



File Code: 1950-3

Date: February 20, 2003

Dear Meadow Face Planning Participant:

Enclosed is your copy of the Record of Decision for the Meadow Face Stewardship Pilot Project Final Environmental Impact Statement. This project, set in the South Fork Clearwater River sub-basin, is the result of intensive community and multi-agency cooperation.

The majority of activities discussed in the Final EIS for this project were developed collaboratively with a group of citizens called the *Stewards of the Nez Perce Forest*. From October 1999 through July 2000, this group reviewed physical and biological information for the Meadow Face area and developed a package of proposed actions for the Forest Service to consider and evaluate through the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process. The collaborative effort of folks with diverse interests was exemplary.

The Meadow Face analysis area is located approximately 7 air miles southeast of Grangeville, Idaho. The analysis area is approximately 27,000 acres in size. Past management activities including roading, timber harvest, fire suppression and grazing have degraded forest conditions. Streams have greater sediment, higher temperatures, and less habitat diversity than historically. Forest vegetation is denser, and the composition has changed from fairly open ponderosa pine tree stands to more fir species. The age and size class distribution has also changed from historic. These changes in vegetation have resulted in greater fire risk, increased susceptibility to insects and disease, and less resilience to disturbance.

The Final EIS released in May for public review, discloses the environmental effects of eight action alternatives, as well as the effects of taking no action. The discussion of effects covers watershed and soils, fisheries, vegetation (including exotic and rare plants), wildlife, transportation, recreation, heritage and air resources. The effects are displayed in Chapter 3 of the Final EIS.

The alternative selected for implementation is 4B as described in the Final EIS, with modifications. The following activities are included with this modified decision:

- Maintain 102 miles of road (12.5 deferred maintenance)
- Construct 12 miles of temporary road
- Decommission 91 miles of road
- Convert 5 miles of road to trail
- Construct 0.1 mile of new OHV trail
- Maintain dispersed campsites where roads are decommissioned
- Rehabilitate about 3 miles of stream
- Harvest timber up to 3735 acres
- Prescribe burn 7100 acres
- Replace 45 culverts



- Apply dust abatement to 5 miles of road
- Treat 200 acres of noxious weeds
- Restore native plant species in McComas Meadows
- Restore 550 acres of compacted soils
- Stabilize the Meadow Creek Slide
- Install improvements at McComas/ Blacktail Junction, Camp 58, and Quartz Ridge dispersed recreation sites
- Three site specific amendments of the Nez Perce Forest Plan

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR 215.7. Appeals must be postmarked or received within 45 days of the date of publication of the legal notice. Send appeals to USDA Forest Service, Northern Region, Attn: Appeals Deciding Officer (RFO), P.O. Box 7669, Missoula, Montana 59807.

Appeals must meet the requirements of 36 CFR 215.14.

For more information on this project, contact Darcy Pederson, District Ranger, or David Harper, Project Coordinator, at (208) 983-1963.

Sincerely,

/s/ Bruce E. Bernhardt
BRUCE E. BERNHARDT
Forest Supervisor

Enclosure (1)

cc: Darcy Pederson