Governor’s Roadless Commission

Idaho Roadless Rule

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

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**Notes**

June 3, 2025

**Meeting Starts at:** **9:00 AM Mountain Time (MT)/8:00 AM Pacific Time (PT)**

**Idaho Department of Fish and Game Headquarters**

**600 S Walnut Street, Boise, ID 83712**

**Public Comment**

The public is invited 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 project’s 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 register 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.](mailto:Species.Conservation@osc.idaho.gov)

**SECTION I: Welcome and Business Meeting**

***Commission:*** Jim Casewell, Michael Gibson, Mike Hanna, Higgins, Gilbert, Smith

***State:*** Jace Hogg (OSC), Alex Ernst (IDPR)

***Congressional***: Darren Parker (Senator Risch)

***FS***: Ginn, Moyer, Harris, Gilloon, Kurtis Steele

***Call to Order/Preliminary Action Items - 9:00 – 9:45 AM MT (8:00 – 8:30 PT)***

Welcome/Introductions/New Members/Appointments ……………………….............. Jim Caswell

* ***No Qurom*** – no decisions today on bringing projects forward or notes, just updates.
* Appointments: Peter and Alan have their paper turned in, and a county commissioner from Valley County to replace Elt, and John Robison has turned in his paperwork for appointments. No word from the Govs office despite our best efforts. Still looking for a Tribal replacement for Barquin.

Review and Approve December 2024 Meeting Minutes……………………………... Michael Gibson

* No Qurom – draft notes remain draft.

Staffing, New Notes/Forms, New IRC MOU and Pilot Project Letter Update ………………………………………...................................................................................... Allison Ginn

* Staffing Updates: Region 4: Casey Johnson, new SNF Forest Sup, Kristen Peirson on the CTNF. Lost 1 in 4 positions since January, non fire. 5200 people total, with 1800 of those with red cards. Region 4 has entire programs that have disappeared, other programs have been barely touched, others in-between. Lots of consolidating of programs and projects. How to prioritize workload with new congressional direction, lawsuit and court direction. On 3rd wave of lateral moves, lots of people leaving regional offices to the ground level at individual forests. Region 1: No change in forest sups (other than Jon Ward). Regional foresters have left, Dan McKeague has moved to another position. Most regional offices are down 25% - 50%, individual ranger districts are staffed a little better, though varies on the forest. Chris Campell is replacing Kelly Orr.
  + Gibson: What about the planning teams for FP revisions? Chris: Very much in limbo. Still a big question on how to approach revision, programmatic NEPA for ESA species. The chief says we need to start revisions, its important. Mountain Planning will stay mostly intact, working on getting other region 4 forest plan revisions to a good stopping point. Will the 2012 planning rule stay intact? Gibson: What about the regions reorg? Ginn: We are reading the same news you are, no new inside information. Reorg delayed due to courts.
  + Parker: Fire EO is coming out soon from the WH, supposedly. Rumblings of a Fire Service being put together, where FS fire money would go over to DOI instead, unclear moving forward. Heading towards another CR.
* IRC MOU: It is executed.
* Pilot Project Letter Update: Despite changes to staff, the letter is still being reviewed, though the original requests are still there. The FS understands the request, it would not require a change to the IRR, but we still need to do some kind of public comment/notice, but not full-blown rule making. The commission could make a request to the Chief to make this a priority.
  + Caswell: Does the commission need to do anything to support this public comment period? Once comment comes through, make a recommendation to the chief.
  + Moyer: What have you heard about the 2001 Roadless Rule lasting? Its been rumored that the 2001 rule might go away but keep Idaho and Colorado’s rule. It is unclear how the Idaho and Colorado rules would stand if the 2001 goes away. Risch could codify the IRA, that bill is floating around.
* New Notes/Forms: New format for briefing papers, reduced size of total packet.

*\*Crow Creek Pipeline Litigation to be discussed during Caribou-Targhee Projects*

* Comments: Same litigants as before are filing another complaint. Stay tuned.

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

***Regular Agenda – Action Items PROJECT UPDATES AND NEW PROJECTS***

***10:15 - 10:30 AM MT (9:15 AM – 9:30 PT)*** **BREAK**

***Public Comment Period – 10:30 AM MT – 11:30 AM MT (9:30 -10:30 AM PT) (Firm time- projects continue to roll if no public present)***

1. ***Non-Timber, non-Roads, or non-Minerals small projects*** *– Includes projects from the Boise, Payette, and Caribou-Targhee National Forests*

***10:30 AM – 12:00 PM Regular Agenda – Action Items PROJECT UPDATES AND NEW PROJECTS, CONTINUED***

***Boise National Forest*** *–*

Southwest Idaho Resilient Landscape……………..……..…..….………………….………... Update/Status

Idaho Power Master Special Use Permit ........................................................... Initial Briefing

Post-Fire Restoration Projects............................................................................ Initial Briefing

***Payette National Forest*** *–*

Payette Forest-Wide Prescribed Fire...................................................................... Update/Status

Granite Goose Landscape Restoration Project ....................................................... Update/Status

***Sawtooth National Forest*** *–*

Elk Meadows Trail Reroute and Habitat Restoration....….........................................Initial briefing

***Caribou-Targhee National Forest*** *–*

Lower Portneuf Cooperative Vegetation Restoration Project ………………………....... Update/Status

Husky 3/4 Project (BLM)....….................................................................................... Initial briefing

Old Ranger Trail Bridge on Burns Creek................................................................... Initial briefing

***Salmon-Challis National Forest*** *–*

Twelve Mile Trail Construction………………………..…………………………………………………. Update/Status

Dump Salvage…………………………………………………………………………………………..………… Update/Status

Camas Creek and Fish Habitat Improvement Project.………………………………..………. Update/Status

Deep Rabbin Fuel Break …………………………………………..………………………………..……… Initial Briefing

Stein Mountain Thinning…………………………………………..………………………………..……… Initial Briefing

***12:00 -1:00 PM MT (11:00 AM – 12:00 PM PT)* LUNCH BREAK**

***Regular Agenda – Action Items PROJECT UPDATES AND NEW PROJECTS, CONTINUED***

***1:00 – 2:00 PM MT (Noon – 1:00 PM PT)***

***Idaho Panhandle National Forests*** *–*

Katkee Fuels……………………………………………………………………………………………….Update/Status

Granite Fuels………………………………………………………………………………………Updated full Briefing

Sandpoint South…………...…………………………………………………………………………….. Initial Briefing

***Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests*** *–*

Forestwide Aspen Restoration ………………………………………………….... Update (Project on Hold)

Race Cow…………………………………………………………………………………………………...... Update/Status

**\*\*No full form briefings on projects from the Kootenai NF for this meeting.**

***Feedback on today’s meeting and discussion of future meetings until adjournment***

***Adjourn***

[Non-Timber, non-Roads, or non-Minerals: Small Projects 5](#_Toc204952263)

[**Project Name:** Poorman Prescribed Underburn Project 7](#_Toc204952264)

[**Project Name:** Kinney Creek Bridge Replacement and Limepoint Fire Trail Stabilization 8](#_Toc204952265)

[**Project Name:**  Trail no. 352, Big Flat, Volunteer Maintenance 8](#_Toc204952266)

[**Project Name:**  Old Ranger Trail Bridge on Burns Creek 9](#_Toc204952267)

[Boise National Forest 10](#_Toc204952268)

[Payette National Forest 15](#_Toc204952269)

[Sawtooth National Forest 19](#_Toc204952270)

[Caribou-Targhee National Forest 22](#_Toc204952271)

[Salmon-Challis National Forest 25](#_Toc204952272)

[Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests 32](#_Toc204952273)

[Idaho Panhandle National Forests 36](#_Toc204952274)

[Kootenai National Forest 36](#_Toc204952275)

R1/R4 National Forests

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

Poorman Prescribed Underburn Project, Boise NF ............................................................... Initial Briefing

Cold Springs Trail, Payette NF................................................................................................ Initial Briefing

Kinney Creek Bridge Replacement & Limepoint Fire Trail Stabilization, Payette NF.............. Initial Briefing

Trail no. 352, Big Flat, Volunteer Maintenance, Payette NF................................................... Initial Briefing

Old Ranger Trail Bridge, Caribou-Targhee NF......................................................................... Initial Briefing

**Region 1 and 4 Idaho Inventoried Roadless Area Briefing Template**

**for Projects That DO NOT INCLUDE Timber1, Road2, or Mineral Activities**

**National Forest/District:** Boise National Forest

## **Project Name:** Poorman Prescribed Underburn Project

**IRA Name and Theme:** Bald Mountain (Back Country 4,625 acres and Forest Plan Special, 325 acres)

**Type of Activity** (prescribed burn): The project area was first implemented in 2011. There is now a need for another burn entry to maintain resource objectives: wildlife habitat, timber stand health, and to keep the forest resilient from uncharacteristic wildfire.

**Approximate Acres of Activity within IRA:** 4,950

**NEPA type (CE, EA, EIS) and expected Decision Date**: Categorical Exclusion, expected June 2025

1Timber – Any cutting, sale, or removal of trees

2Roads – Any new construction or reconstruction. (Maintenance of NFSR is not prohibited by either rule and may use this form)

**Commission Notes:** Caswell: How is this different than SWIRL? FS: SWIRL is still under consultation and a few months out, so they wanted to get this smaller project out.

**National Forest/District:** Payette National Forest

**Project Name:**  Cold Springs Trail, no. 213, Re-establishment

**IRA Name and Theme:** Council Mountain IRA, primitive

**Type of Activity** (e.g., planting, prescribed burn, waterline, etc.): Reestablishment of a non-discernable trail that previously existed. Trail 213, Cold Springs, is located between Forest Road 165 and National Forest System (NFS) Trail. No. 198, Council Mountain. This proposal would allow USFS personnel and volunteers from TVTMA and other groups to begin reestablishing the missing section of the Cold Springs Trail along an approved and marked alignment. The trail alignment seeks primarily to recreate the previous alignment of the trail, where it can be discerned, and relied heavily on USFS blazes on trees and trail tread, where it still existed. No changes in allowable uses are proposed and trail specifications would correspond to allowable use and trail class for each segment.

**Approximate Acres of Activity within IRA:** 4.68 acres (includes a 5-foot buffer along the trail)

**NEPA type (CE, EA, EIS) and expected Decision Date**: Categorical Exclusion

1Timber – Any cutting, sale, or removal of trees

2Roads – Any new construction or reconstruction. (Maintenance of NFSR is not prohibited by either rule and may use this form)

**Commission Notes:** Hanna: Is this a motorized or non-motorized trail?FS:Not sure. Gibson: This is not a new trail, this is just reestablishing an existing trail.

**National Forest/District:** Payette National Forest

## **Project Name:** Kinney Creek Bridge Replacement and Limepoint Fire Trail Stabilization

**IRA Name and Theme:** Hells Canyon/Seven Devils Scenic IRA, primitive

**Type of Activity** (e.g., planting, prescribed burn, waterline, etc.): The 2024 Limepoint Fire impacted the approximately 12.2 miles of “flagship” Payette National Forest system trails. The four trail segments described form two “loops” of non-motorized trails in Hells Canyon, along Hells Canyon Reservoir. The Forest Service would conduct trail stabilization activities on the trails to prevent loss of the defined trail prism from post-fire erosion using a mini-excavator. The Kinney Creek trail bridge was burned in the fire and will be replaced via helicopter and mini-excavator. No changes in allowable uses are proposed and trail specifications would correspond to allowable use and trail class for each segment.

**Approximate Acres of Activity within IRA:** 12 acres (includes a 5-foot buffer along the trail)

**NEPA type (CE, EA, EIS) and expected Decision Date**: Categorical Exclusion

1Timber – Any cutting, sale, or removal of trees

2Roads – Any new construction or reconstruction. (Maintenance of NFSR is not prohibited by either rule and may use this form)

**Commission Notes:** No discussion.

**National Forest/District:** Payette National Forest

## **Project Name:** Trail no. 352, Big Flat, Volunteer Maintenance

**IRA Name and Theme:** Cuddy Mountain IRA, primitive

**Type of Activity** (e.g., planting, prescribed burn, waterline, etc.): The southern (approximately) three miles of Big Flat Trail, no. 352, are currently in poor condition; overgrown, with tread lacking proper outsloping or drainage (no drain dips or other means of preventing over-trail flow). Volunteers would complete maintenance activities including brushing and tread work for trail stabilization on the existing trail prism. No changes in allowable uses are proposed and trail specifications would correspond to allowable use and trail class for each segment.

**Approximate Acres of Activity within IRA:** 9.47 acres (includes a 5-foot buffer along the trail)

**NEPA type (CE, EA, EIS) and expected Decision Date**: Categorical Exclusion

1Timber – Any cutting, sale, or removal of trees

2Roads – Any new construction or reconstruction. (Maintenance of NFSR is not prohibited by either rule and may use this form)

**Commission Notes:** No Discussion

**National Forest/District:** Caribou – Targhee National Forest, Palisades Ranger District

## **Project Name:** Old Ranger Trail Bridge on Burns Creek

**IRA Name and Theme:** Garns Mountain – Forest Plan Special Area (FPSA)

**Type of Activity** (e.g., planting, prescribed burn, waterline, etc.): The project involves building a trail bridge across Burns Creek on the single-track motorized trail FS 4287 known as “Old Ranger Trail”. Currently there is no bridge in place and trail users must ford the creek. This can be hazardous during high flow events. The need is to improve and provide for public safety while crossing Burns Creek. The desire to build the bridge is to improve public safety and decrease stream bank degradation.

The Forest Service trail crew would transport all materials and equipment to the job site. They would use equipment such as a mini excavator, trail dozer and hand tools to prepare the site and install all components of the new bridge and build the earth ramps leading up to the bridge.

Materials to be used would be 40 ft timbered stringers placed on rock gabion basket abutments. Gabion abutments would have to be set-back from the stream bank. Decking would be 60" wide. The earth ramps would be installed after the bridge is in place.

**Approximate Acres of Activity within IRA:** The approximate acres of activity within the IRA would be 0.5 acres within the Garns Mountain FPSA which encompasses 4,973 acres.

**NEPA type (CE, EA, EIS) and expected Decision Date**: CE; Decision expected June 30, 2025.

1Timber – Any cutting, sale, or removal of trees

2Roads – Any new construction or reconstruction. (Maintenance of NFSR is not prohibited by either rule and may use this form)

**Commission Notes:** Gibson: Where are all these trail restoration projects in IRA’s coming from? New money, directive? FS: lots of fire impacts, disaster funding became available for recreation restoration.

# Boise National Forest

Southwest Idaho Resilient Landscape (SWIRL) ……..………………………………………… Update/Status

Idaho Power Master Special Use Permit ……..…………………………………………........... Initial Briefing

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| ***Project:***  Southwest Idaho Resilient Landscape  - **June 2025 Meeting Update** | | |
| ***District:***  Parts of all five ranger districts on the forest | ***Roadless Area:***  Entire Forest | |
| ***Status:***  Waiting for biological opinion | ***Pages in Most Recent IRC Meeting Packet:*** *December 2024 pages 58-62* | ***Project Lead:*** Mike Brady, Forest Fire Management Officer, michael.t.brady@usda.gov |
| ***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.  **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  ***Project Milestone/Timeline:*** Decision expected September 2025 | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?***  No | ***Exception:***  N/A | |
| ***Commission Discussion Notes:*** Caswell: Would the under-burn project have not been presented if SWIRL had been completed? FS: Yes, that is true. Caswell: The status box is unclear if that is the current or previous status. Hogg: Lets make sure that in the future the status box is always the most up to date status. | | |

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| ***Project:***  Idaho Power Master Special Use Permit (MSUP) | | |
| ***District:***  Entire Forest | ***Roadless Area:***  Bald Mountain, Cathedral Rocks, Caton Lake, Deadwood, Grimes Pass, Horse Heaven, House Mountain, Meadow Creek, Rainbow, Reeves Creek, Snowbank | |
| ***Status:***  NEPA Analysis | ***Pages in Most Recent IRC Meeting Packet:*** *December 2024 pages 58-62* | ***Project Lead:*** Kate Hermanns, Forest Land Program Manager, [katherine.hermanns@usda.gov](mailto:katherine.hermanns@usda.gov) /Terre Pearson-Ramirez, Forest NEPA Planner/Environmental Coordinator, [terre.pearsonramirez@usda.gov](mailto:terre.pearsonramirez@usda.gov) |
| ***Project Summary:***  The project area is located across the Boise National Forest on all five Ranger Districts. The project involves occupancy and use for 13 Special Use Permits (SUPs) currently held by Idaho Power Company (IPC). These currently authorize approximately 154 miles of powerline corridor, including 873 acres of rights-of-way (ROW). Small portions of powerline infrastructure are in inventoried roadless areas, but the rights-of-way in the proposed action intersect with the edges of 10 IRAs and 1 Research Natural Area. **A total of 87 acres of IRA may be impacted by ROW clearing activities.** This project does not occur in any designated wilderness areas.  **Summary**   1. **Road Construction/Reconstruction:** No. 2. **Timber Cutting, Sale, or Removal:** Yes, removal of all trees in the powerline ROW. May be commercial or non-commercial. 3. **Discretionary Minerals:** No. 4. **Modification or Correction:** NA   **Timeline:** Decision expected in 2025; Implementation no earlier than 2026. | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?***  No | ***Exception:***  N/A | |
| ***Commission Notes:*** Gilbert: We are missing the rule references in the briefing packets. Caswell: Are they adding new acres to the ROWs? FS: Yes on a few. Most of the ROWS are along roads and wouldn’t change the roadless boundary. This project is just documenting what is already happening and reducing individual requests from utility. Gibson: a ROW is not a cherry stem. | | |

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| ***Project:*** Post-Fire Restoration Projects | | |
| ***District:*** Boise National Forest (Emmett, Cascade, Lowman) | ***Roadless Area:***  Snowbank – Primitive, Peace Rock - Primitive, Backcountry Restoration, Forest Plan Special, Stoney Meadows - Primitive, Backcountry Restoration, Needles - Wildland Restoration, Primitive, Backcountry Restoration, General Forest, Deadwood - Primitive, Backcountry Restoration, *Wilson Peak – Primitive (overlapping but no proposed projects)* | |
| ***Status:***  NEPA | ***Pages in Most Recent IRC Meeting Packet:*** | ***Project Lead:*** Allison Ginn, Recreation/Heritage/Minerals/Lands Staff Officer, [allison.ginn@usda.gov](mailto:allison.ginn@usda.gov) or Terre Pearson-Ramirez, Forest NEPA Planner/Environmental Coordinator, [terre.pearsonramirez@usda.gov](mailto:terre.pearsonramirez@usda.gov) |
| ***Project Summary:***  The Boise National Forest initiated a suite of NEPA analysis to treat areas affected by the 2024 wildfires generally across the northern zone of the Forest. Portions of the Snowbank Inventoried Roadless Area are in the Lava Restoration EA and Snowball project areas. Inventoried Roadless areas present within the Snag-Nellie project areas include Peace Rock, Stoney Meadows, Needles and Deadwood. A portion of the Peace Rock Inventoried Roadless Area is also in the Goat project area (5,445 acres) and within the Bulldog project area (345 acres). A portion of the Needles Inventoried Roadless Area is in the Dollar project area (859 acres). The Flat Fire burned roughly 149 acres into the Wilson Peak Inventoried Roadless Area, however no actual treatments are planned within that IRA.  The only proposed actions within the IRAs are reforestation and hazard tree mitigation along trails, and some felling of hazard trees along boundary roads. The Forest is proposing commercial timber sales along several sections of boundary road. However, the IRA boundary is offset from the road by 300 ft so there will be no commercial work inside an IRA. Outside of IRAs, the Boise is also considering some commercial area salvage and key infrastructure repair.  **Summary**   1. **Road Construction/Reconstruction:** No. 2. **Timber Cutting, Sale, or Removal:** Limited to hand felling of hazard trees. 3. **Discretionary Minerals:** No. 4. **Modification or Correction:** NA   **Timeline:**   * [Flat Post-Fire Recovery CE](https://www.fs.usda.gov/r04/boise/projects/67276) signed 4/11/2025 * [Snowball Project CE](https://www.fs.usda.gov/r04/boise/projects/67382) expected May/June 2025 * [Lava Restoration EA](https://www.fs.usda.gov/r04/boise/projects/67425) expected June 2025 * [Snag Nellie Project EA](https://www.fs.usda.gov/r04/boise/projects/67427) expected June 2025 * Goat Hazard Tree Mitigation and Reforestation CE expected July 2025 * Dollar Hazard Tree Mitigation and Reforestation CE expected July 2025 * Bulldog Hazard Tree Mitigation and Reforestation CE expected July 2025 | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?***  No | ***Exception:***  N/A | |
| ***Commission Notes:*** No discussion. | | |

# Payette National Forest

Granite Goose Landscape Restoration Project…………………………………………………… Update/Status

Payette Forest Resilience and Fuels Reduction Prescribed Fire Project…..………... Update/Status

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| ***Project:*** Granite Goose Landscape Restoration Project - **June 2025 Meeting Update** | | |
| ***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. | ***Pages in Most Recent IRC Meeting Packet:*** *December 2024 pages 46-56* | ***Project Lead:*** Dana Harris, New Meadows District Ranger, [Dana.Harris@usda.gov](mailto: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.  **1. Road Construction/Reconstruction:** No new road construction or road reconstruction is proposed.  **2. 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.  **3. Discretionary Minerals:** No.  **4. Modification or Correction:** No.  ***Project Milestone/Timeline:***  Expect that the project will go out for objection in spring 2025 – this is fully dependent on Washington Office discussions regarding travel management in the project and the current Office of the Secretary pause on all travel management. | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?*** No | ***Exception:*** N/A | |
| ***Most Recent Commission Discussion Notes:*** *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.*  ***FS Response (If Needed):*** *The project includes commercial harvest in IRAs – 3,885 acres would be within IRAs. A total of 880 acres of heavy mechanical (commercial) treatments would occur within IRAs. No road construction is proposed to treat these acres.*  *A total of 36,205 total acres are proposed for prescribed fire - 29,639 acres could occur on National Forest System lands, 5,371 acres on state lands, and 1,195 acres on private lands across a 25-year timespan. The Payette National Forest has successfully reduced fuels on approximately 81,000 acres in the forest over the last 5 years using non-commercial thinning and prescribed fire.*  *Proposed prescribed burning would be conducted within established law, regulation, and policy.*  *This includes the development of prescribed burn plans, which address air quality and smoke*  *management, and timing fire operations when air quality conditions allow. An approved*  *prescribed burn plan would be in place prior to burning. Current policy states that plans will*  *follow the site-specific requirements that provide the agency administrator with the information*  *needed to approve the plan; and for the burn boss, the information needed to implement the*  *plan. Element 19 - Smoke Management and Air Quality of the burn plan template describes how*  *the project would comply with local, county, State, tribal, and Federal air quality regulations. The*  *burn plan would identify what permits, if any, are needed. It would also identify potential smoke*  *receptors, non-attainment areas, class I areas, and restricted areas that may be impacted.*  *It would also include modeling outputs and implementing strategies and techniques to reduce*  *the impacts of smoke production, if required by State Smoke Management Plans, and State or*  *local regulations. The burn plan development ensures air quality requirements of the Clean Air*  *Act would be met. To proceed with prescribed burning, all state and federal air quality*  *regulations must be met to obtain permission from the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group.*  *Implementation of prescribed fire with this proposal would be done in adherence with the*  *procedures of the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group to limit smoke impact, and burning activities*  *would be restricted if conditions indicate unacceptable smoke impacts may occur (see Appendix*  *B – Project Design Features). For example, there would be no new ignitions during declared air*  *pollution episodes. Air quality monitors in McCall are checked as part of the prescribed burn.*  *The airnow.gov website would also be used during implementation which also includes private*  *air monitors. Smoke monitoring forecasters are used to predict effects.*  **Commission Comments:** No comment. | | |

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| ***Project:*** Payette Forest-Wide Prescribed Fire - **June 2025 Meeting Update** | | |
| ***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. | ***Pages in Most Recent IRC Meeting Packet:*** *June 2024, pages 119-121* | ***Project Lead:*** Patrick Schon, [patrick.schon@usda.gov](mailto: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  ***Project Milestone/Timeline:*** Decision Notice signed May 2025. | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?*** No | ***Exception:*** N/A | |
| ***Commission Discussion Notes:* No Comments** | | |

Sawtooth National Forest

Elk Meadows Trail Reroute and Habitat Restoration....….........................................Initial briefing

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| ***Project:*** Elk Meadows Trail Reroute and Habitat Restoration | | |
| ***District:*** SNRA | ***Roadless Area:***  Hanson Lakes – Wildland Recreation, Primitive and Forest Plan Special Area | |
| ***Status:***  Developing Proposal | ***Pages in Most Recent IRC Meeting Packet:*** | ***Project Lead:*** James Paris, Fish Biologist, [james.paris@usda.gov](mailto:james.paris@usda.gov) |
| ***Project Summary:***  The purpose of this project is to remove a current, motorized trail that exists in a large wetland-meadow complex and reroute it through an upland forested area. In addition, low-tech interventions will be installed within damaged areas of the meadow to rehabilitate hydrogeomorphic function and fish and wildlife habitat.  Need for this project arises because the location and orientation of the current trail facilitates the establishment of a network of trails across the wetland-meadow complex and its stream channels, often used by motorbikes, which is driving: 1) destruction of wet meadow vegetation and soils, 2) over-widening of surface water channels and increased bank erosion at stream crossings, and 3) degradation of fish and wildlife habitats. Removing the current trail through the meadow, decommissioning it, and rehabilitating certain problematic locations are anticipated to improve ecological integrity of the wet meadow ecosystem.  The proposal contains three actions to improve the trail system for both motorized and non-motorized use, while protecting and improving meadow system functions within the Elk Creek meadow complex.     1. Replace the segment of Elk Mtn Trail #628 through Elk Meadows with a new trail on the north side of the meadow. Decommission approximately 2.8 miles of trail #628 through the meadows between the junction with Elk Meadow/Park Creek Trail #853 and Bench Creek-Stanley Creek Trail #624. Construct 4.8 miles of new trail connecting Elk Meadows Trailhead to Bench Creek-Stanley Creek Trail #624 on the north side of the meadows. 2. Decommission and reclaim the abandoned trail where it enters the meadow in the south and exits the meadow in the northwest removing and/or, roughening and revegetating to restore the resource to a natural condition and dissuade user groups from using the decommissioned section of trail. 3. Restoration and/or improvement of ecological functions and reduction of conifers, specifically lodgepole pine encroachment, within the meadow complex reach boundaries. Actions consist of the construction of low-tech process-based structures such as beaver dam analogs (BDAs), Post Assisted Log Structures (PALS) and/or similar low-tech structures. The proposal also includes the strategic felling of conifers trees within the meadow complex and use that material for instream habitat for resident fish and/or as part of the construction of low-tech structures and girdling select trees in the meadow to both reduce encroachment and provide snags for wildlife use. This treatment would provide additional instream habitat structure, material for beavers in the system to use in their dam building, while treating the threat of encroachment.   Wildland Recreation Rule Reference  36 CFR 294.24(a)(1) – The cutting, sale, or removal of timber is prohibited in Idaho Roadless Areas designated as Wild Land Recreation under this subpart, except For personal or administrative use, as provided for in 36 CFR part 223    36 CFR 223.2(a) – For construction, maintenance or repair of roads, bridges, trails, telephone lines, fences, recreation areas or other improvements of value for the protection or the administration of Federal lands.    Primitive Rule Reference  36 CFR 294.24(b)(1)(ii) – The cutting, sale, or removal of timber is prohibited in Idaho Roadless Areas designated as a Special Area of Historic or Tribal Significance or as Primitive under this subpart, except to maintain or restore the characteristics of ecosystem composition, structure, and processes  **Summary**   1. Road Construction/Reconstruction: No 2. Timber Cutting, Sale, or Removal: Yes, primarily lodgepole pine and non-commercial. 3. Discretionary Minerals: No 4. Modification or Correction: No   **Timeline:**   1. Complete Project Initiation Letter (May 2025) 2. Present proposed action to Sawtooth National Forest Level 1 team for streamlined ESA consultation (Summer 2025) 3. Conduct ecological surveys for ESA-listed species and their habitat (Summer 2025) 4. ESA consultation completed and letters of concurrence received from the services (January 2026) 5. Executed Decision Notice (June 2026) | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?***  No | ***Exception:***  N/A | |
| ***Commission Notes:*** No Comment | | |

Caribou-Targhee National Forest

Lower Portneuf Cooperative Vegetation Restoration Project ……………………….…… Update/Status

Husky 3/4 Project (BLM) ....................................................................................... Initial Briefing

Crow Creek Litigation Update

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| ***Project:***  Lower Portneuf Cooperative Vegetation Restoration Project   - **June 2025 Meeting Update** | | |
| ***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:***  In EA Comment Period | ***Pages in Most Recent IRC Meeting Packet:*** *December 2024 pages* 64-73 | ***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    ***Project Milestone/Timeline:*** Draft EA comment period open until May 15. Estimated Draft Decision in Winter 2025. | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?***  No | ***Exception:***  N/A | |
| ***Most Recent Commission Discussion Notes:*** *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.*  **Comments:** Caswell: Where there comments regarding cutting in Roadless? Not specifically, but the comments were focused on just reducing timber harvest in general so the forest chose to reduce timber acres in Roadless. | | |

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| ***Project:*** Husky ¾ Exploration Project | | |
| ***District:*** Soda Springs and Montpelier Ranger Districts | ***Roadless Area:***  Dry Ridge IRA: General Forest, Rangeland, and Grassland | |
| ***Status:***  EA Analysis is currently underway. | ***Pages in Most Recent IRC Meeting Packet:*** | ***Project Lead:*** Ashly Kula, NEPA coordinator, (208) 557-5822, Ashly.kula@usda.gov. |
| ***Project Summary:***Itafos proposes 6.69 acres of temporary disturbance for this project that includes 1.54 acres of temporary surface disturbance on their leases in the Dry Ridge IRA. It is anticipated that exploration of Husky 3 and 4 will occur in the first year, and that reclamation will be completed in the second year. The majority of this project will be completed by using existing National Forest System roads in the area that will require a USFS Special Use Permit to accommodate off-lease road maintenance. This will include a road maintenance agreement with the USFS. Other than maintenance for access, existing roads would not be widening or changed.  Disturbance in the Dry Ridge IRA includes 0.93 acres for exploration drill pads and 0.61 acres of temporary roads to access the pads on their leases. The temporary roads will be very short and directly off the existing USFS roads to access drill pads (Figure 2). The Project includes concurrent reclamation with completion the following year including all temporary disturbance regraded to approximate the surrounding original contour, growth media replaced and revegetated to meet reclamation standards.  **Rule References:** The proposed action is consistent with 36 CFR 294.24 and 294.25.  ***Summary:***   * **Road Construction/Reconstruction:** Yes, temporary road construction will occur. See Figure 2 for locations. * **Timber Cutting, Sale, or Removal:** Yes, however no trees would be cut for sale. Efforts would be made to avoid clearing and/or removal of mature upland shrubs, trees, and snags and any woody material disturbed during exploration activities would be side-casted and used in reclamation. The timber types consist of Douglas fir, lodge pole pine, and alpine fir. * **Discretionary Minerals:** No. * **Modification or Correction:** NA   ***Timeline:*** The BLM and USFS are currently completing an Environmental Assessment for this Project. This Project is anticipated to be implemented in late summer or fall 2025.  The Caribou-Targhee Forest Supervisor will make recommendations to the BLM concerning surface management, mitigation, and make decisions related to off-lease exploration related activities. | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?***  No | ***Exception:***  N/A | |
| ***Commission Notes:* Important to note that this is in general forest and follows the forest plan.** | | |

# Salmon-Challis National Forest

Twelve Mile Trail Construction………………………..………………………………………………… Update/Status

Dump Salvage…………………………………………………………………………………………..………… Update/Status

Camas Creek and Fish Habitat Improvement Project.………………………………..……… Update/Status

Deep Rabbit Fuel Break …………………………………………..………………………………..……… Initial Briefing

Stein Mountain Thinning…………………………………………..………………………………..……… Initial Briefing

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| ***Project:*** Twelve mile Trail Construction  - **June 2025 Meeting Update** | | | |
| ***District:*** Salmon-Cobalt Ranger District | ***Roadless Area:***  Sal Mountain (Add roadless area themes) | | |
| ***Status:*** CE, Decision expected Summer 2025 | ***Pages in Most Recent IRC Meeting Packet:*** *December 2024 pages 88-90* | | ***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 subpart.    **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    ***Project Milestone/Timeline:*** The decision is expected to be signed Fall 2025. | | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?***  No | | ***Exception:*** N/A | |
| ***Most Recent Commission Discussion Notes:*** *None specific to project.* | | | |

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| ***Project:***  Dump Salvage  - **June 2025 Meeting Update** | | | |
| ***District:*** Salmon-Cobalt District | ***Roadless Area:***  Napoleon Ridge | | |
| ***Status:*** CE, Decision expected Summer 2025. | ***Pages in Most Recent IRC Meeting Packet:*** *December 2024 pages 91-94* | | ***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:   * Reduce the spread of Douglas-fir beetle and mountain pine beetle in adjacent unburned stands. * 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.      1. 1. **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. 2. 2. **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: 3. 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    ***Project Milestone/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?***  No | | ***Exception:***  N/A | |
| ***Most Recent Commission Discussion Notes:*** *Jim**Caswell: When is the decision coming out on this project? FS: This summer. Elt Hasbrouck: Let’s bring this one back.*  ***FS Response:*** *The decision for this project is expected for summer 2025.*  **Comments:** Caswell:Is this going to be signed this summer? | | | |

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| ***Project:***  Camas Creek Road and Fish Habitat Improvement Project  - **June 2025 Meeting Update** | | |
| ***District:*** Salmon-Cobalt Ranger District | ***Roadless Area:***  Camas Creek | |
| ***Status:*** CE, Decision expected Spring 2025 | ***Pages in Most Recent IRC Meeting Packet:*** *December 2024 pages 95-98* | ***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 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.    ***Project Milestone/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:*** ESA | |
| ***Most Recent Commission Discussion Notes:*** *Jim Caswell:**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.*  ***FS Response:*** NEPA scoping documents explain rationale for location of road.  **Comments:** No Comment. | | |

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| ***Project:*** Deep Rabbit Fuel Break | | |
| ***District:*** Salmon Cobalt District | ***Roadless Area:***  Deep Creek IRA – General Forest Rangeland, and Grassland, Phelan IRA – General Forest, Rangeland, and Grassland | |
| ***Status:***  CE, Decision expected Fall 2025 | ***Pages in Most Recent IRC Meeting Packet:*** | ***Project Lead:*** Jonathan Leblanc, District Ranger, [jonthan.leblanc@usda.gov](mailto:jonthan.leblanc@usda.gov)  Nathan Meyer, Project Lead, [nathan.meyer@usda.gov](mailto:nathan.meyer@usda.gov) |
| ***Project Summary:***The project area is located on the Salmon-Cobalt Ranger District, west of Salmon, ID. The project area parallels the Sharkey Creek Road (#60272), Rabbit Flat Road (#61008), Phelan Creek Road (#60098), Deep Creek Road (#60101), and Moccasin Ridge Road (#60244).  The Forest Service proposes to implement the Deep Rabbit Fuel Break Project on the Salmon-Cobalt Ranger District of the Salmon-Challis National Forest in Lemhi County, Idaho. This project aims to proactively reduce hazardous fuels across two linear fuel breaks to facilitate strategic wildfire management and protect critical resources and communities. The linear fuel breaks would be implemented along Forest System roads between the 2022 Moose Fire scar to the north and the 2024 Red Rock fire to the south. Treatments may be up to 1,000 feet in width and total treatment areas would not exceed 3,000 acres. No new permanent road construction is proposed, and all treatments would occur within the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) as identified in the Lemhi County Wildland Fire Hazard and Risk Mitigation Plan.  **Fuels Treatment Projects and CWPP:** The entire project area lies within the wildland-urban interface (WUI) identified in the Lemhi County Wildland Fire Hazard and Risk Mitigation Plan. The proposed action would reduce fuels in the project area, which could reduce the risk for the occurrence of catastrophic wildfire and the associated negative impacts on local ecosystems and to public and firefighter safety.  **Rule References:**  36 CFR 294.23(d): Temporary road construction is permissible in General Forest, Rangeland, and Grassland themed roadless areas and must be conducted in a way that minimizes effects on surface resources, is consistent with land management plan components, and may only be used for the specified purposes.  Temporary roads must also be decommissioned upon completion of the project.  36 CFR 294.24(d): Timber may be cut, sold, or removed withing Idaho Roadless Areas designated as General Forest, Rangeland, and Grassland but shall be consistent with the land management plan components.  ***Summary:***   1. Road Construction/Reconstruction: No permanent road construction would occur, but up to 1.50 miles of temporary road construction may be needed to create the fuel break and facilitate log-haul.  These roads would comply with the Salmon Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines to address compaction, drainage, and erosion concerns.  After project completion, all new temporary roads would be decommissioned and restored. 2. Timber Cutting, Sale, or Removal: Yes. The Deep Rabbit Fuel Break project would authorize forest product removal via commercial harvest, commercial thinning, and mastication. 3. Discretionary Minerals: No 4. Modification or Correction: No   ***Timeline:***  Public Scoping: January 2025  Comment Period Open: Feb 25, 2025 to March 27, 2025  Decision Memo signed: September 2025  Implementation: Fall 2025 | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?***  No | ***Exception:***  N/A | |
| ***Commission Notes:*** Gibson: Is this within the CPZ or WUI? FS: It is within the WUI. | | |

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| ***Project:*** Stein Mountain Thinning | | |
| ***District:*** North Fork Ranger District | ***Roadless Area:***  West Big Hole IRA – General Forest, Rangeland, and Grassland. | |
| ***Status:***  CE, Decision expected Fall 2025 | ***Pages in Most Recent IRC Meeting Packet:*** | ***Project Lead:*** Jonathan Leblanc, District Ranger, [jonthan.leblanc@usda.gov](mailto:jonthan.leblanc@usda.gov)  Sarah Windsor, Project Lead, [sarah.windsor@usda.gov](mailto:sarah.windsor@usda.gov) |
| ***Project Summary:***The project area is located on the south side of Stein Mountain, approximately 20 miles north of Salmon, Idaho on the North Fork Ranger District of the Salmon-Challis National Forest. The area consists of sagebrush meadows interspersed across forest stands consisting almost entirely of Douglas fir. Elevation is between 5,400 and 8,555 feet.  The purpose of this project is to remove conifers that have encroached into sagebrush meadows. Project units were selected because historic aerial imagery shows that they were once open, high-elevation, sagebrush meadows that have slowly filled in with conifers over the last 70 years. This project is needed because these meadows serve as important summer range for mule deer and other big game species, and loss of these meadow systems has reduced forage availability and habitat quality for big game and a variety of other wildlife species.  **Fuels Treatment Projects and CWPP:**The proposed treatment units are within the CWPP and will reduce fuels and risk of wildfire.  **Rule References:** 36 CFR 294.24(d) General Forest, Rangeland, and Grassland.  ***Summary:***   1. **Road Construction/Reconstruction:**No 2. **Timber Cutting, Sale, or Removal:** Yes. Trees will be lopped and scattered by a chainsaw crew. A total of 664 acres will be treated. Tree species that occur in that area will be almost entirely Douglas fir. No whitebark pine or Ponderosa pine will be treated. 3. **Discretionary Minerals:** No. 4. **Modification or Correction:** No.   ***Timeline:***  Public Scoping: May 2025  Comment Period Open: May 2025  Decision Memo signed: June 2025  Implementation: June 2025 | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?***  No | ***Exception:***  N/A | |
| ***Commission Notes:*** Gibson: All within General Forest theme? FS: Yes. | | |

# Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests

Forest-wide Aspen Restoration ………………………………………………………… Update/Status (cancelled)

Revised Land Management Plan …………………………………………………………………………… Final Update

Race Cow……………………………………………………….…………….……………………………………. Update/Status

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| ***Project:***  Forestwide Aspen Restoration   - **June 2025 Meeting Update** | | |
| ***District:***  Nez Perce- Clearwater National Forests, Forest-wide | ***Roadless Area:***  All Nez Perce- Clearwater National Forests | |
| ***Status:*** Project is cancelled. | ***Pages in Most Recent IRC Meeting Packet:*** *December 2024 pages 114-117* | ***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    ***Project Milestone/Timeline:*** Project has been cancelled. Portions of this project will be incorporated into the upcoming forest wide fuels reduction project as appropriate. | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?***  No | ***Exception:***  ***N/A*** | |
| ***Most Recent Commission Discussion Notes:*** *FS: The forest will rescope the project under the new forest plan at some point in the future.* | | |

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| ***Project:***  Race Cow  - **June 2025 Meeting Update** | | |
| ***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:*** In Progress | ***Pages in Most Recent IRC Meeting Packet:*** *December 2024 pages 118-131* | ***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:***   * Project is being re-evaluated under the new Nez Perce-Clearwater Land Management Plan * Project is within the updated Idaho County WUI (2022) – 100%. * 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 (April 2025) * Project Implementation: 2028-2038; FY28 Race Cow Timber Sale Q2.   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  ***Project Milestone/Timeline:***  Scoping: Fall 2025 Decision: Fall 2026 | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?***  Yes | ***Exception:***  TBD | |
| ***Most Recent Commission Discussion Notes:*** *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.*  ***FS Response:*** *The Race Cow project has not been scoped to the public yet. Scoping is planned for fall of 2025.*  ***Comment:*** It’ll come back… again. | | |

**Forest Plan Update:** It is signed, currently live, and being implemented. All projects are currently being reviewed for compliance with the Forest Plan.

Idaho Panhandle National Forests

Katkee Fuels Project…………………………………………………………………………………………. Update/Status

Granite Fuels Project………………………………………………………………………………………… Update/Status

Sandpoint South Project………………………………………………………………………………….… Initial Briefing

Kootenai National Forest

No projects to brief at this time.

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| ***Project:***  Katkee Fuels  - **June 2025 Meeting Update** | | |
| ***District:***  Bonners Ferry | ***Roadless Area:***  Katka Peak, Backcountry Restoration and General Forest | |
| ***Status:*** Draft EA – under analysis | ***Pages in Most Recent IRC Meeting Packet:*** *December 2024 pages* 100-104 | ***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.  ***Project Milestone/Timeline:*** Estimated Decision for the EA is September 2025. | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?***  No | ***Exception:***  ***N/A*** | |
| ***Most Recent Commission Discussion Notes:*** *None specific to project.*  **Comment:** USFWS consultation holding up the project. Waiting for BO. | | |

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| ***Project:***  Granite Fuels  - **June 2025 Meeting Update** | |  | |
| ***District:***  St. Joe District | ***Roadless Area:***  Mallard Larkins #300 (99,691 acres) and Sheep Mountain-State Line #799 (1 acre) | | |
| ***Status:*** Environmental Assessment, Finding of No Significant Impact and draft Decision Notice completed objections comment period (January 1st through February 14th), final decision pending Letter of Concurrence from FWS | ***Pages in Most Recent IRC Meeting Packet:*** *December 2024 pages 105-109* | | ***Project Lead:*** Noe Reyes, 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 (October 16 - November 14, 2024)  These impacts include locations of ATV use in Inventoried Roadless Lands (IRAs) as per EA at 57; helicopter use for treatment units and management of work crews; logging of trees in whitebark pine areas; areas that will have heavy machinery use for mastication; areas where pre-treatment activities will occur and for how long; areas where cut trees will be piled and burned; timeline for return to treatment areas to burn piles; timelines per treatment unit and area required for fire line construction, then rehabilitation of fire lines following treatments; areas where no ignition is planned; areas where fire will be allowed within no ignition zones; areas where spring burning may occur; areas where reforestation may be needed due to severe fire effects; areas that will be designated for staging human/machinery staging use; estimated risk of fire escape as per acreage; tactics for fire suppression for potential or actual fire escapes; trails that will be used for pretreatment activities.  Mechanized use is not allowed in designated wild river segments, as is motorized use. The NEPA documents for the Granite Fuels project do not address how access will achieved for these extensive acres (EA Table 1) in the project area, depending upon the specific designation.  Nor do the project NEPA documents address how Forest Plan direction regarding mechanized equipment will be applied to these MAs.  Also, the project NEPA documents do not define how specifically what the resource objectives are for these MAs, and how these will be addressed as per prescribed fire.  Response: The Granite Fuels project has been developed in collaboration with the Idaho Roadless Commission. The commission has been and will continue to be updated on a regular basis. The Forest Service is adhering to the guidance associated with the roadless areas. Implementation of prescribed fire will occur by aerial ignition or hand ignition.  Objections (January 1 – February 14, 2025): Objectors allege insufficient impacts analysis for the roadless areas affected by the proposed action due to no information on existing conditions. Additionally, objectors allege noncompliance with the Idaho Roadless Rule.  Objector(s): AWR, FOC  Response: Roadless worksheet added to project file.  Issue: Insufficient analysis of the effects to roadless characteristics as a result of proposed activities.  Rule: Idaho Roadless Rule  Analysis: All of the NFS lands within the project area are within the Mallard Larkins Pioneer area which is an Idaho Roadless Area and recommended wilderness. The state lands within the project area are managed as roadless areas. The Recreation Effects Analysis discusses these areas and the forest plan components related to these designations and the Idaho Roadless Rule. The analysis does not identify the roadless characteristics in the Mallard Larkins Pioneer area and disclose how these characteristics would be affected by the proposed activities. Similarly, there is no analysis of the wilderness characteristics in the Mallard Larkins Pioneer area and how those might be affected by the proposed activities. Such an analysis would demonstrate that the decision maker took a hard look at the potential for effects to the roadless characteristics and the potential wilderness characteristics and determined that these effects would not be significant.  ***Project Milestone/Timeline:*** Decision Notice is anticipated to be complete in September 2025 following consultation, prescribed fire implementation no earlier than summer or fall of 2026. | | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?***  No | ***Exception:***  N/A | | |
| ***Most Recent Commission Discussion Notes:*** *None specific to project.*  Comment: | | | |

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| ***Project:*** Sandpoint South | | |
| ***District:*** Sandpoint Ranger District | ***Roadless Area:***  Blackmail Mountain IRA – Backcountry Restoration | |
| ***Status:*** Preparing EA for comment | ***Pages in Most Recent IRC Meeting Packet:*** | ***Project Lead:*** Chris Noyes, Acting District Ranger, [christopher.noyes@usda.gov](mailto:jonathan.leblanc@usda.gov)  Jen Cinq-Mars, Project Lead, [jennifer.cinq-mars@usda.gov](mailto:sarah.windsor@usda.gov) |
| ***Project Summary:***The project area encompasses 174,347 acres of IPNF, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), State Idaho Department of Lands (IDL), and private lands west of Lake Pend Oreille and south of the Pend Oreille River in Bonner and Kootenai Counties. All proposed treatment units are located in Bonner County, with most of the proposed treatment units located east of Highway 95 between Sagle, Green Bay, and Bayview. Proposed activity in Kootenai County is limited to reconstructing 0.80 miles of IPNF system road.  Approximately 8,334 acres within the 174,347-acre project area are being treated for hazardous fuels reduction and vegetation management. Proposed treatments would only occur on lands managed by IPNF. Primary access to the project area is from Highway 95 between Athol and Sandpoint. Access to some treatment units would be through State and private lands, and road management activities needed to implement vegetation treatments are also proposed. The IRA within the project area is the 4,800-acre Blacktail Mountain (#161) backcountry roadless area.  In Blacktail Mountain IRA, the proposed actions are constructing 0.5 miles of temporary road for the purpose of decommissioning 0.8 miles of unauthorized road in the IRA. The temporary road is required to transport equipment to decommission the unauthorized road. The temporary road would be constructed, utilized to transport equipment then obliterated. If practicable, obliteration would occur within the same operating season, or no more than 3 years after construction. If the road is to be overwintered, it would be water-barred and placed into a hydrologically stable condition to minimize surface erosion potential. The entrance would be gated or otherwise obstructed with boulders or an earthen barrier to prevent unauthorized motor vehicle use if decommissioning operations are not completed in a single season. The temporary road would be restricted with a gate during the decommissioning of FSR 2239 and while decommissioning the temporary road. This road work is not anticipated to occur prior to 2027.  Additionally, in this same unit, labeled unit 310, a shaded fuel break encompassing 181 acres along the boundary (see red border on Figure 2 below) would be ignited. Shaded fuel breaks are built in timbered areas where trees are thinned and pruned to reduce fire potential yet retain enough crown canopy to make a less favorable microclimate for surface fires. The purpose is to reduce fuels and fire intensity to give suppression resources improved opportunities for fire management activities. In the other unit, unit 279, of which 43 treatment acres overlap on the Blacktail Mountain IRA, closer to Lake Pend Oreille, the proposed action is natural fuels burning. Natural fuels burning treatment is prescribed burning through aerial and/or hand ignition depending on accessibility limitations to meet the same purpose of decreasing wildfire impact on resource values by reducing hazardous fuels.  **Fuels Treatment Projects and CWPP:**  The Bonner County Wildfire Protection Plan (WPP) indicates the majority of communities in Bonner County are at high risk of wildfire, with the exception of the city Sandpoint being at moderate risk considering its watershed. The terrain and fuel conditions that exist across the county dictate that the majority of Bonner County is designated as a priority area in the WPP. Communities at risk within the Sandpoint South project area include Bayview, Careywood, Cocolalla, Edgemere, Garfield Bay, Harlem, Sagle, Talache, and Westmond. Powerlines are present in the project area in addition to the Gas Transmission Northwest pipeline from Canada to Washington, which passes under the project area. Public water systems within the project area include Little Blacktail Ranch Water District and Sagle Valley, Bayview, Bottle Bay, and Garfield Bay Sewer and Water Districts (2024 Bonner County Comprehensive Plan). The Sandpoint South project proposes hazardous fuels/vegetation management activities in the vicinity of these communities and values at risk.  **Rule References:**  Temporary road construction under 294.23(b)(1)(iv), A road realignment is needed to prevent irreparable resource damage that arises from the design, location, use, or deterioration of a road and cannot be mitigated by road maintenance. Road realignment may occur under this subsection only if the road is deemed essential for public or private access, natural resource management, or public health and safety.  Fuel Break and Natural Fuels treatment under 294.24(c)(1), Backcountry/Restoration: Timber Cutting, Sale or Removal: Serve as Responsible Official: (i) to reduce hazardous fuel conditions within the community protection zone if in the responsible official’s judgment the project generally retains large trees as appropriate for the forest type and is consistent with land management plan components as provided for in § 294.28(d); (v) To reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects.  **Scoping comments/objections: (19 March to 21 April 2025)**  1. The Blacktail Mountain IRA is included in the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act, reintroduced in 2025. Please identify the roadless expanses adjacent to the existing Blacktail IRA. These areas should be combined with the poorly mapped IRA boundaries. Existing USFS IRA mapping is historic and needs to be updated. The boundaries are arbitrary and capricious. The value of IRA's to wildlife and humans is unquestioned by most. The revulsion that the IPNF has with marinating wilderness character and the roadless expanse is characterized by Bilodeau and McFarlane (2020):  "In conclusion, both RACR and the Idaho Roadless Rule have facilitated a gradual erosion of the roadless system. Neither rule effectively protects roadless areas from logging, but rather provides exceptions for logging and roadbuilding to various degrees, which the Forest Service is exploiting. The Forest Service's environmental analyses have shifted to justify utilizing the exceptions in an unchecked manner, and because the Forest Service does not update roadless boundaries, wildlands overlooked from the initial inventories remain unprotected while there is a growing number of "inventoried roadless areas" that no longer have roadless and wilderness characteristics. Given these rules are not as protective as assumed, we need a substantive review of both rules and an accounting of the remaining roadless areas in the United States.” Bilodeau and McFarlane (2020).  ***Summary:***   1. **Road Construction/Reconstruction:** Yes, 0.5 miles of temporary road construction is proposed for the sole purpose of transporting equipment to decommission 0.8 miles of an unauthorized Forest System Road (FSR) 2239 in the Blacktail Mountain roadless area (#161). The Forest Service lacks access to FSR 2239, and the road is surrounded by Blacktail Mountain Backcountry (MA5). There is currently no authorized motor vehicle use of FSR 2239. The temporary road would be constructed just for this project and would be decommissioned (physically removed) when management activities are complete. Decommissioning would remove any resource risks associated with these routes (e.g. culverts), and the road prism would be in an impassable state to discourage illegal use. 2. **Timber Cutting, Sale, or Removal:** Yes, through fuels treatment of a fire break and natural fuels treatments. 3. **Discretionary Minerals:** No. 4. **Modification or Correction:** No.   ***Timeline:***  Public Scoping: March 19 – April 21 2025  Comment Period Open: mid-June to mid-July 2025  Decision Memo signed: Fall/winter 2025  Implementation: August 2026 | | |
| ***Does Proposed Activity require use of an Exception?***  No | ***Exception:***  N/A | |
| ***Commission Notes:*** Re type some of the conversation surrounding the temp road and whether or not building that temp road is legal under the IRR. Caswell, FS, Hanna, Smith, and Higgins contributed. Private landowners not wanting to grant access. Smith said the PFC supports the project and the removal of the road will improve the roadless character. | | |

**FINAL THOUGHTS**

Caswell: While there will be more projects in the fall, we should not entirely be ignoring IRA just because it is hard.

FS: The Roadless commission could give a presentation on CPZ and compliance with EO’s at the next fall meeting to keep the FS staff up to date.