

**DECISION NOTICE
AND
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)
USDA Forest Service**

1700 System Flood Repair Project

**Okanogan – Wenatchee National Forest
Naches Ranger District
Yakima and Kittitas County, WA**

HISTORY OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

In June 2011, the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest was granted Federal Lands Highway funding after a 100-year flood event that spring. The Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads, known as ERFO, has made it possible for the Naches Ranger District to plan and implement multiple flood repair projects. The intent of the ERFO program is to pay the unusually heavy expenses in the repair and reconstruction of Federal roads as a result of damaged sustained by a natural disaster over a wide area or by a catastrophic failure (Federal Highway Administration, 2013). The Naches District in July 2012 proposed to address flood damaged along multiple Forest System Roads (FSR) within the 1700 System. The roads assessed in this analysis include: FSR 1700-416 C mile post 0.1, FSR 1703 mile post 2.0 (Gold Creek Road), FSR 1704 mile post 1.3 (Lower River Road), and FSR 1708 mile post 0.6-0.8, 1.9, and 3.9 (Milk Creek Road).

The range of proposed actions for the Environmental Assessment (EA) included repairing the road to pre-flood conditions or decommissioning the damaged area or crossing. The FSR 1702 mile post 1.0 and FSR 1702-550 were originally scoped as part of this project, however, they now have a separate environmental analysis titled 1702 System Flood Repair Project.

The locations of the damaged sites are as follows:

- FSR 1700-416C mile post 0.1 is in the Gold Creek drainage in Township 17N, Range 14E, and Section 36 within Yakima County.
- FSR 1703 mile post 2.0 is known as Gold Creek Road on the Naches Ranger District. The site is located in Township 17N, Range 14E, Section 25 within Kittitas County.
- FSR 1704 mile post 1.3, Lower River Road, is located next to the Naches River. The site is located in Township 17N, Range 14E, Section 26 within Yakima County.
- FSR 1708 mile post 0.6-0.8, 1.9, and 3.9 are located along Milk Creek Road on the Naches Ranger District. Mile post 0.6 and 0.8 are located in Township 17N, Range 14E, Section 10 within Kittitas County. Mile post 1.9 is located in

Township 17N, Range 14E, Section 2 within Kittitas County. Mile post 3.9 is located in Township 17N, Range 14E, Section 1 within Kittitas County.

A proposed action was developed and sent to the public in July 2012. The scoping letter proposed two options for the flood damaged sites on FSR 1703, 1704, and 1700-416C and only proposed to re-repair and re-open FSR 1708. These proposed options were organized into Alternative A and Alternative B in the EA. The scoping letter originally proposed an option to re-open FSR 1700-416C; this was not fully analyzed in the EA. A description of why this alternative was eliminated from detailed study can be found on page II-2 of the EA. Additionally, FSR 1708 mile post 1.9 was included in this analysis after the scoping letter after we learned there was similar damage at the site. The 2012 scoping letter in its entirety can be found in Appendix A of the EA and page DN-7 further describes the Public Involvement and Scoping for this project. There are no unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources, therefore, no additional alternatives are required (36 CFR Part 220, Section 220.7 (b) (2) (i)).

This decision incorporates the completed 1700 System Flood Repair Project EA by reference. The EA documents the development of the two action alternatives and discloses known environmental impacts. The EA is available at the Naches Ranger District or from the Forest’s projects and plans website under “Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest Current and Recent Projects”:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/okawen/landmanagement/projects>

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose and need of the 1700 Flood Repair Project is described in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Purpose and Need of Project.

Need	Purpose
Address roads with serious damaged caused by a natural disaster or catastrophic failure (Federal Highway Administration, 2013). Damaged was sustained by May 2011 100-year flood event.	The project will address the damaged on the 1700 Road System.
Reduce road and stream interactions.	The project will strengthen the road embankment and road protection within the 1700 Road System. The project will minimize the release of sediment from the exposed damaged areas.
Maintain aquatic and wildlife habitat standards in respect to the Forest Plan and national direction.	The project will minimize the release of sediment from the exposed damaged areas. The project will meet aquatic and wildlife standards during project implementation.

Refer to page I-17 of the EA for more information on the Desired Future Condition and the Purpose and Need for Action.

DECISION AND RATIONALE

Decision

This Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Issues (FONSI) documents my decision regarding the implementation of the 1700 System Flood Repair Project. I have decided to implement Alternative A as presented in the 1700 System Flood Repair EA. Management actions are necessary to accomplish the purpose and need for the project area. In summary Alternative A entails decommissioning the crossing at FSR 1700-416C mile post (mp) 0.1, decommissioning the crossing at FSR 1703 mp 2.0, decommissioning the damaged portion of the road on FSR 1704 mp 1.3, and repairing all damaged sites on FSR 1708. I have decided to take the following specific action at each site:

FSR 1700-416C mile post 0.1: Decommission approximately 100 feet of the road (50 feet on either side of the center of the stream). The two existing 48" culverts will be removed from the site. This will include removing road surfacing and fill, and stabilizing stream banks through the crossing. FSR 1700-416C will remain open on both sides of Gold Creek.

FSR 1703 mile post 2.0: Close the road from approximately mp 1.9 to mp 2.2 allowing for adequate turn around areas at both locations. Decommission the crossing (approximately 1,500 feet) by stabilizing the steeply eroded stream banks and removing remaining road fill from within the stream floodplain. Remove the existing 60" culvert and other remaining road fill from the stream floodplain. Forest System Road 1703 will be open from Highway 410 to approximately mile post 1.9 and from the junction of FSR 1705 to approximately mile post 2.2.

FSR 1704 mile post 1.3: Close approximately 2,000 feet of the road to motor vehicles. Within the 2,000 feet, remove two-thirds of the road surface width to prevent additional erosion. Leave the remaining one-third of road surfacing to function as a walking path. Vehicle turn-arounds will be made at each side of the closure. Forest System Road 1704 will remain open on both sides of the closure.

FSR 1708 mile post 0.6-0.8, 1.9, and 3.9: Repair and fully re-open FSR 1708. At mile post 0.6-0.8, turn the existing road to the rock borrow site into the main FSR 1708. Repair work will include upgrading the access road to the borrow site to meet Maintenance Level Three road standards (USDA 2005). Decommission the existing 1708 road between mp 0.6 and 0.8 (approximately 1000 feet. Decommissioning will include removing road fill from the stream floodplain, hardening portions of the stream bank near the road with rock and large woody debris, and revegetating the disturbed areas with mulch, locally prescribed grass seed mix, and shrubs. At mile post 1.9, shift the road approximately 5 feet into the cut slope away from Milk Creek. Narrow the road to 14 feet

in width through the site. The existing shape of road, where it failed, currently holds water and snow against the road wall. The road wall throughout the damaged site will be shaped to shed water and snow. The road shoulder will be stabilized to prevent additional slumping. At mile post 3.9, replace the existing culvert with a larger culvert (approximately 48 inches) within the same alignment. At the entrance to the culvert, remove aggregated streambed material and create a catch basin consisting of large rocks to guide stream flow into the culvert. Repair the eroded portions of the road.

Rationale

I have determined that this project will serve the public interest by addressing roads in the 1700 system with serious damaged caused by the May 2011 flood event, reducing road and stream interactions, and maintaining aquatic and wildlife habitat standards. My conclusion is based on a review of the record that shows a thorough review of relevant scientific information, a consideration of responsible opposing views, and the acknowledgment of incomplete or unavailable information, scientific uncertainty, and risk. Refer to page II-5 of the EA for a summary of Alternative Accomplishment of Purpose and Need and Chapter III for the effects of the proposed actions.

The decision to close certain roads and re-opening others is based on being able to maintain adequate road access where possible while minimizing impacts to natural resources. Closing FSR 1703 will close the loop driving access, however, the road below the damaged site will still be accessible from the junction with Hwy 410 and the upper portion will be accessible from FSR 1705. Forest System Road 1704 mostly provides local access and the damaged site will also be accessible from both sides (intersects with Hwy 410 on both ends). Although cabin owners do not prefer the second entrance to the Gold Creek cabins (EA page III-47), there is still reasonable access to all cabins without the repair of the FSR 1700-416C crossing. Forest System Road 1708 is a priority for the District to re-open as it accesses land that is otherwise inaccessible; there are no alternative routes to get to certain areas up the Milk Creek drainage.

Based on the project design in Chapter II of the EA and the associated effects analysis in Chapter III of the EA, this project meets the identified Purpose and Need as follows:

- Alternative A will stabilize all of the damaged sites, decommission road portions that are not needed with adequate turn-around areas at each end (II-3 of EA), and re-open FSR 1708 for the public and for forest managers (II-3-4 of EA). Impacts of Alternative A in relation to this Purpose and Need element are disclosed in the Hydrology, Fire and Public Safety, Recreation, and Special Uses resource sections in Chapter III of the EA.
- Alternative A will stabilize or decommission damaged areas to reduce road and stream interactions. Road crossings that are not necessary will be removed (II-3-4 of EA). Remaining road embankments will be armored within the project area (II-3-4 of EA). Impacts of Alternative A in relation to this Purpose and Need element are disclosed in the Hydrology and Fisheries resources sections in Chapter III of the EA.

- Alternative A includes design criteria and best management practices that protect aquatic organisms and limit degradation of the aquatic habitat (II-3-4 and Appendix B of the EA). Alternative A decommissions multiple road crossing and failed road portions to enhance the aquatic habitat. Impacts of Alternative A in relation to this Purpose and Need element are disclosed in the Fisheries and Wildlife resource sections in Chapter III of the EA.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Alternative B

Alternative B proposed the same decommission option on FSR 1700-416C and repair option for FSR 1708 but unlike Alternative A, it proposed to repair FSR 1703 at mp 2.0 and FSR 1704 at mile post 1.3. At FSR 1703 the repair will consist of repairing the road in the previous location by shifting the stream to its pre-flood channel location. This will include reconstruction the road to its pre-flood alignment. Large wood and rock will be used to direct the stream back into is previous channel. Replace the existing 60" culvert with a bottomless ach approximately 25' wide. Remove trees that have been undercut from erosion that could potentially fall on the road. Any trees removed will be used in the streambank stabilization. The repair at FSR 1704 mile post 1.3 will consist of repairing the road by reconstructing the eroded portion of the road and armoring the road shoulder with large rocks and woody debris. The road surface will be reconstructed to its pre-flood width. Alternative B is described on page II-4 of the EA.

Alternative B also meets all of the project's Purpose and Need elements; however, Alternative A meets the necessary access needs and provides for greater improvements in riparian areas.

Unresolved Conflicts

With the two action alternatives, there were no unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources. (42 USC § 4331, Section 102 (2) (E)).

No Action

The 1700 Flood Repair Project EA includes a No Action alternative, as per 36 CFR Part 220, Section 220.7 (b) (2) (ii). The No Action Alternative considered effects to the project area if no management action were taken. I did not choose the no-action alternative because the existing condition would continue and it would not meet this project's Purpose and Need. No action would result in concrete road blockages remaining at multiple locations. The limited access increases the response time to several areas in the 1700 system (Fire and Public Safety effects page III-38 of EA). No action would leave the damaged roads and road shoulders exposed and highly susceptible to more damage in the next flood season. The adjacent River or Creek will continue to degrade the road shoulders. This will cause additional damage to the roads and additional

sedimentation into the stream (Hydrology effects page III-2 of the EA). No action would allow continued erosion of the roads into the channels, contributing asphalt and road fill at the damage sites. The roads would continue to be reclaimed by the adjacent River or Creek and erosion of chip seal asphalt road surface and fill material would be delivered into channel (Fisheries effects page III-8 of the EA).

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED STUDY

Repair FSR 1700-416C to Provide Through Access for Cabin Owners

The proposal was made to consider the action of repairing FSR 1700-416C during project scoping. Cabin owners that live in the summer home tract use FSR 1700-416C to drive from one side of the tract to the other (Figure 1, show on page II-2 of the EA). Please note that Figure 1 below was corrected from the EA; in the EA the Second Entrance was mistakenly labeled the No Access entrance. Cabin owners claimed that this access was important to them to access both sides of the tract. They also said that the second entrance, which now half of the owners must use with the road un-repaired, is unsafe (page II-2 of the EA).

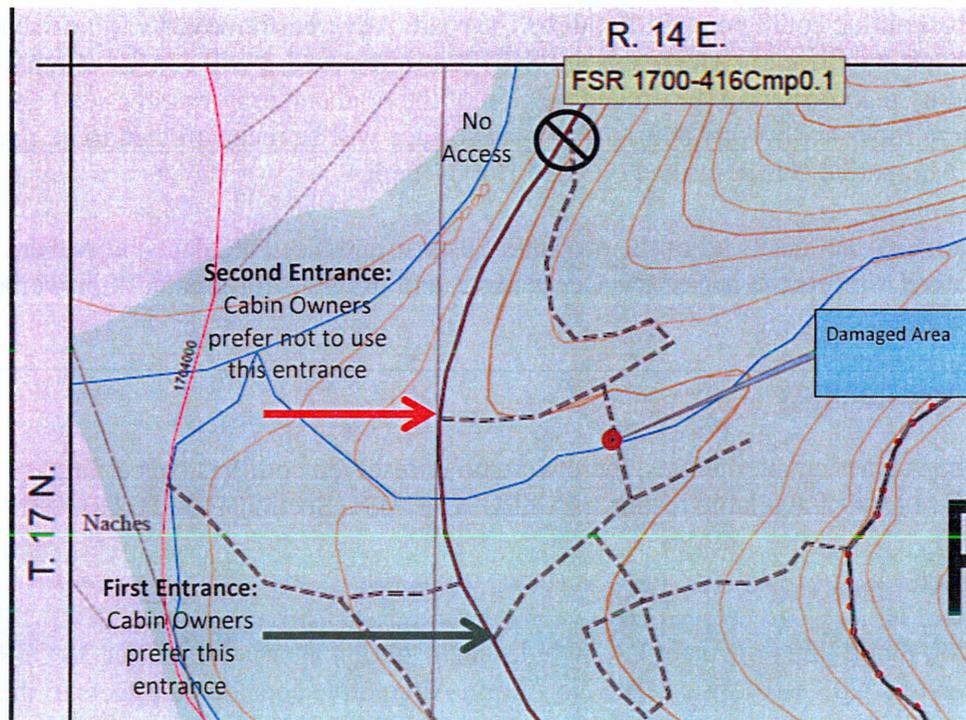


Figure 1: FSR 1700-416C showing two current entrances to summer home cabins.

It was determined to eliminate this alternative from detailed study for the following reasons:

- The Forest Service is not limiting access to the area by not repairing the damaged crossing

- The Forest Service is not required to maintain the roads in summer home tracts; cabin owners are responsible for the maintenance of these roads
- Recreational Cabin owners are allowed to complete NEPA and pay for road and entrance repairs
- Weighing the cost of repairing the crossing with the benefits to the public and natural resources, repairing the crossing would be of limited benefit to the public good.
- Under both Alternative A and Alternative B the damaged crossing would be stabilized to prevent further erosion, thus meeting the project's purpose and need

Impacts of all Alternatives on special uses including summer home tracts can be found in the Special Uses effects analysis (EA page III-47).

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND SCOPING

The Project Initiation Letter (PIL) on October 5, 2011 directed the IDT to include a compilation of specialist and planner from the Cle Elum and Naches Ranger districts. For a full list of persons consulted, see Chapter V.

The 2013 Flood Repair Project Proposals (scoping letter in Appendix A of EA) contained the proposal for the 1700 Road System. The tribal scoping letter was sent to the Yakama Nation on July 10, 2012 and on July 20, 2012 the public scoping letter was sent to over 1,000 recipients.

Additional public outreach included presentations and available information at:

- Forest Service Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA)
- 2012 & 2013 Central Washington Sportsmen Show
- Multiple (2011-2013) Trails and Wilderness Interest Group Meetings (TWIG)
- 2012 Central Washington State Fair
- Pacific Northwest 4-Wheel Drive Association meetings, both local and regional
- Dust Dodger Motorcycle Club meetings
- Cascade Quad Squad Club meetings
- Naches Ranger District foyer

The IDT received 66 comments total on the 1700 System Flood Repair project during the scoping period. For a complete list of commenters, see the project file. Topics within the comments included safety concerns, firefighting access, travel access, illegal use, recreational access, hunting access, capital improvement retention, economics, wildlife habitat improvement, aquatic habitat improvement, access for allotment operations, and access for the elderly.

As discussed above, during scoping cabin owners claimed that the FSR 1700-416C throughway was important to them in order to access both sides of the tract. The District Ranger met with cabin owners and the Washington State Department of Transportation

and determined that the alternative to repair FSR 1700-416C would be eliminated from detailed study (page DN-6 and II-2 of EA).

The Interdisciplinary Team leader notified all individuals and agencies that expressed interest including Pacific Northwest 4-Wheel Drive Association, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, NOAA Fisheries, S. Martinez Livestock Inc., Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Nile Cliffdell Fire Department, Washington State Department of Transportation, Washington State Department of Ecology, and the Environmental Protection Agency. Those that specifically asked received a full copy of the EA and the others were notified that the EA was available for viewing online. A public notice appeared in The Wenatchee World (newspaper of record) on May 16, 2013 beginning the 30-day comment period.

Comment Analysis

Sixteen individuals along with WA Department of Ecology, WA Department of Transportation, WA Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Yakama Nation supplied separate responses during the EA comment period. In general, individuals supported returning the 1700 Road System to pre-flood conditions and re-opening roads to the public. Similar issues and topics from the comment period are organized and responded to below. To view each individual comment and a more detailed Forest Service response, please see the project file.

- **Topic 1:** All roads within the 1700 Flood Repair Project are valuable for forest access in regards to hunting, summer recreation, winter recreation, driving, and other public uses. These areas bring users to our forest.
Response: The IDT analyzed the impacts of road closures and openings to public access. A detailed analysis can be found in Chapter III of the EA under Recreation. Some recreationalists have been displaced to other areas on the District or off the Forest in light of the road closures. Alternative A was selected to be able to maintain adequate road access where possible while minimizing impacts to natural resources.
- **Topic 2:** If roads remain closed, there is a concern for wildland fire-fighting access and other emergency ingress and egress needs.
Response: Vehicle access is limited in many areas on National Forest lands for fire suppression and emergency apparatus. If in the event of limited access, standard fire-fighting and emergency equipment and techniques allow for safe and timely responses to emergency situations. For more information, see Fire and Public Safety effects on page III-38 of the EA.
- **Topic 3:** Suggestion that Alternative A is analyzed with the option of Gold Creek being repaired.
Response: The effects of each individual repair were analyzed separately; the Line Officer could choose a combination of Alternative A and B.

- **Topic 4:** Available entrance to portion of Gold Creek summer home cabins (on FSR 1700-416C) is unsafe. Cabin owners prefer to use the lower entrance and then cross Gold Creek.
Response: Access to National Forest lands is commonly gained off of major road systems. Most of this type of access does not meet current road junction standards. Furthermore, it is essential that all motor vehicle operators practice safe driving and remain aware of inherent changes of conditions when driving in mountainous terrain. Impacts to Special Uses are found on page III-47 of the EA.
- **Topic 5:** FSR 1700-416C and Highway 410 junction sight distance needs to be improved. FSR 1700-416C permit needs to be updated with the WA Department of Transportation. FSR 1708 and 1703 highway junctions need permits.
Response: These comments are outside the scope of the ERFO projects. Cabin owners have the option of requesting permission to improve the site distance themselves. As mentioned on page II-2 of the EA, the Forest Service is not required to maintain motorized access for any FSRs in summer home tracts. Renewing or applying for permits with the WA Department of Transportation is outside the scope of this project.
- **Topic 6:** Figure II-1 is incorrect.
Response: Figure II-1 on page II-2 of the EA has been corrected. The correction does not impact the environmental analysis.
- **Topic 7:** Roads on the Naches Ranger District were built for a reason and that reason has not changed. Lack of maintenance has caused road damage.
Response: A large portion of roads on the Naches Ranger District were constructed for logging operations and maintained by those contractors. Logging practices have dramatically changed since the construction of these roads (see Fuels and Vegetation Management page III-37 of the EA). The Forest Service continues to conduct road maintenance to the maximum extent of our ability within the confines of the available road maintenance budget.
- **Topic 8:** Public outreach- Chinook Pass Cabin Owners Association (CPCOA) was omitted. General concern regarding the way the public was notified and contacted. Specifically disagreement over the use of The Wenatchee World as the newspaper of record.
Response: Although Chapter IV of the EA does not specifically list CPCOA, they were contacted. For a complete list of individuals and agencies contacted, please seek the project file, over 1,000 recipients were notified in July 2012. The Wenatchee World was stated at the newspaper of record for all projects on the Naches Ranger District. This was presented in the original scoping letter and all individuals interested in receiving further information were asked to contact the project lead (see Appendix A of EA). The Naches Ranger District appreciates feedback on public outreach and continues to improve its communication with the public, both locally and nationally.

- **Topic 9:** FSR 1708 access portion of forest that is otherwise inaccessible.
Response: The Naches Ranger District agrees with this statement and has prioritized the repair and re-opening of FSR 1708.
- **Topic 10:** Cabin owners have the right to drive to their cabin (FSR 1700-416C).
Response: See response to Topic 5. Access to National Forest lands is commonly gained off of major road systems.
- **Topic 11:** Closure of certain roads will lead to over-use in other areas.
Response: Impacts to road use and recreation can be found on page III-40 of the EA. Compounding impacts of closing roads, including potential road closures outside the 1700 Road System Project, were analyzed in the cumulative effects analysis to recreation.
- **Topic 12:** The District Ranger spoke with WA Department of Transportation and cabin owners in the Gold Creek tract and indicated that all motorized access could be taken away.
Response: The District Ranger did meet with cabin owners and the WA Department of Transportation. The District Ranger presented cabin owners with details as to what they are entitled to as cabin owners and what options they have in repairing and maintaining FSRs within their tract.
- **Topic 13:** Culverts on Gold Creek at FSR 1700-416C did fill with debris contrary to description of flood event in EA.
Response: At the time Forest Service engineers visited the damaged site, it was clear that the culverts were overwhelmed by the large debris flow. The specific method in which the road failed is not pertinent to the environmental analysis.
- **Topic 14:** Poor logging practices caused the debris flow and subsequent flood damage on FSR 1703.
Response: As referenced on page III-1 of the EA, past activities are included in the cumulative effects analysis of each alternative. Impacts from past, present, and predicted future activities are analyzed; this includes impacts from logging activities.
- **Topic 15:** WA Department of Fish and Wildlife will need the Forest Service to grant an alternative easement to access portions of wildlife area (in FSR 1703 and 1705 area).
Response: No easement should be necessary as WA Department of Fish and Wildlife will be able to access all parcels within that area. There will be no through access of FSR 1703 with Alternative A, but the damage site can still be reached from both ends. Managers will be able to take FSR 1705 to FSR 1703 to access the upper portions of the Gold Creek drainage.

- **Topic 16:** Incorporate large woody debris in decommissioned areas and actively establish trees, not just mulch and grass seed.
Response: Each decommissioned area will use large woody debris, mulch, and seed to help stabilize the disturbed areas. Impacts of the proposed action on botany can be found on page III-32 of the EA.
- **Topic 17:** Upgrade culvert at FSR 1708 mile post 0.05.
Response: This is outside the scope of the project. Per Federal Highways Administration's interpretation, the culvert at mile post 0.05 did not fail and therefore is not eligible for ERFO funding. See project's Purpose and Need on page DN-2.
- **Topic 18:** Alternative B would maintain impacts to fish and riparian areas.
Response: Impacts of Alternative B on fisheries and riparian areas can be found on page III-13 of the EA. As stated on page III-16 of the EA, both Alternatives A and B are consistent with the Northwest Forest Plan including the Aquatic conservation Strategy. Additional consistency findings for fishery resources can be found on pages III-18-19.
- **Topic 19:** Forest Service applied for ERFO funds without contacting any of the cabin owners.
Response: Acquisition of ERFO funds does not prohibit cabin owners from pursuing road maintenance or improvements. ERFO funds are emergency related and the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest had to apply with Federal Highways in a short period of time after the May 2011 flood.

None of these comments describe "Unresolved conflicts concerning alternate uses of available resources" (42 USC § 4331, Section 102 (2) (E), and 36 CFR Part 220, Section 220.7 (b) (2) (i)) that would merit the development of additional action alternatives.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

My responsibility as the Line Officer with authority to make this decision is to review the EA and determine whether the proposed action may have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. In compliance with 40 CFR 1508.13 and 1508.25, the following findings support my determination that there will not be a significant effect on the human environment and an environmental impact statement will, therefore, not be prepared.

SIGNIFICANCE

From 40 CFR 1508.27:

"Significantly" as used in NEPA requires considerations of both context and intensity:

(a) Context. This means that the significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts such as society as a whole (human, national), the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality. Significance varies with the setting of the proposed action. For instance, in the case of a site-specific action, significance would usually depend upon the effects in the locale rather than in the world as a whole. Both short- and long-term effects are relevant.

(b) Intensity. This refers to the severity of impact. Responsible officials must bear in mind that more than one agency may make decisions about partial aspects of a major action.

Context

This project is a site-specific action that by itself does not have international, national, region-wide, or statewide importance. The discussion of the significance criteria that follows applies to the intended action and is within the context of local importance in the area associated with the 1700 System Flood Repair project area.

Intensity

The following discussion is organized around the 10 Significance Criteria described in NEPA regulations (40 CFR 1508.27).

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that on balance the effect will be beneficial. A thorough effects analysis (direct, indirect, and cumulative) is available in Chapter III of the EA, and in the Biological Evaluations and Biological Assessment (in the project file). The beneficial effects of the action as disclosed in Chapter III do not bias my finding of no significant environmental effects, nor do beneficial effects mask adverse effects.
2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety. The proposed actions will not have adverse effects to public safety. Effects to fire fighting and public safety can be found on page III-38 of the EA. Alternative A will be an improvement from the existing condition of closed roads. With the repair of FSR 1708, crucial access to a large portion of the 1700 road system will be restored. This project proposes no prescribed burning or invasive species treatment and is consistent with the Clean Air Act (EA, page III-51).
3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, ecologically critical areas, critical habitat, Inventoried Roadless Areas, or Potential Wilderness Areas. There will be no significant effects on the unique characteristics of the area. No Inventoried Roadless Areas, Potential Wilderness Areas, park lands, prime farmlands or prime forest lands are found in the project area (EA, page III-51). This project complies with regulations of Wild and Scenic Rivers and will have no impact on designated Wild and Scenic Rivers (EA, page III-51). I base my determination on the effects discussion found in the EA

Chapter III. Project design criteria and mitigations address and minimize possible effects to the scenic character.

Best Management Practices and Mitigation Measures listed in Appendix B will limit or eliminate damage, or assure rehabilitation to the water and aquatic/riparian resources. Implementation of design features for Riparian Reserves will ensure compliance with floodplain management and wetland protection. Design features are expected to improve and restore the function of this area (EA, page III-8). Impacts to critical habitat are summarized in Significant Criteria element #9 on page DN-14.

4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial. The nature of potential effects on the human environment from the Alternative A is well established and not likely to be highly controversial. The Forest Service has used best available science in guiding the effects of this project. The Forest Service also conducted far reaching scoping on this project (EA, page IV-1).
5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks. The Forest Service has considerable experience with this type of action. The effects analysis (EA Chapter III) as well as science and monitoring shows the effects are not uncertain. Effects do not involve unique or unknown risk. There is no science differing on effects on the quality to the environment.
6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration. My decision to implement the actions included in Alternative A does not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration. I have made this decision based on the overall consistency of the proposed activities with the Amended Wenatchee Forest Plan standards and guidelines. The decisions made and analysis completed is site and temporal specific. The purpose and need are only relevant to the specific affected environment.
7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. Significance exists if it is reasonable to anticipate a cumulatively significant impact on the environment. Significance cannot be avoided by terming an action temporary or by breaking it down into small component parts. The effects of implementing the actions included in Alternative A will not be significant, individually or cumulatively, when considered with the effects of other past and reasonably foreseeable future actions. See the cumulative effects analysis for each resource area in Chapter III of the EA.

8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. I have determined that the actions described in Alternative A do not adversely affect or cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. Pages III-49 through III-50 of the EA describes the effects of the actions on heritage resources. No scientific, cultural, or historical resources are located within the project area.
9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act. A Biological Assessments and Biological Evaluation for threatened and endangered wildlife and aquatic species were completed and concluded the following for the implementation of Alternative A:
 - a. This project will not affect species that do not occur and habitat this is not present within or adjacent to the project area, therefore, grizzly bear, Canada lynx, marbled murrelet, Designated Critical Habitat for Canada Lynx, and Pacific fisher will not be effected (EA page III-20)
 - b. No risk factors were concluded for the shiny tightcoil, peregrine falcon, and bald eagle (Sensitive species) (EA page III-20)
 - c. This project “May affect, not likely to adversely affect” the grey wolf (EA page III-21)
 - d. This project is “Not likely to jeopardize the continued existence” of the North American wolverine (EA page III-21)
 - e. This project will have “No effect” on Designated Critical Habitat for the Northern Spotted Owl and “May affect, not likely to adversely affect” the Northern Spotted Owl (EA page III-22)
 - f. This project “May affect, likely to adversely affect” Columbia River Bull Trout and Middle Columbia River steelhead (EA page III-8)
 - g. This project will have “No effect” to any listed Botanical species (III-33)

Concurrence with the wildlife Biological Assessment was received on March 13, 2013 by US Fish and Wildlife Service. Consultation for aquatic species is being completed through the Aquatic Restoration Biological Opinion (ARBO) process requiring pre-notification to US Fish and Wildlife and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries 60 days before project implementation.

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment. The actions described in the Alternative A do not threaten any violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (see section on Findings Required By Other Laws below).

I find that implementing Alternative A does not constitute a major federal action that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment in either context or intensity. I

have made this determination after considering both positive and negative effects, as well as direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of this action.

I have found that the context of the environmental impacts of this decision is limited to the local area and is not significant. I have also determined that the severity of these impacts is not significant based on the above.

I base my conclusion on a review of the record that shows a thorough review of relevant scientific information, a consideration of responsible opposing views, and the acknowledgment that there is not incomplete or unavailable information, scientific uncertainty, or risk associated with Alternative A. My basis includes the effects analysis contained in the EA in Chapter III, public comment, and consultation with interested environmental groups and government agencies (EA, Chapter IV and comment analysis in project file).

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS

Wenatchee National Land and Resource Management Plan as Amended by the Northwest Forest Plan (Amended Forest Plan)

This decision is consistent with the Wenatchee National Land and Resource Management Plan's (as amended) Goals and Objectives. Project design is in conformance with Amended Forest Plan Forest-wide Management Area standards and guidelines. Chapter III of the EA show adherence to these land allocations in the Hydrology, Fisheries, Wildlife, and Recreation effects analyses. The following are the applicable land allocations:

Table 2: Damaged Sites and applicable Land Allocations from the Northwest Forest Plan and Wenatchee Land and Resource Management Plan.

Damaged Site Location	Land Allocation	
	Northwest Forest Plan	Wenatchee Management Plan
FSR 1700-416C mp 0.1	-Riparian Reserve -Managed Late-Successional Reserve	-Mather Memorial Parkway -Riparian-Aquatic Habitat Protection
FSR 1703 mp 2.0	-Riparian Reserve -Matrix	-Key Deer/Elk Habitat -Riparian-Aquatic Habitat Protection
FSR 1704 mp 1.3	-Riparian Reserve -Managed Late-Successional Reserve	-Mather Memorial Parkway -Riparian-Aquatic Habitat Protection
FSR 1708 mp 0.6	-Riparian Reserve -Managed Late Successional Reserve	-Mather Memorial Parkway -Riparian-Aquatic Habitat Protection
FSR 1708 mp 0.8	-Riparian Reserve -Managed Late Successional	-Mather Memorial Parkway -Riparian-Aquatic Habitat

Damaged Site Location	Land Allocation	
	Northwest Forest Plan	Wenatchee Management Plan
FSR 1708 mp 1.9	Reserve	Protection
	-Riparian Reserve	-General Forest
	-Managed Late Successional Reserve	-Riparian-Aquatic Habitat Protection
FSR 1708 mp 3.9	-Riparian Reserve	-General Forest
	-Managed Late Successional Reserve	-Riparian-Aquatic Habitat Protection

No management activities are planned in Administratively Withdrawn or Congressionally Withdrawn Areas. This project is consistent with the Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) objectives. The project will maintain all nine objectives of the ACS at the project and 5th field watershed levels (EA, pages III-16 through III-18). The project may involve some short term negative impacts associated with construction but this will be offset by long term riparian area improvements. The project will not threaten viability of any Management Indicator Species (EA, page III-24)

This project has no impact on timber or other Forest resources and is consistent with the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) of 1976.

This project is consistent with the 2001 Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage Protection buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines. The project will have “No impact” and Survey and Manage species (Wildlife species discussed on EA page III-31, Botany species discussed on page III-32).

This project is consistent with the 2005 Pacific Northwest Record of Decision for Invasive Plant Management (EA page III-33). All applicable prevention and treatment standards and guidelines from that document have been incorporated into the design criteria for the 1700 Flood Repair Project.

Roadless Area Conservation Rule

No management activities are proposed within or adjacent to any Inventoried Roadless Area.

Endangered Species Act

Alternative A is designed to promote the conservation of endangered species. See Significant Criteria #9 above.

Magnuson – Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act

All streams currently or historically occupied by spring Chinook and Coho salmon in the project area have been designated as essential fish habitat by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). No negative effects to occupied and critical habitat are predicted to occur with this action. The project is consistent with this act (EA page III-19).

Clean Air Act (CAA)

Alternative A does not include any burning or actions that will cause more than incidental dust. The project will not compromise air quality and therefore is consistent with the Clean Air Act (EA page III-51).

Clean Water Act

Implementation of this project along with Best Management Practices (BMPs) listed in Appendix B will meet water quality standards and the anti-degradation policy. Full implementation of the BMPs has shown to be an effective method in preventing and controlling nonpoint source water pollution. Monitoring will be conducted during the project in order to validate implementation and effectiveness of BMPs and assure compliance with the Clean Water Act and other State water quality regulations (EA page III-8).

National Historic Preservation Act, Alaska Native Religious Sites, and Cultural Sites

The Forest Service program for compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act includes locating, inventorying, and nominating all cultural sites that may be directly or indirectly affected by scheduled activities. There are not cultural resources within or in close proximity to the project area. It was determined that the project will have "No effect" on cultural resources including historic properties or tribal customs or practices. National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 consultation for this project was completed in accordance with the terms of the programmatic agreement regarding management of cultural resources on Washington State National Forest. Yakama Nation was originally notified July 10, 2012 and the Nation raised no concerns regarding NHPA.

Floodplain Management (E.O. 11988), Protection of Wetlands (E.O. 11990), municipal watersheds

Floodplains are present in the analysis area and this project will restore and preserve the natural and beneficial values served by floodplains. This project will also minimize destruction, loss, or degradation of wetlands. Streamside Riparian Reserves, seeps and other wet habitats were assessed (EA page III-8 and III-19).

Recreational Fishing (E.O. 12962)

This project will not result in any appreciable reduction in the fish population numbers or otherwise negatively affect the fishing opportunity (EA III-19).

Environmental Justice (E.O. 12898)

I have determined that in accordance with Executive Order 12898 this project does not have disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority populations and low-income populations. Refer to EA page III-51.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW AND APPEAL OPPORTUNITIES

This Decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215. The appeal must be filed (regular mail, fax, email, hand-delivery, or express delivery) with the Appeal Deciding Officer.

Send appeals to:

ATTN: 1570 APPEALS
215 Melody Lane
Wenatchee, WA 98801

The Fax number is (509) 664-9280

The business hours for those submitting hand-delivered appeals are: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. PDT, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Appeals may also be filed electronically and must be submitted in one of the following formats; as part of an email message; rich text format (.rtf); portable document format (.pdf) or; Word (.doc or .docx) to appeals-pacificnorthwest-okagnogan-wenatchee@fs.fed.us. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to an electronic message, a verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature is one way to provide verification.

Appeals, including attachments, must be filed within 45 days from the publication date of the legal notice for this decision in the Wenatchee World, the newspaper of record. The publication date in said newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Those wishing to appeal this decision should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. It is the responsibility of all individuals and organizations to ensure their appeals are received in a timely manner. For electronically mailed appeals, the sender should normally receive an automated electronic acknowledgement from the agency as confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive an automated acknowledgement of the receipt of the appeal, it is the sender's responsibility to ensure timely receipt by other means.

Individuals or organizations who submitted comments by the close of the comment period on the EA, specified in 36 CFR 215.6 may appeal this Decision. The notice of appeal must meet the appeal content requirements at 36 CFR 215.14.

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISION

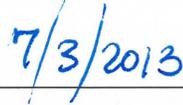
This project may begin implementation in the summer/fall of 2013 and will likely continue on to the summer/fall of 2014. If no appeals are filed within the 45-day time period, implementation of the decision may occur on, but not before, five business days from the close of the appeal-filing period. When appeals are filed, implementation may occur on, but not before, the 15th business day following the date of the last appeal disposition, should my decision be upheld.

INFORMATION CONTACT PERSON

For additional information concerning this decision or the Forest Service appeal process, contact Michelle King, NEPA Planner, 10237 Highway 12, Naches, WA, 98937, at 509-653-1420, or via email at mdking02@fs.fed.us.



IRENE DAVIDSON



Date

District Ranger
Naches Ranger District
Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest

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