



Guide to Commenting

The Forest Service is responsible for managing public lands in the public interest. The scoping period is an opportunity to be involved in the planning process, to offer thoughts on alternative ways for the Forest Service to accomplish what is proposed, to comment on the activities proposed, and to work with the Forest Service in doing what is right for the land, while also enhancing social and economic vitality.

Comments that provide relevant and new information with sufficient detail and rationale are the most useful and are referred to as specific written comments. Tips on writing useful comments are provided below. The Forest Service reads and considers all comments and identifies the key issues for consideration to help shape project alternatives.

This project will have two designated public comment periods before a decision is reached: the scoping comment period and the draft analysis document comment period. The public scoping period for the Gold Creek Valley Restoration project is expected to begin in March 2020. The comment period on the draft analysis document will begin when that document is released for public comment. Upon completion of the final analysis document and draft decision document, a 45-day objection period will begin. Further information on the objection process is provided below.

The Proposed Action

We encourage the public to view project details, maps, and subsequent analysis through the project website available at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57415>

If you are unable to access documents online, limited hardcopies can be requested by writing, calling, or visiting the Cle Elum Ranger Station at 803 W 2nd St, Cle Elum, WA 98922 (telephone 509-852-1100; open Monday-Friday, 8:00 – 4:00; closed 12:30 to 1:15 pm and on legal holidays).

How to Submit Comments

All comments, whether submitted electronically or via postal mail, will be added to a web-based system (described below) and can be publicly viewed in a “reading room”. All commenters will be added to the project mailing list.

Electronically:

We use a web-based system called CARA (Comment Analysis and Response Application) for submitting comments electronically. This is the preferred method of receiving comments versus postal mail because CARA collects comments into a project-specific website available to other commenters for viewing and makes it more efficient to analyze the comments.

You can access CARA through the project website, clicking on the “[Comment/Object on Project](#)” link at the right side of the page.

After you click this link, you will see information about the commenting and objection requirements at the top of the page. If a designated comment period is open, the “Option to Submit Comment Electronically” and form will be available at the bottom of the page.

- Please be as detailed and specific as possible when completing this form.
- The “Name and Email” fields are the only two required fields; however, all the information is useful, and we encourage you to include the information.
- By submitting a comment on this project, you will automatically be added to our mailing list. If an email is provided you will be on our email mailing list; however, if you wish to be on the postal mailing list we need all of the information in the fields above. You may enter “Anonymous” into the name field if you do not wish to submit your name, but you will not be eligible to participate in the objection phase of this project if you do so (see information on page 2). All comment letters and contact information are included in the project record for this project and may be released under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).
- Input your comment in the “Letter Text” space. Attachments can be included but are not necessary if they are a duplicate of the comment itself. If you decide to attach a document, they must be submitted in Microsoft Word, rich text format (rtf), or Adobe Portable Document (pdf) format. Some types of useful attachments include maps, pictures, or supportive documents that reinforce the comment you are making.
- The maximum files size for uploads is 10 MBs. Once you hit “Submit”, your comment will be entered into the system.

U.S. Mail:

Please address comments sent through the postal system to:

Patty Garvey-Darda, Project Leader
Cle Elum Ranger District
803 W 2nd Street
Cle Elum, WA 98922

If you need assistance in submitting a comment and/or working through the electronic system, please call Patty at 509-852-1029, or Kathryn Furr, Environmental Coordinator, at 509-996-4043.

Tips on Useful Commenting

Comments on the Proposed Action are encouraged and are essential to helping us make the right decisions for the good of the land and the public we serve. Comments that provide relevant and new information with sufficient detail and rationale are the most useful and are referred to as specific comments. Below you will find definitions and examples of what is a specific written comment and what is a non-specific written comment.

Specific Comments:

As defined in 36 CFR 218.2, specific written comments are those submitted to the responsible official or designee during a designated opportunity for public participation (§218.5(a)) provided for a proposed project. Written comments can include submission of transcriptions or other notes from oral statements or presentation. For the purposes of this rule, specific written comments should be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and must include supporting reasons for the responsible official to consider.

Example:

- I see vehicles driving in Gold Creek and think preventing motorized vehicles from being able to drive in the stream bed would help address impacts to bull trout and improve habitat quality.

Non-Specific Comments:

Non-specific comments are outside the scope of the analysis; appear as a “vote” (the NEPA process is not about voting); do not provide supporting rationale; or lack sufficient specificity to support either a change in the project, analysis document, or to permit a meaningful response (i.e., emotional and without rationale). These comments are not considered in further refinement or analysis of the project.

Example:

- I do not support this project at all. It is not in the best interest of the general public.

Participating in the Objection Process

This project is subject to pre-decisional administrative review, also called the “objection process.” The predecisional administrative review process replaced the appeal process in March of 2013. The process provides an opportunity for individuals and organizations to file an objection to a project before the final decision is signed. This allows interested individuals and organizations to advise the Responsible Official about concerns regarding the final decision before the decision is made.

Only individuals or organizations that submitted specific written comments with their name and address during a designated opportunity for public participation (including the public scoping period and/or the draft Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Statement public comment period) may object. Anonymous comments will be accepted and considered during the analysis process, but do not provide standing for the objection process. Notices of objection must meet the requirements outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations at 36 CFR 218.5.