



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Okanogan-Wenatchee National
Forest
Headquarters Office

215 Melody Lane
Wenatchee, WA 98801
509-664-9200

File Code: 1950

Date: August 28, 2007

Dear Buckhorn Access Project Planning Participant:

As you are aware, the Record of Decision for the Buckhorn Access Project was signed in January 2007. The project was subsequently appealed and the decision was upheld by the Forest Service Regional Office in Portland, Oregon. Okanogan Highlands Alliance filed a lawsuit on the project in Federal District Court in May 2007. During preparation for the lawsuit, we discovered that the pipeline from the water treatment plant on Crown's private lands to the infiltration gallery on National Forest System lands will cross an intermittent stream. The Inland Native Fish Strategy (INFISH), an amendment to the Okanogan National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, requires that mining roads, structures and facilities be located outside of riparian habitat conservation areas (RHCA) unless there are no alternatives. Under INFISH, the intermittent stream has a 50 foot RHCA on either side.

The National Environmental Policy Act requires that a supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) be prepared when agencies make substantial changes in the proposed action that are relevant to environmental concerns, or when significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its impacts arise. Once we realized the pipeline crossed an RHCA, we undertook an analysis to determine if an SEIS is required and to make the necessary findings to be consistent with INFISH's requirement to locate roads, facilities and structures outside of RHCA. We have completed that analysis, which is attached, and I find that preparation of an SEIS is not necessary and that the project is consistent with INFISH's requirements.

Because you have expressed interest in this project in the past, I am circulating this analysis to you and giving you the opportunity to review it and let me know about any concerns you have. Any concerns raised must be received no later than September 17, 2007 (20 days from the date of this letter).

Remarks on this analysis may be addressed to the project team leader, Jan Flatten, at the above address, or can be sent electronically to:

comments-pacificnorthwest-okanogan-wenatchee@fs.fed.us

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Ms. Flatten at 509-664-9239.

Sincerely,

for
REBECCA LOCKETT HEATH
Forest Supervisor

