



**File Code:** 1570

**Date:** August 4, 2014

#14-04-00-0032-OB218

Tom Partin  
President  
American Forest Resource Council  
5100 S. W. Macadam Avenue  
Suite 350  
Portland, OR 97239

CERTIFIED MAIL – RETURN  
RECEIPT REQUESTED

Dear Mr. Partin:

This letter is in response to your objection, dated May 23, 2014, on behalf of American Forest Resource Council regarding the Lost Creek-Boulder Creek Landscape Restoration Project located on the Payette National Forest. I have read your objection and reviewed the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the draft Record of Decision (ROD), the content in the project file, as well as considered the comments submitted during the opportunities for public comment for this project. Based on this review, conducted in accordance with 36 CFR 218, I understand the disclosed environmental effects of this project.

The 36 CFR 218 regulations provide for a pre-decisional administrative review process in which the objector provides sufficient narrative description of the project, specific Objections related to the project, and suggests remedies that would resolve the objection (36 CFR 218.8). The regulations also allow, in part, for the parties to meet in order to resolve the Objections (36 CFR 218.11(a)). While a call was held on June 20, 2014, no resolution of objections were forthcoming from it.

I find your objection satisfies the requirements of 36 CFR 218.8. As specified at 36 CFR 218.11(b), I must provide a written response that sets forth reasons for the response; however, this written response need not be point-by-point. The Responsible Official and I have reviewed the project in light of the Objections presented in your objection letter. I have considered your Objections and suggested remedies and included my reasons for response to these Objections and suggested remedies, which are detailed below.

## Overview of Project

The Lost Creek–Boulder Creek Landscape Restoration Project is analyzing proposed landscape restoration treatment activities in the 80,000 acre area on the New Meadows Ranger District, Payette National Forest. The purpose of the proposed action is as follows:

- 1) Move vegetation toward the desired conditions defined in the Forest Plan and consistent with the science in the Forest's draft Wildlife Conservation Strategy.
- 2) Move all subwatersheds within the project area toward the desired condition for soil, water, riparian, and aquatic resources and improve the Boulder Creek subwatershed from the



“Impaired” category to the “Functioning at Risk” category as described in the Watershed Condition Framework.

3) Manage recreation use in Boulder Creek and in the vicinity of Lost Creek with an emphasis on providing sanitation facilities, identifying and hardening dispersed recreation areas, and developing new trail opportunities.

4) Contribute to the economic vitality of the communities adjacent to the Payette National Forest.

The preferred alternative is Alternative B. This alternative proposes non-commercial and commercial thinning, prescribed burning, watershed improvements such as road closures, road decommissioning, and fish passage improvements, and recreation improvements including ATV/UTV trails and dispersed camping improvements. Alternative B responds to the purpose and need as stated above, and incorporates the recommendations of the Payette Forest Coalition and other concerns expressed in comment letters and public meetings.

## **Response to Objections & Suggested Remedies**

### **Suggested Remedy**

Your suggested remedy includes that Alternative D be selected as the preferred alternative. Alternative D restores more habitat and generates significantly more revenue than Alternative B which will provide the forest with significantly more opportunities for restoration of riparian and aquatic areas, recreation improvements, and road improvements.

### **Objections not Requiring Further Discussion or Instructions**

***Objection:** Your Objection presented concerns that the LCBC project does not meet the purpose and need. You also stated Alternative D better meets the purpose and need than the preferred Alternative B, for improving habitat for specific wildlife species, restoring connectivity in streams in the subwatersheds, and for contributing to the economic vitality of communities adjacent to the Payette National Forest.*

**Response:** Based on my review of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the draft Record of Decision (ROD), and the content in the project file, I find these objections do not require further discussion or instructions to the Responsible Official because Alternatives B and D both meet the purpose and need for improving habitat for specific wildlife species, restoring connectivity in streams in the subwatersheds, and for contributing to the economic vitality of communities adjacent to the Payette National Forest.

## **Conclusion**

The Responsible Official’s rationale for this project is clear and the reasons for the project are logical and responsive to direction contained in the Payette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. As described above, I made a reasonable and appropriate effort to resolve the concerns that were brought forward while maintaining a balanced approach to managing the lands and meeting the purpose and need of the project.

I am instructing Forest Supervisor Keith Lannom to proceed with issuance of the Record of Decision for this project. My review constitutes the final administrative determination of the

Department of Agriculture; no further review from any other Forest Service or USDA official of my written response to your objection is available [36 CFR 218.11(b)(2)].

Sincerely,

/s/ George C. Iverson  
GEORGE C. IVERSON  
Objection Reviewing Officer

cc: Keith Lannom