United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

Idaho Panhandle National Forests

Bonners Ferry Ranger District
6286 Main Street
Bonners Ferry, ID 83805
(208) 267-5561
FAX (208) 267-3732

File Code: 1950

Date: March 7, 2008

Dear Interested Public:

Enclosed is a copy of the completed Twin Skin Healthy Forests Restoration (HFRA) Project Environmental Assessment (EA) and Draft Finding of No-Significant Impact (FONSI). I have included you in this mailing because you have an interest in, or previously requested to be included on the project mailing list, or have submitted specific written comments related to the project.

The Twin Skin HFRA project proposes fuels reduction treatments on National Forest System lands near the town of Moyie Springs primarily in the Lower Moyie River Watershed of the Bonners Ferry Ranger District of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests, located in Boundary County, Idaho. The objectives of the project are to 1) reduce hazardous fuels within the Boundary County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)-defined wildland urban interface (WUI) area and; 2) trend towards or maintain vegetative conditions that would be more resilient to fire in the watersheds.

Alternative 2, the proposed action and preferred alternative, would reduce surface fuels (currently in excess of 40 tons per acre in places), ladder fuels, and crown fuels by using a combination of mechanical treatments, hand treatments and prescribed fire, in order to decrease the expected fire type and intensity. Currently, heavy surface fuels under a dense tree canopy could lead to high surface flame lengths and potential crown fire – the treated stands would result in a fire environment (light fuels under a more open tree canopy) where low flame lengths and surface fire would be expected in the case of a wildfire across the 713 acre treatment area. The proposed action would also accomplish routine road reconditioning and reconstruction such as brushing, blading, ditch reestablishment, culvert replacements, hazard tree removal along haul routes, etc. on approximately 14 miles of existing roads and construct up to one and one-half mile of temporary roads that would be obliterated following use to maintain pre-treatment access levels.

I am the Responsible Official who will issue a decision on this project. Additional information, if needed, regarding this proposed project can be obtained from: Jennifer Borg, Project Leader or Pat Behrens, Ecosystems Planning Staff Officer, Bonners Ferry Ranger District, (208) 267-7669.

Opportunity to Object to a Proposed Authorized Hazardous Fuel Reduction Project

This proposed project is subject to the objection process pursuant to 36 CFR Part 218 Subpart A and is not subject to notice, comment and appeal procedures under 36 CFR Part 215 (218.3).

Eligibility to File Objections

Objections will be accepted only from those who submitted written comments specific to this proposed project during the 30 day comment period (36 CFR 218.6). The publication date of the legal notice in the Coeur d'Alene Press, the newspaper of record, is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection (36 CFR 218.9(a)). Those wishing to object should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. An objection, including any attachments, must be filed (regular mail, fax, e-mail, hand-delivery, express delivery, or messenger service) as stated above within 30 days of the date of publication of the legal notice for the objection process (36 CFR 218.9(a)). Incorporation of documents by reference shall not be allowed in the objection (36 CFR 218.7(c)).

Filing an Objection

Objections must be filed with the Reviewing Officer in writing. The Reviewing Officer is the next higher level supervisor of the Responsible Official. Objections must be submitted by mail at: USDA Forest Service, Northern Region, P.O. Box 7669, Missoula, MT 59807; by FAX at: (406) 329-3411; or by Email at: appeals-northern-regional-office@fs.fed.us. The acceptable formats for submitting an electronic objection are: MS Word, Word Perfect, or RTF. Please type "Twin Skin HFRA EA" in the Email subject line. Hand-delivered objections will be accepted at the Regional Forester's Office, 200 E. Broadway, Missoula, MT, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. All objections shall be open to public inspection during the objection process (36 CFR 218.7(a)).

At a minimum an objection must include the following (36 CFR 218.7(d)): 1) The objector's name and address, with a telephone number, if available; 2) a signature or other verification of authorship upon request (a scanned signature for Email may be filed with the objection); 3) when multiple names are listed on an objection, identification of the lead objector (verification of the identity of the lead objector shall be provided upon request); 4) the name of the proposed authorized hazardous fuel reduction project, the name and title of the Responsible Official, and the name(s) of the National Forest(s) and/or Ranger District(s) on which the proposed authorized hazardous fuel reduction project will be implemented; and 5) provide sufficient narrative description of those aspects of the project that are objected to (36 CFR 218.7(b)) by identifying specific issues and suggested remedies which would resolve the objection.

If an objection is received on this project the Reviewing Officer and objector may meet and/or converse by telephone to discuss issues raised in the objection and potential resolution. The Reviewing Officer has the discretion to determine whether or not adequate time remains in the review period to make a meeting with the objector practical. These meetings would take place soon after the closing date for filing an objection. All meetings are open to the public. If you are interested in attending any resolution discussions, please contact the Responsible Official or monitor the following website for postings about current objections in the Northern Region of the Forest Service: http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/projects/appeal_index.shtml.

It is the responsibility of Objectors to ensure their objection is received in a timely manner (218.9). As stated, the publication date in the *Coeur d'Alene Press*, newspaper of record, is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection. As mentioned, those wishing to object to this proposed project should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. Time extensions of the objection time period are not permitted (218.9).

Timing of Project Decision and Implementation

When the objection-filing period has ended and responses have been made to all objections by the Reviewing Officer, the Responsible Official may make a final decision on the proposed project. The Reviewing Officer shall issue a written response to the Objectors within 30 days following the end of this objection-filing period (218.9). When no timely objections are filed, a decision can be made on the 5th business day following the close of the filing period (218.11).

Implementation may begin immediately after the decision is made.

Sincerely,

Linda McFadden

for Ranotta McNair, IPNF Forest Supervisor

Enclosures: EA and Draft FONSI