

September 19, 2014

Chad Hudson
District Ranger, Coeur d'Alene District Office
2502 East Sherman Ave.
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814

Dear Chad,

The Panhandle Forest Collaborative (PFC) has appreciated the opportunity to visit the Bottom Canyon project this summer in field trips, and to continue discussion with you and your staff about the project. We also appreciate the Idaho Panhandle National Forest's consideration of our recommendations presented both here and in the PFC's Bottom Canyon Alternative, dated April 9, 2014. We are submitting this letter to you with several additional recommendations we would like you to consider.

- New units/acreage
 - The PFC understands that field surveys have resulted in new information and are generally fine with small changes to unit allocations so long as the changes do not affect the proportionate type of harvest, timber volume, or wildlife habitat. It is difficult for the group to comment specifically without further information.
 - The PFC recommends that any treatments adjacent to old growth are designed to provide buffers in order to reduce negative impacts such as windthrow, root disease spread, etc.
 - Unit 2 – The PFC recommends removing this unit from the harvest plan, in order to maintain connectivity between old growth stands.
 - Units 5A/B – The PFC asks that buffers be placed adjacent to old growth and connectivity through the unit be provided.
 - Unit 8A - The PFC recommends removing unit 8A from the harvest plan.
 - Unit 8B – The PFC recommends maintaining buffers along old growth to help insulate the area from negative effects of adjacent treatments. Also, the PFC recommends leaving the eastern half and old tree plots within the unit, and harvesting in the western part of the unit only (approximately 10 acres).
 - Unit 18A – It is unclear if this unit is old growth. The PFC requests that this be field verified.
 - Unit 22B – The PFC recommends removing the southwest corner (triangle shape) of the unit from harvest, and leaving buffers along all other edges of the unit.

- Road 206
 - The PFC recognizes that Road 206 provides access for recreation and mining operations, and it also has negative environmental impacts. The meeting held on September 12 was a good start toward discussing options, but we have no consensus on the re-route or any other option. We believe the various options, including one that would move the road to the northern edge of the floodplain, should be analyzed. The PFC members commit to continuing the discussion with the IPNF and other stakeholders to help find a resolution to the road impacts.
- Habitat
 - The PFC remains concerned about habitat impacts on fisher, elk and other species but it is not possible to understand individual project impacts without an integrated management plan across the whole forest. The PFC would like to have a more in depth discussion about these issues but we don't have sufficient supporting facts and data.
 - The PFC does not support treatments in the Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas, and appreciate that you have withdrawn these from the proposal.
 - The PFC recommends a “salt and pepper” integration of willow, aspen, black cottonwood, and birch into appropriate sites (~5% of project area), and that when treatments are in adjacent areas, trees are dropped around to aid in recruitment and protect regrowth from browsing.
 - The PFC acknowledges the IPNF's limitations in prescribed burning through the beaver habitat area specified in the alternative, and appreciates your efforts to move fire toward the lower areas of that valley as much as possible.

After the scoping notice comes out, the PFC would like to schedule a meeting with you to discuss touchpoints for the NEPA process with you so we can be clear about timelines, roles and expectations for engagement. We have attached a worksheet that is part of the National Forest Foundation's [A Roadmap for Collaboration Before, During and After the NEPA Process](#) that we think is a useful template for the discussion.

Thank you, and we look forward to working with you further on the Bottom Canyon project.

Sincerely,

Liz Johnson Gebhardt
PFC Chair

Mike Petersen
PFC Vice-Chair