

OFFICE OF SPECIES CONSERVATION

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304 N. Eighth Street, Suite 149
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October 2, 2020

Chuck Mark, Forest Supervisor
US Forest Service
1206 South Challis St.
Salmon, ID 83467

RE: Salmon Challis National Forest Existing Forest Plan Review

Dear Forest Supervisor Mark,

The State of Idaho appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Salmon Challis Existing Forest Plan Review. This review process allows hands on, public input to the foundational documents of the national forests that comprise of Lemhi and Custer County resident's backyard, heritage, and, in many cases, their livelihood. The outcome of this process should be one that provides practical and usable direction for managing the Salmon Challis National Forest into the future.

The current, separate plans reflect management direction from the 1980's. Where some resource areas have project level specifications, other resource areas have very broad, very vague goals. At the same time, some of the current plans provide a baseline management direction that is still relevant today. Based on state agencies feedback there is consensus that there are substantial changes that need to be made to the existing forest plans.

For example, rangeland and grazing practices could be updated to reflect the more site-specific management approach to utilization limits or making sure language surrounding stockwater rights reflect current Idaho State law. Recreation has also changed in the past 35 years, with the introduction of Ebikes and the proliferation of OHV use on public lands, and how the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule fits into the current management direction. New forest management conditions based on changes in wildfire intensity, endangered species management, and management of invasive species have associated polices that should be incorporated. The current focus on Shared Stewardship and cross boundary work to reduce the amount of fuels available in the wildland urban interface, as well as other issues, should be reflected in any updated or new management direction.

Considering the breadth of stakeholders and interests in the Salmon-Challis NF, the State understands that a pragmatic, flexible, and adaptable approach to forest planning will likely be needed. The instrument for achieving this goal, however, is not as important as the resource specific issues that need to be addressed whether the revision process results in one plan, two plans, or an amended plan. The State looks forward to providing input to the new forest plan(s) once they are developed.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

Mike Edmondson, Interim Administrator