



Bitterroot National Forest

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News Release

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Tod McKay

Gold Butterfly Project Decision Withdrawn

Hamilton, Montana (August 28, 2020) – Bitterroot National Forest Supervisor Matt Anderson has withdrawn his Record of Decision (ROD) for the Gold Butterfly Project on the Stevensville Ranger District. “I have decided it is in the best interest of the public to withdraw the Decision at this time. Upon further review of the project analysis, we recognized some deficiencies regarding Forest Plan compliance,” Anderson said.

The Gold Butterfly Project is a vegetation management and fuels reduction project in the Sapphire Mountains east of Corvallis. Objectives of the project included improving forest resilience to natural disturbances (fire, insects, and diseases), reducing chronic sediment sources in Willow Creek watershed to improve water quality and bull trout habitat, restoring or improving key habitats including meadows, aspen, and whitebark pine, and managing timber to provide forest products, jobs, and income to local communities. The decision also included vegetation management activities, including commercial timber harvests, non-commercial thinning, and prescribed burning on approximately 7,376 acres to improve forest health. The selected alternative was modified to retain old growth status in all treatment units.

Supervisor Anderson emphasized, “The Forest staff on the Bitterroot will be reviewing the procedural steps and analysis to date, and we will determine the best path to move the project forward. The Bitterroot National Forest is still committed to completing the important work in this project area.”

Any new decision will proceed through required NEPA and public involvement procedures.

For more information, contact the Stevensville Ranger District at (406) 777-5461.

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