



May 7, 2021

Gary Hess
Regulatory and Stewardship Program Manager
Forestry and Fire Division
Idaho Department of Lands
3284 W Industrial Loop
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, 83815

Re: Docket 20.02.01 – RULES PERTAINING TO THE IDAHO FOREST PRACTICES ACT

Dear Mr. Hess:

PotlatchDeltic writes in full support of the proposed rules in docket 20-0201-2101 pertaining to the Idaho Forest Practices Act (FPA). Based on the experience of our 30 professional foresters working with approximately 100 professional and trained logging, road building and silviculture contractors we support the adoption of the proposed rules. The proposed rule set will simplify implementation, increase management flexibility for landowners and maintain or increase resource protections.

Stream Protection Rules

Since July 14, 2020 we have been operating under a waiver issued by IDL for the Stream Protection Rule (IDAPA 20.02.03 030.07.e.ii) commonly known as the shade rule. The intent of the waiver is to allow testing of a modified stream protection methodology using weighted tree counts (WTC) in place of relative stocking. The modified rule language in our waiver for Class I Stream tree retention was designed to provide equivalent stream shade and large organic debris (LOD) recruitment. The waiver rule is very similar to the proposed simplified shade rule. Our experience over the last 10 months has been that use of WTC decreases the amount of time necessary to install Stream Protection Zones (SPZs) and provides equal or greater tree retention and stream shade. The proposed rule's linkage of the WTC in the inner 50' of the SPZ with harvest in the outer 25' of the SPZ within 100' longitudinal sections is a workable solution to those few instances where we encounter a poorly stocked inner zone and a well-stocked outer zone. The value of the proposed rule to landowners and to achieving resource protection is



embodied in its simplicity and ease of implementation and we urge IDL to maintain simplicity during this rulemaking.

We recognize that the Idaho 2020 Interagency Forest Practices Water Quality Audit contained a recommendation that “FPAC should continue to work on establishing a minimum tree retention requirement for those class II streams that would contribute elevated temperatures to downstream waters”. We note that the proposed rules do not include changes to Class II stream tree retention. We agree that Class II stream tree retention rules should not be changed as part of this rulemaking and that any future rules considered should be based on actual resource impacts from forest management and should be well informed by research. We have completed a significant amount of investigation of Class II streams characteristics and the factors that impact stream temperature, and our work is continuing. Our investigation includes long term research of stream temperature in Class II stream reaches within and downstream of harvesting. The network of water temperature recorders installed in our Mica Creek experimental watershed in northern Idaho is designed to obtain empirical data on the relationships among forest treatments, stream temperatures and riparian cover. Temperature sensors were placed in non-fish bearing reaches in harvested and unharvested areas and in downstream fish bearing reaches. Riparian canopy cover and temperature in the nonfish-bearing reaches was measured before and after harvest. Importantly there has been no significant increase in maximum summer temperature in downstream fish-bearing reaches and fish distribution and density has expanded as harvesting, replanting and active management occur. Temperature responses in non-fish bearing reaches within the treatment reaches have been highly variable and of short duration (1-3 years) following harvest, which indicates that shade from understory vegetation and ground water exchange are important factors effecting stream temperature. Most nonfish-bearing stream reaches have widths of .5 to 1.5 feet suggesting that understory vegetation, which increased after harvest, may be more important for stream shade than retained trees. The research results support the value of the current Class II 30’ equipment exclusion zone towards maintaining and promoting growth of understory vegetation that quickly shades nonfish-bearing streams. We continue to collect and analyze riparian vegetation and temperature data useful for determining the need for future rule changes.

Modification of the Class I stream definition at 010.60.a. will align the definition with aquatic life beneficial uses and is a needed clarification that will maintain stream protections for water quality and aquatic life.

Cable Assist Logging



We support addition of definitions for Traction-Assisted Harvesting and elimination of the requirement to obtain a variance for cable-assisted machinery to work immediately adjacent to a stream. Our logging contractors have been utilizing cable-assisted (tethered) equipment since 2016 and our experience has been that cable-assisted machinery has a light footprint and virtually eliminates loss of traction, spinning of tracks and sliding that can cause soil disturbance. Importantly this technology also increases safety for logging contractors.

Road BMPs

The road measures and clarified language for road Best Management Practices (BMPs) are well targeted to minimize sediment and increase stream protection. Rocking of Class I stream crossings during new construction and reconstructions and armoring of culverts greater than 30" for new stream crossings are practices that we frequently implement. Requiring these BMPs for all instances will increase landowner costs. Modifications that increase costs should only be made based on research results that provide empirical data that the modifications will be effective at minimizing resource impacts and using applied field experience demonstrating the modifications are reasonable to implement. These measures meet both criteria.

Stream Segments of Concern

Elimination of Stream Segments of Concern will remove inconsistent language from the FPA rules and will improve understanding. The FPA rules include consistent, strong stream protection rules that apply to all streams. If the proposed rules become final at the conclusion of this rulemaking Idaho's streams will have increased resource protection.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Trevor Stone".

Trevor Stone
Idaho Timberlands Manager

Cc:

Craig Foss, State Forester IDL
Archie Gray, Bureau Chief, Forestry Assistance IDL
Darin Ball, Vice President Timberlands PotlatchDeltic



Anna Torma, Vice President Public Affairs PotlatchDeltic
Kit Hart, Director Forest Planning and Environment PotlatchDeltic

From: [Trevor Stone](#)
To: [Rule Making](#)
Cc: [Kit Hart](#); [Darin Ball](#); [Anna Torma](#); [Kristy Tucker](#); [Craig Foss](#); [Archie Gray](#)
Subject: IDAPA 20.02.01
Date: Wednesday, May 5, 2021 2:33:34 PM
Attachments: [image003.png](#)
[20210505132942813.pdf](#)

Attached, please find PotlatchDeltic's comments for Docket 20.02.01 - RULES PERTAINING TO THE IDAHO FOREST PRACTICES ACT. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

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