



File Code: 1570

Date: October 25, 2012

Jeff Juel
Forest Policy Director
The Lands Council
25 W. Main Street, Suite 222
Spokane, WA 99201

**CERTIFIED MAIL – RETURN
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Dear Mr. Juel:

This constitutes my decision, pursuant to 36 CFR 215.18(b)(1), on your appeal (#12-06-14-0004-215) of Pomeroy Ranger District, Umatilla National Forest District Ranger Monte Fujishin's Record of Decision (ROD) for the South George Vegetation Management Project Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

Background

On July 17, 2012, Monte Fujishin, District Ranger for the Umatilla National Forest signed a record of decision (ROD) for the South George Vegetation Management Project FEIS. His decision to implement Alternative B, as modified includes:

- 2,900 acres of fuels treatment including pile burning and prescribed burning;
- 3,000 acres of prescribed landscape fire;
- 1,150 acres of non-commercial thinning and ladder fuel removal;
- Using helicopter, skyline, and ground based logging systems, implement 3,020 acres of improvement cutting (variable thinning); 80 acres of low thinning; 550 acres of seed tree regeneration harvest; and 250 acres of clearcut harvest with reserve trees;
- Road maintenance on 46.5 miles of ML 2 and ML 3 road;
- Use of 32.5 miles of ML 1 road;
- 3 miles of temporary road construction.

Modifications to the decision include:

- Implementation of helicopter logging in units #1 (approximately 100 acres) and #10 (approximately 158 acres) will be based on economic feasibility at the time of operation. If not economically feasible stand characteristics may still be manipulated by other methods such as manual thinning and burning. This strategy will only be implemented in the remaining stand structure can be properly protected to maintain other resource values. This also will result in less temporary road construction (approx. 0.64 miles).
- Decommissioning of approximately 31 miles of system roads.
- Any unauthorized non-system roads or trails located in harvest units will have entry areas made impassible after harvest activities.



- Hogback Road (FR 4302) will have the existing seasonal closure extended annually from September 15 to November 30th and will change from an operational maintenance level 3 to operational maintenance level 2.

Pursuant to 36 CFR 215.17, an attempt was made to seek informal resolution of the appeals. The record indicates that informal resolution was not reached with American Forest Resource Council, Boise Cascade or The Lands Council/Blue Mountain Biodiversity Project/Hells Canyon Preservation Council. Informal resolution was reached with the State of Washington, Department of Fish and Wildlife.

My review of this appeal has been conducted in accordance with 36 CFR 215.18, *Formal review and disposition procedures*. I have reviewed the appeal record, including the recommendations of the Appeal Reviewing Officer. A copy of his recommendation is enclosed. The Appeal Reviewing Officer focused his review on the appeal record and the issues that were raised in all of the appeals.

Appeal Decision

After a detailed review of the record and the Appeal Reviewing Officer's recommendation, I affirm the Responsible Official's decision with instructions for the South George Vegetation Management Project and deny your requested relief. I instruct the District Ranger to complete an errata sheet that corrects minor errors that have been found since the ROD was signed and posting this errata sheet to the Forest's public website as well as provide it to appellants. This decision constitutes the final administrative determination of the Department of Agriculture [36 CFR 215.18(c)].

A copy of this letter will be posted on the national appeals web page at <http://www.fs.fed.us/appeals>.

Sincerely,

/s/ John Laurence
JOHN LAURENCE
Acting Forest Supervisor