SF Stillaguamish Vegetation Project
Objection Resolution Meeting Notes
December 19, 2017
10:00 AM-12:00 PM (Pacific Time)

Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie N.F. Supervisor's Office, 2930 Wetmore Ave., Room 5-C, Everett, WA

Meeting Objectives:

- Present concerns that the FS has decided to correct/modify
- Clarify areas where Responsible Official is not willing to modify decision
- Facilitate dialogue on remaining items

During the open dialogue, the Forest Supervisor is most interested in listening to the objectors' options for resolution, with the intent that there may be follow up meetings with the Responsible Official if there are further areas of resolution that can be explored. The meeting will be facilitated and notes will be kept. Times are drafted below, but we will be flexible if needed. While the meeting is open to the public, please note that only parties to the objection will be participating in the discussions with the Objection Reviewing Officer.

10:00 am Introductions (Facilitator)

- Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie NF Participants
  - Objection Reviewing officer: Jamie Kingsbury
  - Responsible Official: Peter Forbes
  - Others – Phyllis Reed, Project Leader (Notes), Lori Wisehart, Forest Environmental Coordinator, and David Kendrick Forest Vegetation Manager
- Objectors present – North Cascades Conservation Council (NCCC) - Mark Bardsley, and Dave Gladstone of NCCC/Pilchuck Audubon Society (PAS), and Allen Gibbs (PAS). American Forest Resource Council (AFRC) – Matt Comisky
- Objectors on phone - Sierra Club-Nete Olsen and Don Parks. Darrington Area Resource Advocates (DARA) - Walt Dortch

Meeting Rules (Facilitator – Lori Wisehart) – safety route out, restrooms, end by noon, chance to have dialog between objectors, reviewing officer, and the responsible official. Opportunity for conversation together.

10:10 am - Opening Statement (Objection Reviewing Officer-Jamie Kingsbury) - Welcome and thanks for being here. Meeting is an opportunity to be clear on objections, to have dialog on the project and to continue conversations with Peter (District Ranger) and Forest. No decision will be provided today, that will come later. Peter Forbes (Responsible Official): thanks for your attendance, has expectation that meeting can result in providing clarity and answers to some questions. Opportunity for dialog and to identify if there are items we can commit to. Peter reiterated that he is here to listen.

10:15 am Key Concerns and Resolution Proposals (Responsible Official)

1) Concerns the Forest Service has decided to correct or modify for the DN
   Corrections:
   1. **The MBS will correct discrepancies in the estimates of temporary roads either as errata to the Final EA or in the Final DN.**
      - Final DN will be updated with clarification of information regarding amount of temporary road construction (see attached table). Updated maps displaying road system to be used in thinning and riparian reserve have also been uploaded to Forest website and will be included in the Final DN.
      - Sixty miles of roads of temporary roads. Question on will they all be decommissioned? Peter: Yes, temporary roads will be decommissioned through the timber sale contract. If road footprint is used again (potential future use), it would be subject to a separate EA document. Explanation by Peter that not all areas would be under one sale, he expects that there would be 4 to 5 sequential sales.
      - Question – Is there a bond for covering road decommissioning? D. Kendrick (MBS Forest Vegetation Program Manager): A timber sale contract includes a bond which is typically 10% of the sale, and is a performance bond held for contractual obligations such as brush disposal, and road work. Lori (Forest Environmental Coordinator): The Forest can provide an example of a timber sale contract. Matt Comisky (AFRC): If an operator doesn't meet contract provisions, they are in breach of the contract so there is incentive to meet obligations in order to continue bidding on USFS timber sales.
      - Nete Olsen (Sierra Club) suggestion: One of the suggestions provided previously is that the project identify desired future conditions for all roads. What the desired condition for the roads over the long term should be incorporated into the EA now. Peter: Intent of EA was to look at the road conditions and needs over time. If there are younger stands with road access, roads were designated for storage for future use vs. decommission. Nete: Desire to have a statement that when ML1 roads use is no longer needed in LSR, roads would be decommissioned. Would like to see projections for all roads in LSR.
      - Don Parks (Sierra Club) Question: Are all the roads in the LSR slated for eventual decommissioning? Peter: No. There are roads to be used for recreation and administration. Roads not needed for recreation or administrative management would be closed, and a number of roads identified for decommissioning. Phyllis Reed (Project Leader) described the Road Status map (page 217 of the EA) which displays what roads would be open, administratively closed, closed, and decommissioned with the SF Stillaguamish Project. Jamie asked the question of what could we provide to help clarify the roads scenario?
      - **Don Parks – Would like a table of what each segment of the road would be with the EA decision, with the rationale for retaining the road – recreation or stand management.**
        - **Jaimie/Peter: Forest will provide the table described in the final DN.**
      - Lori: Note that there are some roads that are proposed for decommissioning that would not be used in the thinning sale.
      - Question: when will the road decommissioning happen? Peter: Roads would be closed at end of contract or for non-haul roads, when funding is available.

2. **The maintenance level for Sunrise Mine trailhead will be corrected in the Final DN and in an errata to the Final EA: ML2 to ML3 for Road 4065 to Sunrise Mine trailhead**.
3. Clarifications
   i. **ESA Consultation - The MBS will complete Section 7 Consultation, incorporate any new or adjusted mitigations into the selected alternative and determine if these changes need further effects analysis prior to issuing a final Decision Notice/FONSI.**
      1. Completion of ESA consultation Q: Will there be another review process? Peter/Lori: if adjustment is not outside of the scope of current analysis, there would not be a need for another review. If there is a change that is substantial, then there would be another review period. The Biological Opinion (BO) will become part of the Project File. Q from Matt: When will BO be done? Peter: The Forest is in line with other agencies for FWS services, and the Forest has submitted other projects, for consultation so do not expect to have the BO until in the new year. Matt: what are their (FWS) time lines? USFS: Explanation of process – draft BA to Services to get agreement on complete BA, then Services have 90 days for BO.

   ii. **Daylighting- additional description of the proposed action will be provided in the Final DN.** Trees targeted for daylighting are overhanging deciduous trees (such as alder, cottonwood) that frequently have branch breakage into ditch lines or limit safe transport on the road. Hazard trees that are leaning to the road would also be candidates for removal if deemed a safety hazard. Large diameter trees would be left on site as per the mitigations.
      1. Peter: Explanation on why we are proposing to do "daylighting. Question from Matt: What happens with the large diameter trees? Peter: retention of trees of 20 inches dbh and greater is described in the guidelines in table 7 of EA. If there is large tree that is a hazard tree (safety issue), it is retained as down wood.
      2. PAS/NCCC – concern with having sufficient USFS staff to cover the work with daylighting and sale preparation. Peter: we have Timber Sale Administrators (TSAs) on both ends of the forest to cover contract obligations.
      3. Jamie Question to Matt: do other landowners provide guidelines vs. marking each tree? Matt: marking/managing varies by landowner. Owners typically manage for defined road width and manage the veg. within that width. Don't usually have diameter limits, usually see the USFS mark the trees. Sees potential advantage for a purchaser mark.
      4. Dave of PAS/NCCC had a concern with what has gone on in the past on USFS timber sales. Concern with daylighting meeting LSR guidelines and if it would be taken advantage of by operator. Matt: selective cutting of hardwoods is tough and not a great income for operator, so there is not an incentive to do more than is needed/directed. Dave (closed canopy is important to LSR, concern if we open up canopy, it may be counter to the LSR objectives. Concern with control. Of work on sales.
      5. Walt Dortch (DARA) comment on daylighting being previously done, with Dans Cr. Road (#24) being an example worth reviewing, roadside

looks great. There are examples that the USFS can provide to help our understanding.

6. Don Parks (SC): cutting in the LSR is intended to accelerate the LSR objectives, need to keep that objective in mind.
7. Walt Dortch: LSR roads are open to recreation, so maintaining roads in a safe condition within an LSR is appropriate and is provided for in LSR guidelines. Don Parks – agreed, road left on the system differ from temporary roads. Phyllis – described the temp road safety aspect and why there would be some daylighting along temporary roads. Nete: her expectation is that timber haul routes that go to rec sites would have daylighting, but the temp roads would not have the same level of daylighting as the system roads. Need to clarify how this is accomplished. Peter: USFS marks the trees along the routes, TSA approves requests from purchaser on tree removal for safe entry. Note – most of the temporary roads are within stands. Nete: example of the Gordon units where road between units. **Don – document doesn't define more than one level of daylighting – recommends that there be a summary with daylighting to be described at different levels of intensity between temporary and system roads.**
8. Don: Concern with amount of trees that might be taken, and being more precise in setting out guidelines for not losing trees. Err on side of conservation to meet objectives of LSR.

iii. **Need for new temporary roads: Clarifying rationale for new temporary road construction will be provided in Final DN**. To avoid potential impacts from use of previous, temporary or unclassified roads (existing footprint) that crossed sensitive riparian reserve areas or unstable sites. (see EA Alternative 2a and 2B)

4. Objections raised that the Forest will resolve as requested by objectors:
   i. Post-implementation trips for the public will be scheduled to visit the SF Stillaguamish project area, and to other thinning projects as per public interest. Peter: Forest would provide field trips to review the EA and meeting the intent of the project.

2) Suggestions for modification of decision from the objectors that will not be considered:

   1. EA to EIS – no issues identified at this time to lead to EIS

   2. Other items?

3) Facilitated open dialogue between the objectors, Responsible Official and Objection Reviewing Officer. Discussion of remaining objection issues and potential resolution

   1. Walt: Happy to see the project. Has a primary concern that project meet objectives, and also have stewardship opportunities for roads, Aquatic organism passage (AOPs, recreation, etc. Desire that the project be designed to provide funding for all objectives, not just the non-commercial thinning. Request that with the Non-commercial thinning, the Forest provide a list of the units with age and objective (huckleberry, diversity of

habitat, stand development, etc.) and estimated costs for non-thinning work. Would like to have displayed how non-commercial thinning might impact funds for other proposed work (roads, AOP, trails, recreation). Peter explained stewardship projects, and retained receipts being available for work on the ground. Jamie asked if costs of non-commercial would make other projects moot. DARA request: add to final DN language that non-commercial thinning would become part of suite of projects and not necessarily the top priority.

2. Nete – desires an exit plan for the road system.

3. Don Parks– feels there has been good discussion. Will need to see clarifications, knowing a little bit more on the concerns raised, will look for the discussions in the final form of document.

4. PAS/NCCC – concern for fish, need to get money for fish work before the thinning happens. There are a number of sources available for funding. Would USFS be able to get $ before logging? Walt – understands the concern and sincerity of the concern, but also recognizes the dilemma that the USFS faces. There are problem out there, without the budget to tackle everything. Getting money in advance may not be realistic while the stewardship program may provide the funding. The project has the opportunity to provide the funding to do the work. Sees a need to create the budget to do the desired restoration work. Peter: is not comfortable with committing to get money before starting the thinning. Jamie: appreciates the concern to have the money up front; not sure what we can get beforehand, but appreciates the concern. Peter: underlying objective is improve the condition of the watershed. Matt: there can also be retained KV funds for work on the project activities.

5. PAS/NCCC – concern with the USFS monitoring of multiple projects going on at the same time. Peter: Timber sale administrator TSA would have more time to cover the sale in one area/one drainage vs. being spread across the Forest with time spent in travel. Lori clarification: Is the concern that there only be one sale active at a time? Yes. Mark Bardsley: NCCC would like to review the thinned sale before another sale is active. Peter offered field trip to current sales such as the Finney timber sale.

6. AFRC/Matt – asked for clarification on the non-commercial thinning, seems that the effort is late getting into the stands. Why do non-commercial thinning if potentially commercial in a few years? Would like to have non-commercial stands better described as to why they were proposed for non-commercial thinning. Also has some questions on economic analysis for doing the non-commercial work. Waiting to see what the ESA mitigations might be. See Walt comment – table/list on non-commercial.

4) Other Thoughts

1. Nete – Alternative 2B, final road mapping - does not want to see unclassified roads fall through cracks for decommissioning, if roads accessed other areas deeper in the drainage, when will work be done? Would like to see that there be a time frame established for the hydrological evaluation of roads not used for haul. Question is on

road sections (Pink roads on Road Status map) that were identified for another review, don't leave stranded road sections without treatment. ML1 closed roads that may access other stands for future treatment, would like USFS to take a deeper look if stands need treatment. If stands are only a moderate or low priority for treatment, then decommission road and take the future stand treatments off the table. Peter responded that we will take that concern into consideration.

2. Jamie – feels positive in the discussions and in the clarifications of where concerns are.

11:45 am Conclusion and wrap-up/next steps

- Notes were taken and will be distributed, tasks identified:
    - Add a table to Final DN that identifies each of the road segments and rationale for the selected maintenance level.
    - Add a table to Final DN that identifies each of the non-commercial thinning units and both the purpose rationale for such treatment (and cost estimates).
    - Add clarifying language to final DN explaining that need for implementation of pre-/non-commercial thinning treatments will be evaluated along with other activities (i.e., AOP, trailhead enhancements, etc.).
    - Add clarifying language to final DN explaining that "daylighting" encompasses a variety of actions along roads and explain what types of actions are expected on temporary or ml1 roads versus higher use roads.

Next steps:

1. Objectors are free to continue discussion with Peter and each other.

2. Will be a written response – timeline has ben be extended 30 days to January 22.
- The Reviewing Officer will issue a written response to objections at the completion of her review with her decision. The final decision will depend on when the BOs are received.

Forest will also provide a blank/sample timber sale contract on the Forest website and will organize a public field trip to visit previously thinned stands or the active Finney timber sale (not part of SF Stillaguamish project).

SF Stillaguamish Project (Road lengths and stream crossing #s are approximate as calculated from a GIS mapping exercise)

Temporary Road Activities	Temporary Stream Crossings	Temporary Road Construction Activity	Proposed Action (Miles)
New Temporary Road Construction	3	Within Riparian Reserve	0.5
		Within aquatic nocut	0.02
		Outside Riparian Reserve	0.9
Temporary Road Reconstruction	190	Within Riparian Reserve	39.8
		Within aquatic nocut	1.08
		Outside Riparian Reserve	18.4
Total Stream Crossings	**193**	----	--
Total Temp Road Construction/Reconstruction (miles)		Within Riparian Reserve	40.3
		Within aquatic nocut	1.1
		Outside Riparian Reserve	19.3