

**Forest Service**

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# News Release

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## **Huckleberry Landscape Restoration Project Final Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Record of Decision**

**Council, ID.,** March 2, 2020 – The Council Ranger District has completed the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Record of Decision for the Huckleberry Landscape Restoration Project.

The Huckleberry Landscape Restoration Project is the fourth project that is part of the Payette National Forest’s Weiser - Little Salmon Headwaters Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project. Other projects have been the Mill Creek - Council Mountain project, Lost Creek - Boulder Creek project, and the Middle Fork Weiser River project. This project encompasses approximately 67,000 acres on the Council Ranger District of the Payette National Forest, and is located northeast of Council, primarily in the Brownlee Reservoir Subbasin, and the Indian, Lick, and Bear Creek subwatersheds.

Proposed restoration activities include timber harvest, biomass harvest, road reconstruction, road realignment, temporary road construction, road storage, road decommissioning, culvert removal, culvert replacement, thinning of sub-merchantable trees, prescribed fire, and other actions. Specific vegetation treatments are proposed to enhance Northern Idaho Ground Squirrel habitat, a threatened species as listed by the Endangered Species Act, as well as species dependent on dry coniferous forests (e.g., white-headed woodpecker), while maintaining habitat for other Forest sensitive and ESA-listed species. Proposed recreation improvements include developed and dispersed recreation site improvements, motorized and non-motorized trail development and realignment, trailhead improvements, and the conversion of Smith Mountain Lookout to a public rental cabin.

This project is based in part on recommendations provided by the Payette Forest Coalition. The Payette Forest Coalition is a collaborative group formed under the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 whose recommendations are structured to meet the intent of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program. The Payette Forest Coalition members represent stakeholders from a broad range of interests including the, environmental community, timber industry, recreational groups and state and county government.

The purpose of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program is to encourage the collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes. For more information on the Payette Forest Coalition and their involvement in the Payette National Forest’s Weiser - Little Salmon Headwaters Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project visit their website at [www.payetteforestcoalition.org](http://www.payetteforestcoalition.org).

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The Environmental Protection Agency will publish a Notice of Availability for the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Record of Decision in the Federal Register on March 6, 2020. A legal notice was published in the newspaper of record, the Idaho Statesman, on February 28, 2020. The publication date of this legal notice is the exclusive means for calculating the 45-day objection period for the Project. Those wishing to submit an objection should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

### **Eligibility to File Objections**

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

Individual members of organizations must have submitted their own comments to meet the requirements of eligibility as an individual. Objections received on behalf of an organization are considered as those of the organization only. If an objection is submitted on behalf of a number of individuals or organizations, each individual or organization listed must meet the eligibility requirement of having previously submitted comments on the project (§ 218.7). Names and addresses of objectors will become part of the public record.

### **Contents of an Objection**

Incorporation of documents by reference in the objection is permitted only as provided for at § 218.8(b). Minimum content requirements of an objection are identified in § 218.8(d) include:

- Objector's name and address with a telephone number if available; with signature or other verification of authorship supplied upon request;
- Identification of the lead objector when multiple names are listed, along with verification upon request;
- Name of project, name and title of the responsible official, national forest/ranger district where project is located, and
- Sufficient narrative description of those aspects of the proposed project objected to, specific issues related to the project, how environmental law, regulation, or policy would be violated, and suggested remedies which would resolve the objection.
- Statement demonstrating the connection between prior specific written comments on this project and the content of the objection, unless the objection issue arose after the designated opportunity(ies) for comment.

### **Filing an Objection**

Written objections, including any attachments, may be submitted to the reviewing officer through the project web page: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=50218>. Simply click on "Comment /Object on Project" on the right side of the page and fill out the web form with your comments. Written objections, including any attachments, may also be addressed to Reviewing Officer, Intermountain Region USFS, 324 25th Street, Ogden, Utah 84401; or fax to 801-625-5277. The office business hours

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for those submitting hand-delivered objections are: 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic objections may also be submitted in a format such as an email message, pdf, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), and Word (.doc or .docx) to [objections-intermtn-regional-office@fs.fed.us](mailto:objections-intermtn-regional-office@fs.fed.us). Objections must be submitted within 45 days following the publication date of this legal notice in the newspaper of record. It is the responsibility of Objectors to ensure their objection is received in a timely manner (§ 218.9).

***The publication date in the Idaho Statesman, newspaper of record, is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection to this project. The objection period starts the day after the publication of the legal notice per 36 CFR 218.6 (b) and runs for 45 days. Those wishing to object to this proposed project should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.***

For additional information, please contact Mark Fox, Project Leader at the Council Ranger District, 208-253-0164.

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