



File Code: 2670

Date: February 18, 2020

Jodi Bush
Field Supervisor, Ecological Services
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601-6287

Dear Ms. Bush:

Attached is the Biological Assessment (BA) for grizzly bear for the Piquett Project. The project is located on the West Fork Ranger District of the Bitterroot National Forest (BNF). The project area is approximately 5,799 acres, located within the Piquett Creek (4,221 acres) and West Fork Bitterroot River-Lloyd Creek (1,567 acres) watersheds, however, the Categorical Exclusion Category under Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 (HFRA) Section 605(b)(1)(A) limit the project size to 3000 acres. The designated project area is larger to allow for flexibility in vegetation management activities.

The BNF is requesting informal consultation for the threatened grizzly bear, and the effects determination is "May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect". The BNF is requesting concurrence from the Fish and Wildlife Service for this effects determination for grizzly bear.

This BA is the product of extensive communication between BNF and the US Fish and Wildlife Service regarding the project and expected effects. South Zone Wildlife Biologist Justin Martens discussed this project with Service biologist Carly Lewis during several phone calls, two Level 1 meetings between the BNF and the Service, and a field visit to the project site.

If you have any questions about this project or the determination, please contact Justin Martens (wildlife biologist) at 406-821-3269 (M-F, 0800-1630) or by e-mail at justin.martens@usda.gov.

Thank you for your review.

Sincerely,

SETH CARBONARI
District Ranger

