likely to adversely affect grizzly bears and their habitat (EA, p. 22).

A complete biological assessment (BA) is provided within the project file for additional information. The BA determined that there would be no effect to woodland caribou, woodland caribou critical habitat, Canada lynx critical habitat, Kootenai River white sturgeon, Kootenai River white sturgeon critical habitat, water howellia or Spalding's catchfly. Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been completed for the project. The Service has determined that the project would not jeopardize the survival or recovery of the grizzly bear, and concurs with our determinations for bull trout and its designated critical habitat. The Service also acknowledges that the proposed project tiers to previous programmatic consultation for Canada lynx.

### Executive Order 13112

The proposed activities align with this Executive Order both by enacting measures to prevent new weed establishment, and also by taking steps to pro-actively monitor for new weed introductions or spread from existing weed infestations, so that treatments can be implemented effectively to prevent new introductions from spreading (Non-Native Invasive Species Assessment, p. 16).

### Executive Order 12898—Environmental Justice Act

The proposed action will not disproportionately impact minority or low-income populations. There were no public comments raised regarding environmental justice considerations, and no disproportional impacts to minority or low-income populations were identified during scoping or any other portion of public involvement during the course of this analysis. Therefore the proposed action complies with this order.

## Administrative Review and Objection Rights

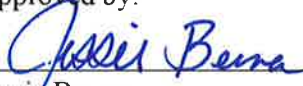
A draft Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact was issued on June 18, 2019, which was subject to the objection process pursuant to 36 CFR 218. The 45-day objection period commenced with the publication of a legal notice in the Coeur d'Alene Press on August 2, 2019.

## Implementation

I have satisfied the objection review requirements under 36 CFR 218.12, therefore, implementation on this project may begin immediately.

For further information concerning the Grouse BMU Compliance Project, contact Brett Lyndaker at (208) 267-6723 or [brett.lyndaker@usda.gov](mailto:brett.lyndaker@usda.gov) during normal business hours.

Approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jessie Berner  
District Ranger  
Sandpoint  
Idaho Panhandle National Forests

August 13, 2019

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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