

File Code: 1570 (218)
Date: July 30, 2020

Dear Mr. Peck,

This letter is in response to objections filed on the Ripley Environmental Assessment (EA) and Draft Decision Notice released by Chad Benson, Forest Supervisor of the Kootenai National Forest. I have read your objections and reviewed the project record. My review of your objection was conducted in accordance with the administrative review procedures found at 36 CFR 218, Subparts A and B.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW PROCESS

The regulations at 36 CFR 218.8 provide for a pre-decisional administrative review process in which the objector provides sufficient narrative description of the project, specific issues related to the project, and suggested remedies that would resolve the objections.

RESPONSE TO OBJECTIONS

As specified at 36 CFR 218.11(b), I must provide a written response to your objections; however, this response need not be point by point. The review of your objection issues is included as an attachment to this letter and will be posted on the project website.

CONCLUSION

My review finds the project is in compliance with all applicable laws and the Kootenai National Land Management Plan (2015). The Forest Supervisor may sign the Decision Notice for this project. My review constitutes the final administrative determination of the Department of Agriculture; no further review from any other Forest Service or Department of Agriculture official of my written response to your objection is available [36 CFR 218.11(b)(2)].

Sincerely,

KEITH LANNOM
Deputy Regional Forester

Enclosure

cc: Chad Benson, Nate Gassmann, Mandy Rockwell, Janis Bouma, Kim Smolt, Karen Dunlap, Olga Troxel



Ripley Project – Kootenai National Forest; Libby Ranger District

Objection Responses – Lincoln County Commissioners

Issue: Equine Trails

Contention 1:

The responsible official should reconsider and provide an equine trail in the project area

Response:

The responsible official considered the request for equine trails received in public comments and included it in the Designation of Equine Trails Alternative. The alternative, which would have added horseback riding trails in the Swede and McMillan mountain areas, was eliminated from detailed study as proposed because opportunities for this activity already exist along roads and cross country in open habitats in the project area. Proposed vegetation management would open up more area for cross country non-motorized travel. Further, roads proposed for storage and decommissioning would not be recontoured and would therefore remain useable for non-motorized use in addition to existing open and gated roads (EA, p. 52).