



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Idaho Panhandle
National Forest

Coeur d'Alene River
Ranger District

P. O. Box 159
Smelterville, ID 83868

2502 East Sherman Avenue
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814

File Code: 1950

Date: October 31, 2007

Hello –

Enclosed is your copy of the **Prichard-Murray Decision Notice (DN) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)**. Assessment of this project has been conducted under the authority of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA, PL 108-148). Passed in December 2003, the HFRA is intended to reduce the threat of destructive wildfires, while upholding environmental standards and encouraging early public input during planning processes.

The HFRA provides a pre-decisional administrative review process (referred to as the “objection” process) pursuant to 36 CFR 218, subpart A (it is not subject to notice, comment and appeal provisions pursuant to 36 CFR 215; see 36 CFR 218.3). The objection period began after release and distribution of the EA, as announced to the public by notification in the cover letter for the EA and through publication of a legal notice in the newspaper of record (*Coeur d'Alene Press*, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho) on July 5, 2007.

Two letters of objection were received in a timely manner: one from Mike Mihelich (on behalf of the Kootenai Environmental Alliance, Lands Council, and WildWest Institute), and the other from Jonathan Oppenheimer (on behalf of the Idaho Conservation League). The District Ranger and representatives of the interdisciplinary planning team met with Mike Mihelich on August 14, 2007; and met with Jonathan Oppenheimer via conference call on August 16, 2007. Based on these meetings, it was determined their major issue was related to commercial harvesting of timber in allocated old growth.

Reviewing Officer Kathy McAllister (USDA Forest Service, Northern Region) considered the Prichard-Murray Resource Area project and determined that the project is in compliance with laws and regulations, and clearly demonstrates how the project is consistent with the HFRA, including use of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, retention of large trees, and monitoring requirements. The concerns and suggestions raised by the objecting organizations have been considered in selecting an alternative for implementation, as described in Section 2 of the DN (The Selected Alternative). After considering public comment, the analysis provided in the EA, and Finding of No significant Impact (FONSI), we decided that a **modified Alternative 3** would be the most effective at meeting the stated purpose and need in the Prichard-Murray Resource Area, while addressing concerns brought forward in the objection process (for further discussion, please refer to Section 1.5 of the DN).

The modification to Alternative 3 is the addition of three prescribed burn-only units in allocated old growth stands that are located adjacent to community structures or the primary ingress/egress route along Forest Highway 9. These units were analyzed under Alternative 2 in the Prichard Murray EA (unit numbers 10b, 38 and 41). Addition of these units increases the amount of prescribed burning (with no harvest) by 223 acres. All other activities are the same as analyzed under Alternative 3.

As stated pursuant to 36 CFR 218.10(b)(2), this project is not subject to further administrative review by the Forest Service or the Department of Agriculture.

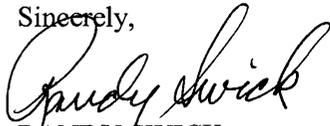
As you can see, the DN and associated documents are being provided on compact disk (CD), which offers a number of convenient features. The document is “book marked” so the viewer can easily navigate from one section of the document to another. The viewer can also “zoom” in on maps and other materials, which make them considerably easier to read. In addition, the charts and graphs are nearly all displayed in color, while the printed copy of the EA displays most charts, graphs and photographs in shades of gray.



I would encourage you to first try the CD format if you have access to a computer. If not, printed copies will be provided to those who request them. If you received a CD but need to have a printed copy, please contact Kerry Arneson at our Fernan Office (208-769-3021). For the convenience of our interested public and in an effort to conserve paper and reduce publication costs, documents related to this proposal are also available to the public on our Forest's internet web page: <http://www.fs.fed.us/ipnf/eco/manage/nepa>.

The Responsible Official for this proposal is Forest Supervisor Ranotta K. McNair (3815 Schreiber Way, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815; telephone 208-765-7223). For more information, please contact Project Team Leader Sarah Jerome at (208) 783-2109.

Sincerely,



RANDY SWICK
District Ranger

enclosure

