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Governor’s Roadless Commission

Idaho Roadless Rule

James L. Caswell, Chair Michael Gibson, Vice-Chair

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**Notes**

**Virtual and In-person Meeting**

**December 4, 2024**

**Meeting Starts at: 9:30 AM**

**Mountain Time (MT)/ 8:30 AM Pacific Time (PT)**

**Idaho Department of Fish and Game Headquarters**

**600 S. Walnut Street, Boise, Idaho 83712**

# **Public Comment**

# The public is invited for to provide comment to the Roadless Commission. Comment on a specific project may be provided during that project update. If you wish to comment on a specific project during that projects’ update, simply use the “raise your hand” feature and you will be called upon to comment. More general public comment may be provided at the allotted time on the agenda. If you wish to provide comment at the allotted public comment time, you must express your intent to comment in the chat feature and you will be placed on a list and called upon when it is your turn to provide comment. If no members of the public registers for public comment and the Commission has concluded the rest of the agenda items, the Commission may adjourn. Written comment may also be provided by email at Species.Conservation@osc.idaho.gov .

**Idaho Roadless Commission Meeting**

**NOTES**

December 4, 2024

Virtual and In Person Meeting

**Introductions:**

**Commission Members present:** Jim Caswell, Michael Gibson, Mike Hanna, Brad Gilbert,Bill Higgins, Elt Hasbrouck, Alan Prouty, Blair Dance, Dan Dinning. *Representing ICL in Jon Oppenheimer’s absence*: *Brad Smith*

**Forest Service:** Allison Ginn, Kelly Orr, Chris Moyer

**Idaho State:** Darren Parker (Senator Risch)**,** Jace Hogg (OSC)

**SECTION I: Welcome and Business Meeting**

***Call to Order/Preliminary Action Items - 8:00 – 8:30 AM MT (7:00 – 7:30 PT)***

**Welcoming Remarks:**

* *Welcome/Introductions/New Members/Re-appointments* .......................................... Jim Caswell
  + Still working with the Governor’s Office on finding a replacement for William Barquin, who was representing Tribal interests. Brad Smith was introduced, filling in for Oppenheimer.
* *Review and Approve 6/7/2024 Meeting Minutes*…………………………….…………..….…...Michael Gibson
  + Motion = Prouty Second = Hanna. Motion carries.
* *Final Pilot Project Letter (Decision)/ SGP Letter (Decision)……………...…*Michael Gibson/Jim Caswell
  + Kelly Orr: What strikes her is that some things are outside of agency control, but the letter makes sense and they can definitely move forward on some aspects of the request.
  + General discussion ensued going over the letter again and clarifying the main ask of the chief and his staff.
    - ***Vote on Letter:*** Alan Prouty motioned. Mike Hanna seconded.

***Regular Agenda – Action Items – 10:00 – 11:30 PT (11:00 – 12:30 MT)***

**Section II: Project Updates and New Projects**

***Non-Timber, non-Roads, or non-Minerals Small Projects***

**National Forest/District:** Caribou Targhee NF, Ashton/Island Park Ranger District

**Project Name:** Ashton/Island Park 8 Range Permit Reissuance

**IRA Name and Theme: Mt Jefferson**: 5,211 acres Primitive, 80 acres General Forest, Range 799 acres Backcountry Restoration **Raynolds Pass:** 4,015 acres Backcountry Restoration, **Winegar Hole:** 416 Primitive, 499 Forest Plan Special Area, 371 Backcountry Restoration.

**Type of Activity** (e.g., planting, prescribed burn, waterline, etc.): This project would reissue grazing permits on eight cattle and horse allotments on the Ashton/Island Park Ranger District. Two of the eight allotments, Boot Jack and West Lake are within Inventoried Roadless Areas. The allotments include fences and water developments.

**Approximate Acres of Activity within IRA:** There are approximately 4,015 acres within the Raynolds Pass IRA, approximately 1,286 acres in the Winegar Hole IRA, and approximately 6,090 acres within the Mt. Jefferson IRA.

**NEPA type (CE, EA, EIS) and expected Decision Date**: EA, Draft Decision expected 8/2025

***Comments:*** Blair Dance: Agriculture is critical to that community, important to reissue those permits.

**National Forest:** Sawtooth NF, Forestwide

**Project Name:** Sawtooth Forestwide Reforestation CE

**IRA Name (and Theme if in Idaho):** All IRA within the Sawtooth NF

**Type of Activity (e.g., planting, prescribed burn, waterline, etc.):** Site preparation, cone collection, and planting/ seeding of native species post- disturbance. Post- fire activities are the most likely to occur but this CE would also authorize reforestation action after landslide, flood, insect and disease, and similar events.

**Approximate Acres of Activity within IRA:** Undetermined. This CE authorizes reforestation actions in areas impacted by disturbance. The exact locations of reforestation action have not been identified at this time, but a process is in place to survey and identify areas of need.

**NEPA type (CE, EA, EIS) and expected Decision Date:** CE, Decision Anticipated February 2025.

**Comments:** Jim Casewell: Is this only in roadless or is the proposed action Forestwide? FS: Forestwide.

**National Forest:** Sawtooth National Forest – Ketchum Ranger District

**Project Name:** Fox Creek Bridge Replacement

**IRA Name (and Theme if in Idaho):** Smoky Mountains, Backcountry Restoration

**Type of Activity (e.g., planting, prescribed burn, waterline, etc.):** We propose to replace the current 20’ nail laminated trail bridge with an engineered 80’ trail bridge that will span the floodplain. This will include utilizing mechanized trail building equipment to construct the bridge abutments. There will be an impacted area for staging project materials near the bridge site. Equipment access will be on the existing trail, this will result in completing heavy maintenance of incised trail sections. Bridge materials may be flown into the site via helicopter or transported along existing trail

**Approximate Acres of Activity within IRA:** 0.1

**NEPA type (CE, EA, EIS) and expected Decision Date:** CE- Expected decision April 2025

**Comments:** Michael Gibson: How wide is the rail? FS: 24” – 36”

**National Forest/District:** Salmon-Challis NF, Salmon-Cobalt Ranger District

**Project Name:** Cruikshank Riparian Fence

**IRA Name and Theme:** Italian Peak IRA, Backcountry Restoration

**Type of Activity (e.g., planting, prescribed burn, waterline, etc.):** Constructing approximately 0.60 miles of new fence to create a riparian exclosure. Cruikshank Creek contains ESA-listed bull trout and the fence would protect the creek from grazing impacts.

**Approximate Acres of Activity within IRA:** Approximately 17 acres will be protected within the fence. Approximately 0.15 acres will be disturbed by fence construction (6,300 square feet).

**NEPA type (CE, EA, EIS) and expected Decision Date:** CE; Decision expected April 1, 2025.

**Comments:** Michael Gibson: Hopefully virtual fencing will reduce the need of future structures in IRAs and wilderness areas.

**National Forest/District:** Payette NF, Council Ranger District

**Project Name:** Council Ranger District 2022-2024 Post-fire Reforestation

**IRA Name and Theme:** A large section of the Limepoint Fire area is within the Hells Canyon/Seven Devils Scenic, Primitive and Indian Creek, Primitive Roadless Areas. A very small portion of the Lava Fire area is within the Snowbank, Primitive Roadless Area. Some of the Four Corners Fire burn area is part of Snowbank, Primitive Roadless Area. A very small portion of the Wolf Creek Fire area is within the Poison Creek, Backcountry Restoration Roadless Area. Any planting that would occur within these areas would be in compliance with roadless rules and maintain natural integrity of these landscapes.

**Type of Activity (e.g., planting, prescribed burn, waterline, etc.):** The Council Ranger District proposes to complete reforestation by planting seedlings within the Lava, Limepoint, Wolf Creek, and Four Corners Fire perimeters on the Payette National Forest where natural regeneration is not anticipated. Site preparation for planting would entail scalping the surface soil layers down (<18-inch diameter) to mineral soil and creating a planting hole with either a hoedad or planting shovel. Seedling species selections would be unit-specific, in accordance with the FMP and site-specific conditions, but would be exclusively native trees from local seed sources. Mechanical seeding of native trees is also possible.

**Approximate Acres of Activity within IRA:** 53,765 on the Payette National Forest (NFS lands only).

**NEPA type (CE, EA, EIS) and expected Decision Date:** CE, Winter 2025

**Comments:** Alan Prouty: What is the timeline? FS: This upcoming winter.

**National Forest/District:** Payette NF, Council Ranger District

**Project Name:** Lick Creek C&H Allotment Range Projects

**IRA Name and Theme:** Indian Creek, Primitive

**Type of Activity (e.g., planting, prescribed burn, waterline, etc.):** The purpose of this project is to repair, rebuild, and improve 21 ponds/reservoirs on the Lick Creek C&H Allotment. This project would provide clean, reliable water for livestock, which would improve livestock distribution and riparian habitat as well as wildlife habitat within the grazing allotment. It would also allow grazing permit holders to become compliant with the terms and conditions in their term grazing permits.

**One of the reservoirs (Salt Creek Reservoir #2) is within the Indian Creek IRA.** The reservoir would be cleaned of sediment that has accumulated since the time of the reservoir basins construction/latest maintenance. Removal of the accumulated sediment will provide increased storage capacity of the reservoir and cleaner, more accessible water for livestock and wildlife. Equipment would compact the tailings around three sides of the reservoir basin. Removed material/sediment from the pond/reservoir would also be used to fortify/repair the dam of the reservoir basin.

**Approximate Acres of Activity within IRA:** less than 1 acre.

**NEPA type (CE, EA, EIS) and expected Decision Date:** CE, Winter 2025

**Comments:** No comment.

**National Forest/District:** Payette NF, Krassel Ranger District

**Project Name:** Buckhorn Creek Bridge Installation

**IRA Name and Theme:** Needles, Backcountry Restoration

**Type of Activity (e.g., planting, prescribed burn, waterline, etc.):** Currently the NFST #089 Krassel Knob Trail, a 2-wheeled motorized designated trail, has a stream crossing at the North Fork Buckhorn Creek that is difficult to ford by motorcycle users. Motorcycle crossings are resulting in resource impacts to stream banks. A user-created bridge has been installed and has begun causing issues to the streambank and stream dynamics as it is becoming more like a dam. This bridge does not conform with Forest Service bridge design standards and poses safety and resource concerns.

A new, built-to-spec bridge is needed to facilitate safe and consistent travel through this stream crossing. This bridge will mitigate ongoing resource issues associated with the current use and address existing safety concerns with respect to the crossing and the existing user created bridge.

**Approximate Acres of Activity within IRA:** 1 acre

**NEPA type (CE, EA, EIS) and expected Decision Date:** CE, Winter 2024/25

**Comments:** No Comment

**National Forest/District:** Idaho Panhandle NF

**Project Name:** IPNF Invasive Plant Management

**IRA Name and Theme:** Forest-wide

**Type of Activity (e.g., planting, prescribed burn, waterline, etc.):** Our 5 weed management plans in place range from 24-29 years old. This forest-wide effort will form one cohesive plan and update many outdated items such as target invasive species, treatment options, and strategies. There will be no aerial application or over water spraying.

**Approximate Acres of Activity within IRA:** The number of acres treated within IRAs will depend on conditions. The Implementation Plan includes reviewing the program annually to:

* Propose treatment locations and methods to be used
* Apply all relevant project design features
* Identify sensitive sites to determine if additional protective measures are necessary
* Ensure herbicides are used and applied according to Forest Service Policy and label directions
* Coordinate and communicate with appropriate entities (Federal, state, and county land managers and public landowners) to facilitate management across boundaries
* Update program with new sites, species, or treatment methods
* Monitoring

**NEPA type (CE, EA, EIS) and expected Decision Date:** EA; Decision expected Summer 2025.

**Comments:** No Comment

***Regular Agenda – Action Items - PROJECT UPDATES AND NEW PROJECTS – 8:30 AM –2:00 PM MT (7:30 AM –1:00 PM PT)***

**Individual Projects by Forest:**

The following are the generally larger, individual projects. These projects may or may not require the use of an exception under the Idaho Roadless Rule. No briefings on projects from the Kootenai NF nor the Sawtooth NF for this meeting.

***8:30 - 10:00 AM MT (7:30 AM – 9:00 PT)***

***Payette National Forests***

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| ***Project:*** Stibnite Gold EIS | | |
| ***District:*** Krassel Ranger District | ***Roadless Area:*** Black Creek, Burnt Log, Meadow Creek IRA’s | |
| ***Status:*** Objection Period | ***Table Location:*** | ***Project Lead:*** Kevin Knesek, Acting Payette National Forest Supervisor (Deputy Forest Supervisor) |
| ***Project Summary:*** The Forest Service’s purpose is to consider approval of Perpetua’s proposed use of the surface of NFS lands in connection with operations authorized by the U.S. mining law as first described in the Plan submitted September 2016, then refined in 2019 (Brown and Caldwell 2019a), and further modified in 2021 as the 2021 Modified Mine Plan (MMP; Perpetua 2021a). The Payette National Forest (PNF) is continuing to work through the NEPA process on a proposed mining project on a combination of 3,265.9 acres of private, and federal lands.  **9. Road Construction/Reconstruction:** Yes. The Burntlog Route (38 miles) for SGP access during last year of construction, mining and ore processing operations, and closure and reclamation. Includes improvements of existing segments (23 miles) and road construction for new segments (15 miles).  **10. Timber Cutting, Sale, or Removal:** Yes. Non-commercial tree removal related to 63 miles of upgraded transmission lines, along Burnt Log improvement/new construction areas, and the mine operations area.  **11. Discretionary Minerals:** No, as this project falls under the General Mining Law of 1872.  **12. Modification or Correction:** No, as the Idaho Roadless Rule has exceptions/conditioned permissions for minerals activities/road construction.  ***Timeline:*** FEIS and Draft Record of Decision sign September 6, 2024  Decision and beginning of the Objection Period Projected for Winter 2024 | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?*** | ***Yes: –***  ***Exception:*** | ***No \_\_\_\_X****\_\_\_* |
| ***Commission Discussion:*** Michael Gibson: The Roadless Commission had prepared a letter addressed to the Payette regarding a statement in the comment response section of the FEIS that implied the IRC ‘approved’ the mining project, which is not the case, since the IRC does not approve/disapprove projects. Gibson was able to speak with the Forest, and they agreed to clarify in the ROD, so the letter is not necessary now. | | |
| ***Action Requested:*** None. | | |

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| ***Project:*** East Fork South Fork RAMP | | |
| ***District:*** Krassel Ranger District | ***Roadless Area:*** Caton Lake, Horse Heaven, Sugar Mountain, Meadow Creek, Secesh | |
| ***Status:*** Planned draft decision is expected in Winter 2024 – 2025 | ***Table Location:*** | ***Project Lead:*** Joshua Simpson Recreation/IRA Specialist, 208-634-0616; joshua.simpson@usda.gov |
| ***Project Summary:*** There are five objectives of the proposal. These objectives represent the purpose for this project:  1. Determine the Minimum Road System (MRS) needed for management of the project area, and what routes will be open for public motor vehicle use.  2. Improve watershed condition, by, decommissioning or obliterating roads, storm damage risk reduction treatments, improving maintenance of roads and trails, and managing dispersed use.  3. Provide motorized trail opportunities, where possible, while minimizing resource impacts.  4. Provide access to reasonably use and enjoy private land within the project area.  5. Amend the forest plan, if determined necessary to implement any project-specific actions of the selected alternative.  1. Road Construction/Reconstruction: No new road construction reconstruction or would occur.  2. Timber Cutting, Sale, or Removal: Possible incidental timber removal may occur during trail maintenance activities and/or route decommissioning. The material would not be removed from the IRA or sold.  3. Discretionary Minerals: No, there is no mineral activity associated with this project.  4. Modification or Correction: No.  ***Timeline:*** A 30-day public comment period on the Draft Environmental Assessment began on May 7, 2024. A planned draft decision is expected in fall 2024. | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?*** | ***Yes: –***  ***Exception:*** | ***No \_\_\_\_X****\_\_\_* |
| ***Commission Discussion: No comment.*** | | |
| ***Action Requested:*** None. | | |

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| ***Project:*** Payette Forest-Wide Prescribed Fire | | |
| ***District:*** Entire Forest | ***Roadless Area:*** Entire Forest | |
| ***Status:*** Objection period occurred in June. Final decision expected Winter 2024-2025 after the biological opinion is issued. | ***Table Location:*** | ***Project Lead:*** Patrick Schon, patrick.schon@usda.gov, Forest Fuels Planner, Payette National Forest |
| ***Project Summary:*** The proposed project would authorize prescribed burning, hand thinning, and mechanical thinning across the project area up to 30,000 acres a year. Prescribed fire treatments could be implemented throughout the year when weather and air-quality conditions allow the Forest to meet the objectives and desired conditions for burning. Treatments would require the proper burning conditions, appropriate weather windows, securing air quality permits for smoke management, and developing additional personnel capacity on the forest.  **1. Road Construction/Reconstruction**: No  **2. Timber Cutting, Sale, or Removal:** Yes. Non-commercial thinning treatments would include the cutting of generally small-diameter trees and brush or other vegetation, with the occasional felling of a larger tree to mitigate hazards of those working within the burn area or the public. The material would not be removed from the IRA or sold. The proposed action does not include the use of harvesting systems as a pre-treatment.  **3. Discretionary Minerals: No**  **4. Modification or Correction:** No  ***Timeline:*** The final decision is expected in the summer of 2024. | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?*** | ***Yes: –***  ***Exception:*** | ***No \_\_\_\_X****\_\_\_* |
| ***Commission Discussion: No Comments*** | | |
| ***Action Requested:*** None. | | |

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| ***Project:*** Granite Goose Landscape Restoration Project | | |
| ***District:*** McCall & New Meadows Ranger Districts | ***Roadless Area:*** French Creek (Backcountry Restoration and Primitive); Patrick Butte (Forest Plan Special Area and Primitive) | |
| ***Status:*** Preparing final EA, Decision Notice in Winter 2024/2025. | ***Table Location:*** | ***Project Lead:*** Dana Harris, New Meadows District Ranger, Dana.Harris@usda.gov |
| ***Project Summary:*** Vegetation removal activities proposed within both IRAs include prescribed fire, non-commercial thinning, shaded fuel breaks, sanitation and salvage of Balsam woolly adelgid (BWA) impacted fir stands, regeneration treatments, whitebark pine restoration treatments, meadow restoration, and aspen treatments. Vegetation treatments will only be implemented to reduce hazardous fuels, reduce dead and dying trees impacted by balsam woolly adelgid (BWA), or for restoration of whitebark pine, aspen, and meadows. Treatments may be commercial or non-commercial and may be carried out with or without heavy equipment. All vegetation treatments may be followed by some level of prescribed fire (pile burning, jackpot burning and/or low-severity broadcast burning) to reduce competing understory conifers.  **6. Road Construction/Reconstruction:** No new road construction or road reconstruction is proposed.  **7. Timber Cutting, Sale, or Removal:** Timber cutting, sale, and removal is proposed in the Patrick Butte and French Creek IRAs. Vegetation would be cut through mechanized and non-mechanized means. All vegetation treatments may be followed by some level of prescribed fire (pile burning, jackpot burning and/or low-severity broadcast burning) and incidental tree cutting and removal may occur to implement burns safely and efficiently in IRAs. Tree cutting could occur incidental to streambank, wetland, riparian, and meadow restoration activities.  **8. Discretionary Minerals:** No.  **9. Modification or Correction:** No.  ***Timeline:*** Decision Notice in Winter 2024/2025. | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?*** | ***Yes: –***  ***Exception:*** | ***No \_\_\_\_X****\_\_\_* |
| ***Commission Discussion:*** Michael Gibson:Does the IRA have commercial harvest? FS: Most of those units are subalpine fir and grand fir, so probably not. Elt Hasbrouck: How many acres of Rx fire are proposed? People in the community are getting really upset with the amount of smoke, the FS should consider scaling back Rx burning. Over 30,000 acres in 25 years have been burned. | | |
| ***Action Requested:*** None. | | |

**Motion to back Granite Goose and receive implementation updates on Forest Wide Rx Fire: Mike Hanna. Second by Alan Prouty**

***Boise National Forests***

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| ***Project:*** Southwest Idaho Resilient Landscape | | |
| ***District:*** Parts of all five ranger districts on the forest | ***Roadless Area:*** Entire Forest | |
| ***Status:*** Waiting for signature | ***Table Location:*** | ***Project Lead:*** Ryan Jones, ryan.c.jones@usda.gov, Forest Fuels Planner |
| ***Project Summary:*** The forest proposes to implement prescribed burns and associated treatments (hand thinning, pruning, piling [hand or grapple], and mastication) on up to 48,000 acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands within the Boise National Forest each year over the next 20 years. This project is a fuels treatment project with prescribed fire and non-harvest mechanical fuels treatments proposed across the forest that includes areas in and around communities that have CWPP. If and when treatments occur around communities, they would be consistent with reducing hazards and risk to those areas. A variety of risk assessment tools including forest priority treatment areas would be used to prioritize project areas and treatments.  **5. Road Construction/Reconstruction: No**  **6. Timber Cutting, Sale, or Removal:** Yes. Non-commercial thinning treatments would include the cutting of generally small diameter trees and brush or other vegetation, with the occasional felling of a larger tree to mitigate hazards of those working within the burn area or the public. The material would not be removed from the IRA or sold. The proposed action does not include the use of harvesting systems as a pre-treatment.  **7. Discretionary Minerals No**  **8. Modification or Correction:** No  ***Timeline:*** Decision expected November/December 2024 | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?*** | ***Yes: –***  ***Exception:*** | ***No \_\_\_\_X****\_\_\_* |
| ***Commission Discussion:*** No comments | | |
| ***Action Requested:*** None. | | |

**Motion to bring SWIRL back: Alan Prouty. Second by Mike Hanna.**

***Caribou Targhee National Forests***

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| ***Project:*** Lower Portneuf Cooperative Vegetation Restoration Project | | |
| ***District:*** Westside Ranger District | ***Roadless Area:*** Scout Mountain Idaho Roadless Area (IRA) - Approximately 105 acres in Forest Plan Special Area Theme; West Mink IRA – approximately 108 acres in General Forest, Rangeland, Grassland Theme. | |
| ***Status:*** Preparing to Scope | ***Table Location:*** | ***Project Lead***: Arik Jorgensen, Caribou Zone Fuels Specialist 208-236-7500 |
| ***Project Summary:*** The project area consists of 32,697 acres of mixed conifer, Douglas-fir, aspen, maple, mixed woodlands, juniper, mahogany, grass, and mountain brush.  Treatments are being proposed on approximately 11,637 acres (54% forested acres, 35% non-forested acres, and 11% woodland acres) within the project area. These vegetation management treatments can be divided into three categories: timber harvest with stand tending, mechanical treatments combined with prescribed fire, and prescribed burning.  1. Road Construction/Reconstruction: No  2. Timber Cutting, Sale, or Removal: Yes. Tree cutting within the Backcountry Restoration theme would be incidental to implement the project within the project area, both along control features as well as within units with thinning, to create stand conditions resilient to future disturbance as well as promote aspen and of age class diversity. Tree cutting for commercial purposes and removal is confined within non-roadless areas in addition to select Forest Plan Special Areas around Scout Mountain, and the General Forest and Rangeland themes of the Idaho Roadless Rule. Any Forest Plan Special areas designated as RNA will not have temp roads or harvest allowed but some tree cutting would be incidental to fire line construction along established trails.  3. Discretionary Minerals: No  4. Modification or Correction: No  ***Timeline:*** Scoping comments/objections: Scoping – July 2024, Decision -March 2025. | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?*** | ***Yes: –***  ***Exception:*** | ***No \_\_\_\_X****\_\_\_* |
| ***Commission Discussion:*** Michael Gibson: Where is the Forest Plan Special Area? FS: Mostly within an area that is used for dispersed camping. Jon Oppenheimer: Why complete a CPZ analysis if no treatments in a CPZ are planned? FS: The CPZ treatments were not commercially viable. | | |
| ***Action Requested:*** None. | | |

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| ***Project:*** Graham Hollow Watershed Restoration Project | | |
| ***District:*** Montpelier Ranger District | ***Roadless Area:*** Mink Creek and Station Creek Inventoried Roadless Area | |
| ***Status:*** Preparing to Scope | ***Project Lead:*** Anna Golightly, Rangeland Management Specialist, 208-339-8649 | |
| ***Project Summary:*** The purpose of this project is to reduce the expansion of junipers outside their historic range of variability, while improving wildlife habitat. The entire project area is about 2,534 acres. The Forest proposes to treat 1,660 acres of Phase I and Phase II juniper expansion. The proposal is to use hand crews to lop and scatter and equipment to masticate juniper trees in Phase I and II to maintain and enhance sagebrush/grass, mountain brush, and meadow habitats.  **Rule References:** 294.24(c)(1)(iv) – The cutting, sale, or removal of timber is permissible in Idaho Roadless Areas designated as Backcountry/Restoration to maintain or restore the characteristics of ecosystem composition structure and process.  **2. Road Construction/Reconstruction:** No  **3. Timber Cutting, Sale, or Removal:** Yes  -include acreage: project area is 2,534 acres of which 1,660 is estimated to be treated  -stand type: juniper  -non-commercial  -Trees would be cut with chainsaws or masticated. Trees would be left in project area.  **4. Discretionary Minerals:** No  **5. Modification or Correction:** No  **Timeline:** Anticipated decision by summer 2025. The project is expected to begin implementation in 2026/2027. | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?*** | ***Yes: –***  ***Exception:*** | ***No \_\_\_\_X****\_\_\_* |
| ***Commission Discussion:*** Jim Casewell: Why is there no prescribed fire proposed? FS: it would put grazing permitees at too much of a disadvantage. Elt Hasbrouck: Is there an ESA nexus with this project? FS: No, there is not. | | |
| ***Action Requested:*** | | |

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| ***Project:*** Phosphate Ore Slurry Spill Clean-Up Project | | |
| ***District:*** Soda Springs RD | ***Roadless Area:*** Schmid Creek | |
| ***Status:*** Decision was already signed, project is underway. | ***Project Lead:*** Bryan Fuell, Soda Springs District Ranger, 208-223-5086 | |
| ***Project Summary:*** The purpose of this project is to clean-up the remaining ore product and restore the site to pre-spill conditions. The need is to authorize Simplot access to the site to facilitate clean-  up. Mechanized and non-mechanized equipment will be used to remove and haul the ore down canyon and then hauled back to the Smoky Canyon Mine.  **Rule References:** 36 CFR 294.24(c)(1)(vii) “The cutting, sale, or removal of timber is permissible in Idaho Roadless Areas designated as Backcountry/Restoration only: (vii) Where incidental to the implementation to the implementation of a management activity not otherwise prohibited by this subpart.”  **Timeline:** A categorical exclusion was prepared for the project under 36 CFR 220.6(e)(3) This category of action(s) is: “Approval, modification, or continuation of special uses that require less than 20 acres of NFS lands. A decision memo is not required for this category.” A decision memo was signed on July 15, 2024. | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?*** | ***Yes: –***  ***Exception:*** | ***No \_\_\_\_X****\_\_\_* |
| ***Commission Discussion:*** No Comment | | |
| ***Action Requested:*** | | |

**Motion to bring back Lower Portneuf: Alan Prouty. Second by Mike Hanna.**

***Public Comment – 10:15 AM MT – 11:15 AM MT (9:15 -10:15 AM PT) (Firm time- projects continue to roll if no public present)***

***10:00 - 10:15 AM MT (9:00 AM – 9:15 PT) BREAK***

***Salmon Challis National Forests***

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| ***Project:*** SCNF Forest Plan Revision | | |
| ***District:*** Entire Forest | ***Roadless Area:*** Entire Forest | |
| ***Status:*** Multiyear planning effort was initiated in October 2016. Phase 1, Assessments and collaborative relationships just beginning. | ***Table Location:*** | ***Project Lead:*** Josh Milligan, Forest Plan Revision Team Ldr, 208-756-5560, joshua.milligan@usda.gov. |
| ***Project Summary:*** The Salmon Forest Plan (1988) is in review (assessment) to determine if there is a need revise, amend, or keep the plan(s) in place based on new Forest Service planning regulations developed in 2012.  ***Timeline:*** 4-Year Revision Process, in Phase I  **YEAR 1: Assessment**  • Communication strategy, cooperating agency MOUs  • Draft Species of Conservation Concern list  • Notice of Initiation for assessment  • Wilderness inventory & evaluation  • Draft Assessment of resource conditions and trends  • Identify revision focus areas and need for change  **YEAR 3 & 4: Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**  • Notice of Intent to prepare EIS  • Draft EIS, Draft Forest Plan, and alternatives  • Final EIS, draft Record of Decision  **YEAR 4: Decision**  • Objection filing period  • Objection resolution process  • Final Record of Decision | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?*** | ***Yes: –***  ***Exception:*** | ***No \_\_\_\_X****\_\_\_* |
| ***Commission Discussion:*** Brad Smith: Forest Plan revision is worth doing and moving forward on. How has the FS utilized the Mountain Planning Services Group? FS: They are still figuring out the details, the group has only worked on a couple FEIS’s. The regional foresters are thinking through forest plan revisions strategies to initiate and complete them in a more reasonable timeframe. Elt Hasbrouck: bring in a collaborative, they can take time, but can be helpful… good luck! | | |
| ***Action Requested:*** None. | | |

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| ***Project:*** Twelve mile Trail Construction | | |
| ***District:*** Salmon-Cobalt Ranger District | ***Roadless Area:*** Sal Mountain | |
| ***Status:*** CE, Decision expected Summer 2025 | ***Project Lead:*** Jonathan LeBlanc, Acting District Ranger, [jonathan.leblanc@usda.gov](mailto:jonathan.leblanc@usda.gov), James Townley, Project Lead, james.townley@usda.gov | |
| ***Project Summary:*** The purpose and need are to construct a network of new multi-use, non-motorized trails in the lower portion of the Twelve mile Creek drainage. The existing Forest Service trail network in the upper Twelve mile Creek drainage is accessed by 9 miles of rough, steep road (Forest Road 60014), which can be a deterrent to many recreationists wishing to access these trails.  **Rule References:**  36 CFR 294.24(c)(1)(vii) The cutting, sale, or removal of timber is permissible in Idaho Roadless Areas designated as Backcountry/Restoration only where incidental to the implementation of a management activity not otherwise prohibited by this subpar.  **1. Road Construction/Reconstruction:** No  **2. Timber Cutting, Sale, or Removal:** Yes, cutting of trees for 1200 linear yards of clearing limits and trail construction, less than one acre. Cutting will be completed with chainsaw. Cut trees will remain the project area.  **3. Discretionary Minerals:** No  **4. Modification or Correction:** No  ***Timeline:*** Complete CE review and sign DM by March of 2025. Implementation to begin Summer of 2025 | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?*** | ***Yes: –***  ***Exception:*** | ***No \_\_\_\_X****\_\_\_* |
| ***Commission Discussion:*** Jim Casewell: Let’s chat with the FS about what sideboards need to be on the project presentations, while the IRC wants to hear about all projects, not all projects need a full briefing and write up. Blair Dance: I agree, lets talk with the FS. | | |
| ***Action Requested:*** None. | | |

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| ***Project:*** Dump Salvage | | |
| ***District:*** Salmon-Cobalt District | ***Roadless Area:*** Napoleon Ridge | |
| ***Status:*** CE, Decision expected Summer 2025. | ***Project Lead:***  Jonathan Leblanc, Acting District Ranger, [jonathan.leblanc@usda.gov](mailto:jonathan.leblanc@usda.gov), Nathan Meyer, Project Lead. 208-865-2721, nathan.meyer@usda.gov | |
| ***Project Summary:*** The project area was impacted by the 2022 Moose fire, killing approximately 40% of the timber. The residual live timber is exhibiting signs of insect infestation. If left untreated, stand mortality is anticipated to increase. Additionally, fire and insect killed trees will fall over time, increasing surface fuel loading. The purpose of this project is to improve forest health and reduce wildfire hazards by harvesting burned and unburned timber in the project area to:  1. Reduce the spread of Douglas-fir beetle and mountain pine beetle in adjacent unburned stands.  2. Remove hazardous fuels and decrease the severity of a future burn by reducing the density of snags that would eventually fall and contribute to increased surface fuels.  **Road Construction/Reconstruction:** Yes. Temporary road construction up to ½ mile may be needed to access units for log-haul. Any newly constructed temporary road would be fully decommissioned after use.  93  **Timber Cutting, Sale, or Removal:** Yes. The Dump Salvage project would authorize forest product removal, as described above. The proposed action may include incidental removal of live or dead trees for landings, skid trails, and road clearing. Examples include but are not limited to:   * Harvest of a portion of a stand damaged by a wind or ice event and construction of a short temporary road to access the damaged trees and * Harvest of fire-damaged trees.   3. **Discretionary Minerals:** No  4. **Modification or Correction:** No  ***Timeline:***  Public Scoping December 2024  Comment Period Open December 2024 to February 2025  Decision Memo Signed Summer 2025  Implementation Summer 2025 | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?*** | ***Yes: –***  ***Exception:*** | ***No \_\_\_\_X****\_\_\_* |
| ***Commission Discussion:*** JimCasewell: When is the decision coming out on this project? FS: This summer. Elt Hasbrouck: Let’s bring this one back. | | |
| ***Action Requested:*** None. | | |

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| ***Project:*** Camas Creek Road and Fish Habitat Improvement Project | | |
| ***District:*** Salmon-Cobalt Ranger District | ***Roadless Area:*** Camas Creek | |
| ***Status:*** CE, Decision expected Spring 2025 | ***Project Lead:*** Craig Allen, Acting District Ranger, craig.m.allen@usda.gov , Kelly Schade, Project Lead, kelly.schade@usda.gov | |
| ***Project Summary:*** To address the deleterious conditions in Camas Creek, the Forest is proposing to re-route just over a ¼ mile of NFSR 258 and install a new bridge on the new route. The new route will be located in a more desirable location, situated further away from the stream edge, with the new bridge located in a more stable location with bedrock formations present on both sides of channel. In addition to the road relocation, the Forest will also rehabilitate the existing ford crossings and decommission the original road. To facilitate this work and the mobilization of heavy equipment, heavy road maintenance actions are anticipated.  **1.Road Construction/Reconstruction:** Yes, road construction is proposed within the Camas Creek Roadless Area for an approximate 0.11 miles. Much of the remaining road construction lies outside of the roadless area. The road is currently located in an undesirable location impacting  97  both floodplain and riparian systems. The reroute proposed as a part of this project will maintain public and private land access into the Camas Creek drainage, while also vastly improving stream conditions in Camas Creek by eliminating two open water crossings.  2. **Timber Cutting, Sale, or Removal:** Yes, cutting of trees would be incidental to constructing the road reroute. Cut trees would remain the project area.  3. **Discretionary Minerals:** No  4. **Modification or Correction:** No.  ***Timeline:*** Public Scoping December 2024, Comment Period Open December 2024 to February 2025,  Decision Memo Signed Spring 2025, Implementation Summer 2025. | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?*** | ***Yes: X***  ***Exception:*** ESA | ***No \_\_\_\_****\_\_\_* |
| ***Commission Discussion:*** Jim Casewell:Is this action allowed? The NEPA document has to say this is absolutely necessary, and make the connection between the Rule and the ESA nexus in the NEPA document. How is the FS showing this in the NEPA document? Brad Smith: Yes, the document needs to be abundantly clear how you are meeting the exception. Bill Higgins: Justify why the engineering needs to go through roadless. | | |
| ***Action Requested:*** None. | | |

**Motion to bring back Twelve Mile, Dump Salvage, and Camas Creek: Mike Hanna, Second by Michael Gibson.**

***Idaho Panhandle National Forests***

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| ***Project:*** Granite Fuels | | |
| ***District:*** St. Joe District | ***Roadless Area:*** Mallard Larkins (99,691 acres) and Sheep Mountain-State Line (1 acre) | |
| ***Status:*** Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact out for combined scoping and comment (October 16th through November 14th) | ***Project Lead:*** Ben Johnson, St. Joe District Ranger, (208) 416 - 8010 | |
| ***Project Summary:*** The purpose of this project is to reduce the risk of uncharacteristically severe wildfire and influence how wildfire and other disturbances will shape the landscape. We propose to use prescribed burn treatments of up to 10,000 acres per year for up to 10 years to reduce fuels at both the stand and landscape scales. Most ignitions will be completed aerially, either by plastic sphere dispenser (PSD) or heli-torch, depending on environmental conditions. Hand ignition may occur on some units to create a black line at ridge tops to help reduce fire spread concerns. We will use a condition-based management approach. Prior to implementing the prescribed burn treatment, a resource-specific pre-implementation checklist will be completed. Additionally, to protect resources, no-ignition buffers will be adhered to.  **Scoping comments/objections** Combined scoping and EA comment period began on October 16, 2024 and closes on November 14, 2024. As of October 30th, only one comment letter in support of the ecological restoration benefits of prescribed fire has been received.  **Timeline** Decision Notice is anticipated to be complete in the summer of 2025, possible prescribed fire implementation no earlier than fall of 2025. | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?*** | ***Yes: –***  ***Exception:*** | ***No \_\_\_\_X****\_\_\_* |
| ***Commission Discussion:*** | | |
| ***Action Requested:*** | | |

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| ***Project:*** Katkee Fuels | | |
| ***District:*** Bonners Ferry | ***Roadless Area:*** Katka Peak, Backcountry Restoration and General Forest | |
| ***Status:*** Draft EA – under analysis | ***Table Location:*** | ***Project Lead:*** Doug Nishek |
| ***Project Summary:*** To meet the purpose and need of the project, a combination of pre-commercial thinning, intermediate harvest, regeneration harvest, and fuel reduction activities are necessary to trend the project area towards Forest Plan desired conditions. Actions such as under burning, mastication, and pile burning are designed to reduce wildfire risk to homes, property, and infrastructure values. Implementing these vegetation prescriptions would also increase the resilience and resistance of the forest stands to drought, climate change, and insects and disease stressors. Examples of the hazardous fuels and vegetation treatments can be found on the project webpage.  **Timeline:** Estimated Decision for the EA is May 2025. | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?*** | ***Yes: –***  ***Exception:*** | ***No \_\_\_\_X****\_\_\_* |
| ***Commission Discussion: No comment*** | | |
| ***Action Requested:*** | | |

**Motion to bring back Granite and Katkee: Jim Casewell. Second by Blair Dance.**

***Nez Perce Clearwater National Forests***

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| ***Project:*** Forest Plan Revision | | |
| ***District:*** Nez Perce- Clearwater National Forests, Forest-wide | ***Roadless Area:*** All Nez Perce- Clearwater National Forests | |
| ***Status:*** Signed ROD January 2025 | ***Table Location:*** | ***Project Lead:***  Sara Daugherty  sara.daugherty@usda.gov |
| ***Project Summary:***  The objection reviewing officer’s response was sent to all objectors and posted to the public on September 30. 2024 and can be found here: https://usfs-public.app.box.com/s/1eouphzyvyxqegs5qwmebvulfagykmt9  **Timeline:** FEIS NOA January 2025  Record of Decision/Revised Forest Plan January 2025 | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?*** | ***Yes: –***  ***Exception:*** | ***No \_\_\_\_****\_\_\_* |
| ***Commission Discussion:*** Jim Casewell: Lets have a celebration! | | |
| ***Action Requested:*** | | |
| ***Project:*** Forestwide Aspen Restoration | | |
| ***District:*** Nez Perce- Clearwater National Forests, Forest-wide | ***Roadless Area:*** All Nez Perce- Clearwater National Forests | |
| ***Status:*** Project is on hold. | ***Project Lead:***  Chris Noyes, Lochsa Powell Deputy District Ranger, 541-261-7926, Christopher.noyes@usda.gov | |
| ***Project Summary:*** The purpose of the Forestwide Aspen Restoration project is to increase the aspen component and improve the vigor of existing aspen on the Forest, improve wildlife habitat for numerous species, and increase landscape fire resiliency. This work is needed because existing aspen stands are not meeting desired conditions due to heavy conifer encroachment, a lack of recruitment, a lack of diverse age structures, and a lack of disturbance that would favor aspen regeneration. Aspen stands are being lost to competing vegetation. Aspen restoration will be considered in the Idaho Roadless Areas as a part of this project.  1. Road Construction/Reconstruction: No  2. Timber Cutting, Sale, or Removal: Timber cutting may be necessary in order to meet project purpose and need. The majority of timber cutting will be non-commercial, however commercial timber harvest, where appropriate, could be considered. Cutting will be done through hand or mechanical treatment and will be determined on a site specific basis. Trees that would be cut would include encroaching conifers, and mature aspen if deemed necessary to stimulate new growth.  3. Discretionary Minerals: No  4. Modification or Correction: No  ***Timeline:*** Project is on hold, no projected timeline for when it will be back. | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?*** | ***Yes: –***  ***Exception:*** | ***No \_\_\_\_X****\_\_\_* |
| ***Commission Discussion:*** FS: The forest will rescope the project under the new forest plan at some point in the future. | | |
| ***Action Requested:*** None. | | |

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| ***Project:*** Race Cow | | |
| ***District:*** Salmon River Ranger District Wallow-Whitman NF - Hells Canyon National Recreation Area | ***Roadless Area:*** Salmon Face IRA #855 – Backcountry Restoration 9,200 acres, no-CPZ  Klopton Creek-Corral Creek IRA #854 – Backcountry Restoration 21,300 acres; 7,100 acres CPZ; 14,200 acres non-CPZ. | |
| ***Status:*** On Hold. | ***Project Lead:*** Jeff Shinn, Salmon River District Ranger, [jeffrey.shinn@usda.gov](mailto:jeffrey.shinn@usda.gov), 208-839-2103  Jamey Basey, Deputy District Ranger. Hells Canyon National Recreation Area, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, Jamey.Basye@usda.gov; 509-852-1042 | |
| ***Project Summary:***  1. Road Construction/Reconstruction: No.  2. Timber Cutting, Sale, or Removal: Yes.  Approximately 121 acres of grassland improvement. Improve grass production by reducing conifer encroachment in and adjacent to grasslands. Felling of trees by hand or mastication equipment, followed by prescribed burning.  3. Discretionary Minerals: No  4. Modification or Correction: No  ***Timeline:***   * Project is within the updated Idaho County WUI (2022) – 100%. * Stand exams for old growth analysis and MA 20 verification are complete. * Nez Perce-Clearwater portion of project is within the Lower Salmon Wildfire Crisis Strategy Landscape and within two High-Risk Firesheds – White Bird and Pinehurst, Idaho (Map 7). * Project will be submitted for Emergency Action Determination authority. * Proposed Actions – No updates at this time (May 2024). * Possible contracting NEPA analysis. * Project Implementation: 2028-2038; FY28 Race Cow Timber Sale Q2. | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?*** | ***Yes: –***  ***Exception:*** | ***No \_\_\_\_****\_\_\_* |
| ***Commission Discussion:*** Alan Prouty: The whole point of all of this work is reducing hazardous fuels, yet we see no projects happening. Most lands are Wilderness/IRA, therefore no management. There is a decent amount of frustration among industry and communities about not seeing progress towards hazardous fuel reduction. Race cow has been set back yet again by some administrative rule/process (having to re scope under the new forest plan), this is just another excuse to not do anything. Allison Ginn: The Nez Clear actually does have a large portfolio of work they are doing with IDL, IDFG, the county, and the tribe under shared stewardship and GNA. What the IRC gets briefed on is not the entire scope of work happening on any of these forests. Bill Higgins: Does the presence of IRA being within this project hinder progress? FS: Not necessarily. | | |
| ***Action Requested:*** | | |

**Dead Laundry Project Update:** The project does not include any commercial harvest in the IRA. The Forest will provide a brief update on how they resolved objections.

***Commission Discussion:*** Mike Hanna: What were the objections again and how were they resolved? FS: Fine fuels analysis was updated along with acreage and road miles. The old growth enhancement was removed, timber units removed for water quality.

**Dixie-Comstock Community Protection Project:** Decision signed 6/14/2024.

**Motion to bring Forest Wide Aspen and Race Cow back: Mike Hanna. Seconded by Dan Dinning.**

***Overview of Wildfire Treatments inside/outside of IRAs***

The Forest Service gave an overview via GIS maps of project boundaries overtime and IRA.

***Commission Discussion:*** Alan Prouty: Simplot is working with the EPA on particulates and is looking for a larger conversation on how the FS can manage fires differently as to free up the air quality and particulate ‘budget’, as allocated by the Clean Air act and ID/MT Airshed regulations. Right now, wildfire and prescribed burning take up most of that budget and leaves little room for anything else.

***Meeting ADJORNED 1pm***