



File Code: 1950
Date: June 24, 2019

Dear Interested Party,

The Bitterroot National Forest has released the *Draft* Record of Decision and Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Gold Butterfly Project. A legal notice for this project will be published in the *Ravalli Republic* (newspaper of record) on July 3, 2019 which will initiate the objection process.

I have selected the Proposed Action, with modifications, which I believe best meets the resource needs while contributing to desired conditions for the Bitterroot National Forest. Specifically, the selected alternative would improve landscape resilience to disturbances, reduce sediment inputs into Willow Creek over the long term, and restore key habitats. The selected alternative includes vegetation management through commercial harvest, non-commercial thinning and prescribed burning. However, the Proposed Action has been modified to change regeneration harvest in old growth stands to intermediate and non-commercial thinning. This modification would result in old growth status being retained for all treatment units. There would also be construction of system and temporary roads needed to complete vegetation management activities. Temporary roads would be revegetated after use. The selected alternative would include road upgrades, decommissioning and storage. The selected alternative would also approve a site-specific Forest Plan amendment for plan standards relating to elk habitat effectiveness and elk thermal cover.

You are receiving this letter because you commented during a public scoping period, comment period or otherwise indicated that you would like to receive additional information for this project. The draft record of decision, final environmental impact statement, and supporting documents are available on the Bitterroot National Forest website at:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=51486>

Pre-Decisional Administrative Review (Objection) Process

The Gold Butterfly Project is subject to the Project-Level Pre-decisional Administrative Review Process, "Objection Process," pursuant to 36 CFR 218 Subparts A and C. Objections are only accepted from those who have previously submitted specific written comments regarding the proposed project during any designated opportunity for public comment in accordance with §218.5(a). Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted, timely, specific written comments regarding the proposal unless based on new information arising after the designated comment opportunities.

Objections, including attachments, must be filed via mail, fax, e-mail, hand-delivery, express delivery, or messenger service (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays) to: Objection Reviewing Officer, Northern Region, Federal Building, Building 26 Fort Missoula Road, Missoula, MT 59804; FAX: 406-329-3411 or electronically with an email to



appeals-northern-regional-office@fs.fed.us. Please type, "Gold Butterfly Project Objection" in the subject line.

Objections must be submitted within 30 calendar days following the publication of the legal notice in the *Ravalli Republic*. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection. Those wishing to object should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. The regulations prohibit extending the time to file an objection.

The objection must contain the minimum content requirements specified in §218.8(d), and incorporation of documents by reference is permitted only as provided in §218.8(b). It is the objector's responsibility to ensure timely filing of a written objection with the reviewing officer pursuant to §218.9. All objections are available for public inspection during and after the objection process.

At a minimum, an objection must include the following (36 CFR §218.8(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 e-mail may be filed with the objection);
- 3) When multiple names are listed on an objection, identify the lead objector (verification of the identity of the lead objector shall be provided upon request);
- 4) The name of the proposed 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 project will be implemented;
- 5) A description of those aspects of the proposed project addressed by the objection, including specific issues related to the proposed project; if applicable, how the objector believes the environmental analysis or draft decision specifically violates law, regulation, or policy; suggested remedies that would resolve the objection; supporting reasons for the reviewing officer to consider; and
- 6) A statement that demonstrates connection between prior specific written comments on the particular proposed project or activity and the content of the objection.

Detailed records of the environmental impact statement are available for public review at the Bitterroot National Forest Supervisor's Office, 1801 N. First St., Hamilton, MT.

Where to Get More Information

For more details, please refer to the final environmental impact statement and draft record of decision, along with supporting documentation, available on the Bitterroot National Forest website: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=51486>

The documents are also available at the Stevensville Ranger District, 88 Main St. Stevensville, MT 59870 or Bitterroot Supervisor's Office, 1801 N. 1st St. Hamilton, MT 59840. Office business hours are: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. For additional information, please contact Danelle Highfill, Acting District Ranger, at danelle.highfill@usda.gov or (406) 777-5461 or Jeff Shearer, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, at jeffrey.shearer@usda.gov or (406) 375-2608.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Anderson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

MATTHEW ANDERSON
Forest Supervisor