



File Code: 1570

Date: April 8, 2011

Ms. Nancy Warren
Northwood Alliance
6063 Baker Lake Rd.
Conover, WI 54519-9519

RE: Appeal of the Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Off-Highway Vehicle Connector Routes Project Environmental Assessment, Bergland, Bessemer, Iron River, Kenton and Watersmeet Ranger Districts, Ottawa National Forest, Appeal # 11-09-07-0004 A215

Dear Ms. Warren:

On February 8, 2011, you filed a notice of appeal pursuant to 36 C.F.R. § 215.11, as an individual and on behalf of Northwood Alliance for the Off-Highway Vehicle Connector Routes Project, Ottawa National Forest (Forest). Forest Supervisor Susan Spear signed the Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact (DN/FONSI) on December 17, 2010, and the legal notice was published in *The Daily Globe* (Ironwood, MI) and *Iron County Reporter* on January 5, 2011.

I have reviewed the Project Record (PR) and also considered the recommendation of the Appeal Reviewing Officer (ARO), Forest Supervisor Tom Wagner, White Mountain National Forest, regarding the disposition of your appeal. The ARO's review focused on the decision documentation developed by the Responsible Official, Forest Supervisor Susan Spear, and the issues in your appeal. The ARO's recommendation is enclosed. This letter constitutes my decision on your appeal and on the specific relief requested.

FOREST ACTION BEING APPEALED

The Off-Highway Vehicle Connector Routes decision implements a Modified Alternative 3 based on the analysis performed for the 2009 Environmental Assessment (EA) and 2010 Revised EA. The decision designates road routes and trails to provide: a system of travel that connects the state of Michigan's Multi-Use Trails, connections to local communities, and connections to other currently designated OHV routes. It also includes improvement and maintenance of selected routes, a site-specific Forest Plan amendment to allow OHV use on two roads, site-specific design criteria and monitoring, and an adaptive management strategy to address unauthorized use.



APPEAL REVIEWING OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

After reviewing the PR and considering the appeal issues raised by the Appellants, the ARO recommended that Forest Supervisor Susan J. Spear's DN/FONSI of December 17, 2010, be remanded. He recommended further analysis and disclosure related to illegal cross-country OHV use. He found no violation in law, regulation or policy related to your remaining issues.

DECISION

After careful review of the PR and your appeal, I concur with the ARO's analysis and findings regarding your appeal issues. **To avoid repetition, I adopt his rationale as my own, and refer you to the enclosed recommendation letter, dated April 8, 2011, for further details.** It is my decision to remand Forest Supervisor Susan Spear's December 17, 2010, DN/FONSI for the OHV Connector Routes Project on the Forest based on the need for more analysis and disclosure related to illegal cross-country OHV use.

Pursuant to 36 C.F.R. § 215.18(c) this decision constitutes the final administrative determination of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. **This decision may be implemented on, but not before, the 15th business day following the date of this letter (36 C.F.R. § 215.9(b)).**

Sincerely,

/s/ LOGAN LEE (for)
KENT P. CONNAUGHTON
Appeal Deciding Officer
Regional Forester

Enclosure

cc: Mailroom R9 Ottawa
Marlanea L French-Pombier
Tom Wagner
Stacy Lemieux
Anthony E Erba
Patricia R Rowell