



File Code: 1950
Date: January 3, 2017

Dear Partners, Friends and Interested Citizens:

I am releasing a draft decision for the Upper Lewis River Roads project that authorizes the closure and decommissioning of roads or portions of roads; rehabilitates or blocks use of unclassified roads; and, authorizes heavy road maintenance where needed in the Headwaters Lewis River Watershed. The draft decision and final Environmental Assessment can be found on our website at the following link: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=50186>.

The Upper Lewis River Roads Project was initiated from a larger, forest-wide Travel Analysis Process. The Gifford Pinchot National Forest started its analysis in 2012 with the purpose of finding a balance between road maintenance and repair costs, providing access to the Forest, and minimizing road-related effects to the ecosystem. The Gifford Pinchot National Forest's Travel Analysis Process (TAP) resulted in a Travel Analysis Report, which was completed in September 2015 and is available on the Forest's webpage: http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd486103.pdf.

The decision specifically:

- Closes or decommissions 17.3 miles of road where access needs are limited and environmental risk is considered moderate or high.
- Blocks access to multiple unclassified roads that had been used as temporary access to historical timber harvest and were not effectively closed or whose construction was never authorized. These roads were identified through volunteer surveys conducted by the Cascade Forest Conservancy.
- Performs necessary road repair and maintenance on 15 roads within the same subwatersheds in order to maintain and improve access while protecting resources.
- Changes the maintenance level on three roads that are currently closed to the public but are needed for administrative management. While these are typically categorized as Level 1, if they are needed for administrative access they should technically be categorized as Level 2, closed to the public. For these roads, no change will occur to current use.

Activities associated with road work (maintenance, closure and decommission) are scheduled to begin as early as 2017. It may take five or more years to complete all activities. Funding may come from grants, stewardship contracts associated with timber sales or stand-alone stewardship service projects.

The draft decision is subject to administrative review pursuant to 36 CFR Part 218. Section 428 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012 directed the Forest Service to establish a pre-decisional objection process for projects and activities documented with a Decision Notice or Record of Decision, instead of the post-decisional appeal process used since 1993. On March 27, 2013, a final rule revising 36 CFR Part 218 was published in the Federal Register and became effective upon that



publication date. The Forest Service believes that considering public concerns before a final decision is made aligns with our collaborative approach to forest management and increases the likelihood of resolving those concerns resulting in better, more informed decisions.

In order to object to this decision, you must have previously submitted timely, specific written comments during the public comment periods, unless your objection concerns an issue that arose after the opportunities for formal comment was over. Any written objections must follow the requirements of 36 CFR 218.8 and be filed (regular mail, fax, email, hand-delivery, or express delivery) with the Reviewing Officer.

Objections may be mailed to:

Reviewing Officer, Upper Lewis Roads Project
Gifford Pinchot National Forest
Attn. 1570 Appeals and Objections
501 E 5th Street #404
Vancouver, WA 98661

Fax: (360) 891-5045, Attn: 1570 OBJECTIONS
Email: objections-pnw-giffordpinchot@fs.fed.us

Objections may also be hand delivered to the Fort Vancouver NHS Visitor Center, 1501 E. Evergreen Blvd., Vancouver, WA 98661 between 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday except legal holidays. Electronic appeals must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), Word (.doc), or portable document format (.pdf). In cases where no identifiable name is attached to an electronic message, a verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature is one way to provide verification. E-mails submitted to email addresses other than the one listed above, or in formats other than those listed or containing viruses, will be rejected. It is the responsibility of the objector to confirm receipt of appeals submitted by electronic mail.

Objections, including attachments, must be filed within 45 days from the publication date of the legal notice of this draft decision/FONSI in the Columbian, the newspaper of record. The publication date in the Columbian is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection. Those wishing to object this draft decision should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

For additional information concerning this decision or the objection process, contact Erin Black, South Zone Planning Team Leader, during normal office hours (weekdays, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) at the Mt. Adams Ranger District office, Phone: (509) 395-3411; e-mail: ekblack@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,
Emily Platt
EMILY PLATT
District Ranger

cc: Erin Black, Ruth Tracy, Dave Olson, Tracy Calizon