

Forest Service, USDA

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218, in lieu of the appeal procedure at 36 CFR 215.

(b) The responsible official must promptly distribute the final EIS or the EA to those who have requested the document or are eligible to file an objection in accordance with §218.7(a).

(c) Upon completion and distribution mailing of the final EIS or EA, legal notice of the opportunity to object to a proposed authorized hazardous fuel reduction project must be published in the applicable newspaper of record identified (218.2) for each National Forest System unit. When the Chief is the responsible official, notice must be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER. The legal notice or FEDERAL REGISTER notice must

(1) Include the name of the proposed authorized hazardous fuel reduction project, a concise description of the preferred alternative and any proposed land management plan amendments, name and title of the responsible official, name of the forest and/or district on which the proposed authorized hazardous fuel reduction project will occur, instructions for obtaining a copy of the final EIS or EA, and instructions on how to obtain additional information on the proposed authorized hazardous fuel reduction project.

(2) State that the proposed authorized hazardous fuel reduction project is subject to the objection process pursuant to 36 CFR part 218, subpart A, and include the following:

(i) Name and address of the reviewing officer with whom an objection is to be filed. The notice must specify a street, postal, fax, and e-mail address, the acceptable format(s) for objections filed electronically, and the reviewing officer's office business hours for those filing hand-delivered objections.

(ii) A statement that objections will be accepted only from those who have previously submitted written comments specific to the proposed authorized hazardous fuel reduction project during scoping or other opportunity for public comment in accordance with §218.7(a).

(iii) A statement that the publication date of the legal notice in the newspaper of record or FEDERAL REGISTER notice is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection

(§218.10(a)), and that those wishing to object should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. A specific date must not be included in the notice.

(iv) A statement that an objection, including attachments, must be filed (regular mail, fax, e-mail, hand-delivery, express delivery, or messenger service) with the appropriate reviewing officer (§218.8) within 30 days of the date of publication of the legal notice for the objection process. It should also be stated that incorporation of documents by reference is permitted only as provided for at §218.8(b).

(v) A statement describing the minimum content requirements of an objection (§218.8(c)).

(vi) A statement that the proposed authorized hazardous fuel reduction project is not subject to the notice, comment, and appeal procedures found at part 215 of this chapter (§218.3).

(d) *Publication.* Through notice published annually in the FEDERAL REGISTER, each regional forester must advise the public of the newspaper(s) of record utilized for publishing legal notice required by this subpart.

§218.6 Reviewing officer.

The reviewing officer determines procedures to be used for processing objections when the procedures are not specifically described in this subpart, including such procedures as needed to be compatible to the extent practicable, with the administrative review processes of other Federal agencies, for authorized hazardous fuel reduction projects proposed jointly with other agencies. Such determinations are not subject to further administrative review.

§218.7 Who may file an objection.

(a) Individuals and organizations who have submitted specific written comments related to the proposed authorized hazardous fuel reduction project during the opportunity for public comment provided during preparation of an EA or EIS for the proposed authorized hazardous fuel reduction project as characterized in section 104(g) of the HFRA may file an objection. For proposed authorized hazardous fuel reduction projects described in a draft EIS,

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such opportunity for public comment will be fulfilled during scoping, by the comment period on the draft EIS in accordance with procedures in 40 CFR 1506.10, and any other periods public comment is specifically requested. For proposed authorized hazardous fuel reduction projects described in an EA, such opportunity for public comment will be fulfilled during scoping or any other periods public comment is specifically requested.

(b) Comments received from an authorized representative(s) of an organization are considered those of the organization only. Individual members of that organization do not meet objection eligibility requirements solely on the basis of membership in an organization. A member or an individual must submit comments independently in order to be eligible to file an objection in an individual capacity.

(c) When an objection lists multiple individuals or organizations, each individual or organization must meet the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section. Individuals or organizations listed on an objection that do not meet eligibility requirements must not be considered objectors. Objections from individuals or organizations that do not meet the requirements of paragraph (a) must not be accepted. This must be documented in the objection record.

(d) Federal agencies may not file objections.

(e) Federal employees who otherwise meet the requirements of this subpart for filing objections in a non-official capacity must comply with Federal conflict of interest statutes at 18 U.S.C. 202-209 and with employee ethics requirements at 5 CFR part 2635. Specifically, employees must not be on official duty nor use Government property or equipment in the preparation or filing of an objection. Further, employees must not incorporate information unavailable to the public, such as Federal agency documents that are exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552(b)).

§218.8 Filing an objection.

(a) Objections must be filed with the reviewing officer in writing. All objec-

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tions must be open to public inspection during the objection process.

(b) Incorporation of documents by reference is not allowed, except for the following list of items which may be provided by including date, page, and section of the cited document. All other documents must be included with the objection.

(1) All or any part of a Federal law or regulation,

(2) Forest Service directives and land management plans,

(3) Documents referenced by the Forest Service in the proposed HFRA project subject to objection,

(4) Comments previously provided to the Forest Service by the objector during the proposed HFRA project comment period.

(c) At a minimum, an objection must include the following:

(1) Objector's name and address (§218.2), with a telephone number, if available;

(2) Signature or other verification of authorship upon request (a scanned signature for electronic mail may be filed with the objection);

(3) When multiple names are listed on an objection, identification of the lead objector (§218.2). Verification of the identity of the lead objector must be provided upon request;

(4) The name of the proposed authorized hazardous fuel reduction project, the name and title of the responsible official, and the name(s) of the national forest(s) and/or ranger district(s) on which the proposed authorized hazardous fuel reduction project will be implemented; and,

(5) Sufficient narrative description of those aspects of the proposed authorized hazardous fuel reduction project addressed by the objection, specific issues related to the proposed authorized hazardous fuel reduction project, and suggested remedies that would resolve the objection.

§218.9 Objections set aside from review.

(a) The reviewing officer must set aside and not review an objection when one or more of the following applies:

(1) Objections are not filed in a timely manner (§§218.5(c)(2)(iv), 218.10(c)).