



March 26, 2019

Jeanne Higgins, Forest Supervisor
Idaho Panhandle National Forest
3815 Schreiber Way
Coeur d' Alene, Idaho 83815

Dear Jeanne:

This letter will serve as documentation for our Idaho Panhandle meeting that was held on March 4 at the Supervisors Office in Coeur d' Alene, Idaho. The meeting started at 9:00 a.m. with introductions, and Tom Partin read the anti-trust statement. A copy of the attendees is attached.

Forest Supervisor Jeanne Higgins gave a brief update on the impacts of the furlough regarding work on the Panhandle. The Forest was able to keep several exempt people working including timber sale administrators and marking crews. AFRC and our members voiced our appreciation for all of the hard work during the furlough. Higgins did say that they could see impacts from the furlough on out year programs of work, however, FY19 looks pretty solid. Supervisor Higgins mentioned that Fire funding in 2018 swept up a lot of K-V and salvage sale funds. Over \$1 million of salvage sale funding was taken away and has not been repaid. Regarding staffing on the Forest, Jeff Lau is on a 120-day detail to Region 4, Kaitlyn Bowman is filling in for Jeff. Jessie is the new District Ranger on the Sandpoint District. At the Regional level, Dave Schmidt was appointed to the Regional Forester in Alaska, Dan Dallas from Colorado is currently in the acting Deputy Regional Forester position.

AFRC handed out our Washington DC update, which included updates from the 2018 Farm bill, an outline of President Trump's Executive Order, and an overview of the 2019 Forest Service budget. Idaho Congressional staff Mitch Silvers (Senator Crapo), Sid Smith (Senator Risch) and Tim Kastning (Rep. Fulcher) gave brief updates on what their bosses have been working on. One big issue is a two year extension to the SRS program. Rep. Fulcher is on the House Natural Resources Committee.

Tom went over the highlights of AFRC's legal program which includes big victories in cases involving the a Supreme Court decision that ruled takings for a species in unoccupied habitat is illegal, Farm Bill CE's Good Neighbor Authority projects and use of Roadside CE's. Nick Smith from Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities spoke on the work that he has been doing to promote projects which help increase the pace and scale of restoration on our public timberlands and help keep our rural communities and counties healthy.

Rob Tomzak presented his priorities from the Contracting Officers perspective. In 2019 his shop will focus on safety, protection of improvements, getting the post-logging work done in a timely manner, and log accountability. Rob reminded the purchasers that he would like to see all of the post-harvest work done before the contract expires without having to ask for an extension. Rob said he understood there would need to be exceptions to this. On log accountability, ten loads need to be branded per load for most sawmills, unless the logs are bound for the Lewiston area which has an export yard. Any loads bound for this area must use 100% branding. Chris Schlenker reported that during the furlough, about 1,800 loads of logs were removed from the Forest during January and 957 loads had been tallied for February. In the last four months 4,500 loads had been removed totaling 22 MMBF.

Kaitlyn went over the timber sale program for the Forest and said the Forest will sell two GNA projects for FY19, Hanna Flats and Black Boulder totaling about 9 MMBF. The Forest will sell 62.8 MMBF in FY19 with 56.8 MMBF being sawlog volume (timber sale program attached). The large Buckskin project is now out for pre-scoping comments. The Homestead project will be out for scoping in Mid-May. Currently the Homestead project is only considering treating 1,000 acres of the 18,000 project area. AFRC and the purchasers would like to provide input as to where more acres might be treated. Tim Dougherty mentioned that there are currently no projects being planned on the North end of the Forest, and this is a big concern.

Jon Songster, Bureau Chief for the Idaho Department of Lands GNA program reported that 60 million acres of Forest Service lands are at risk in the west with 6.1 million of those acres in Idaho. IDL is looking at priority landscapes to treat under the GNA program. Jon said that IDL is approved for 7 more GNA positions and so far have filled 5 positions. The Idaho GNA program has awarded 22 standalone contracts in 2018 statewide. In FY21 IDL may add more FTE's. Ed Wingert reported that two previous GNA sales Jasper II and Hard rock will be operated this fiscal year. Hanna Flats GNA will be broken into two projects, Hanna Flats North (6.2 MMBF) and Hanna Flats South (7.0 MMBF). IDL has five NEPA contractors under contract.

AFRC would like to thank the Forest for having such a good turnout of personnel for this meeting. We would also like to compliment the Forest for their efforts during the furlough to keep needed timber sales going. AFRC will be working with the Forest to set up our next meeting sometime in June or July where we will travel to look at the Honey Badger Project.

Sincerely,



Tom Partin
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