



File Code: 1950

Date: October 22, 2013

Dear Reviewer:

The Forest Service, Payette National Forest, New Meadows Ranger District has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Lost Creek-Boulder Creek Landscape Restoration Project and is seeking comment. The purpose of the project is to move the project area towards desired conditions as defined in the Payette National Forest Land and Resources Management Plan (2003) for vegetation, soil, water, riparian, and aquatic resources; improve recreation opportunities and facilities; and contribute to the economic vitality of the communities adjacent to the Payette National Forest. The proposed action includes approximately 40,000 acres of commercial and non-commercial thinning; approximately 45,000 acres of prescribed burning; watershed improvements including road closures, road decommissioning, and fish passage barrier improvements; and recreation improvements including ATV/UTV trail work and dispersed camping improvements near Lost Valley Reservoir.

The project encompasses approximately 80,000 acres on the New Meadows Ranger District, and is located approximately 10 miles north and west of New Meadows within the following townships: Township 22 N, Range 1 W Sections 25, 26; T 22 N, R 1 E Sections 30-32; T 21 N, R 1 W Sections 10-15, 21-28, 32-36; T 21 N, R 1 E Sections 4-9, 17-19; T 20 N, R 2 W Sections 13, 24, 25, 35, 36; T 20 N, R 1 W Sections 1-36; T 20 N, R 1 E Section 31; T 19 N, R 2 W Sections 1, 2, 10-15, 22-26, 35, 36; T 19 N, R 1 W Sections 4-9, 17-23, 27-34; T 18 N, R 2 W Sections 1, 2, 12; and T 18 N, R 1 W Sections 3-10, 14-21, 28-29, Boise Meridian.

The DEIS, Notice of Availability, Legal Notice, and other information are available for review at the New Meadows Ranger District and at the Forest's web site at www.fs.fed.us/nepa/fs-usda-pop.php/?project=33830. Additional information regarding the new objection process or this action (including hard copies or CD's of the DEIS) can be obtained from: Holly Hutchinson, New Meadows District Environmental Coordinator, 3674 Highway 95, New Meadows, ID 83654; by phone at 208-347-0325; or by e-mail at hollyahutchinson@fs.fed.us.

How to Comment and Timeframe

The Environmental Protection Agency will publish a Notice of Availability (NOA) for the DEIS in the *Federal Register*, expected on November 1, 2013. Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral, and electronic comments concerning this action will be accepted for 45 calendar days following that date. The publication date of the Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register* is the exclusive means for



calculating the comment period for this analysis. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Written comments must be submitted to Responsible Official Keith Lannom, Payette National Forest Supervisor; c/o: Holly Hutchinson, 800 West Lakeside Avenue, McCall, ID 83638. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00am to 4:30pm Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Comments can also be submitted by FAX to 208-634-0744. Oral comments must be provided at the Responsible Official's office during normal business hours via telephone 208-634-0700, TDD/TTY: 202-720-2600, or in person.

Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, .pdf, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc) to comments-intermtn-payette@fs.fed.us. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to a comment, a verification of identity will be required for objection eligibility. If using an electronic message, a scanned signature is one way to provide verification.

Objection Process

If you are receiving this letter, you provided comments on, or otherwise expressed interest in the Lost Creek-Boulder Creek Landscape Restoration Project and/or similar projects on the Payette National Forest. Scoping for the Lost-Creek Boulder Creek Landscape Restoration Project took place in March, 2013. When the scoping period began, the associated documentation indicated that the upcoming decision would be subject to an administrative appeal process according to the Code of Federal Regulations (36 CFR 215); this process allowed people who submitted comments during the comment period on the draft EIS an opportunity to appeal the final decision after it is signed. ***However, on March 27, 2013, new regulations were released that will apply to the Lost Creek-Boulder Creek Landscape Restoration Project.***

The new regulations, found at 36 CFR 218, provide an opportunity for individuals, organizations and tribal entities to file an objection to a project before the final decision is signed. This allows interested individuals, organizations and tribal entities to advise the responsible official about concerns regarding the final decision *before* the decision is made.

Here's how it works:

- The new 218 regulations allow anyone who submitted timely, specific written comments about the proposed project during any designated opportunity for public comment, to file an objection to the draft decision (36 CFR 218.5).
 - *What this means to you* is that if you have submitted timely, specific written comments on the Lost Creek-Boulder Creek Landscape Restoration Project during the scoping period, the review of the Draft EIS, or during any of the public meetings, you will have standing to object to the draft decision.
- When the final EIS and draft Record of Decision are released for public review, you will have 45 days in which to review the documents and, if you choose, file an objection to the draft Record of Decision.

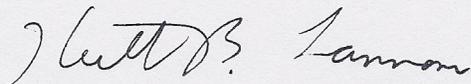
- Specific directions on how to file an objection are provided in 36 CFR 218.8; the regulations are included with this letter for your convenience.
- Objections will be subject to review by a “reviewing officer;” because the Responsible Official for the Lost Creek-Boulder Creek Landscape Restoration Project is the Payette National Forest Supervisor, the reviewing officer will be the Regional Forester.
- The objection process includes an opportunity for the objector to meet with the reviewing officer and the responsible official, with the objective of resolving the concerns expressed in the objection.
- The responsible official cannot sign the final decision until the reviewing officer has responded in writing to all pending objections, and the decision must be consistent with any instructions issued by the reviewing officer.
- There will be NO opportunity for additional administrative review or appeal of the final decision.

For more information on how the objection process works for projects and activities implementing land and resource management plans and the requirements, you may read the regulations under 36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B on the National Forest Service web site at www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-03-27/pdf/2013-06857.pdf. Questions regarding the new objection process can be directed to Holly Hutchinson, New Meadows Ranger District Environmental Coordinator (contact information listed above).

What's next for Lost Creek-Boulder Creek Landscape Restoration Project?

At this time, the Payette National Forest is seeking comment on the DEIS. The 45-day comment period will begin with the publication of the Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*. After the 45-day comment period the Forest will be analyzing and responding to the comments received on the DEIS. Once that work is completed, the project interdisciplinary planning team will work on finalizing the analysis and preparing a final EIS for my review. I will then write a draft Record of Decision (ROD) to document the rationale for my decision. I expect that we will circulate the final EIS and draft ROD in late February/early March of 2014.

I sincerely thank you for your interest in the Payette National Forest.



KEITH B. LANNOM
Forest Supervisor

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