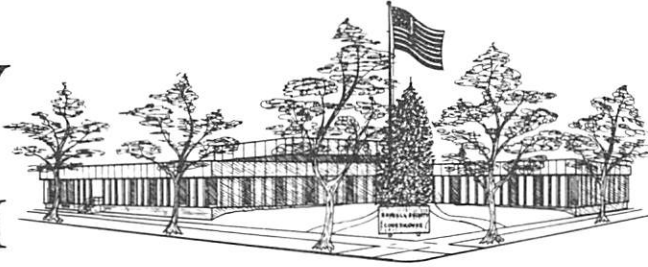


COUNTY OF RAVALLI



RAVALLI COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
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January 19, 2021

Forestry Division of MT Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)
MT Forest Action Plan Implementation Committee (FAPIC)

RE: Ravalli County Commissioner Support Letter for MT Forest Action Plan Funding for Golden Calf and Piquett Projects

Dear DNRC and FAPIC,

The Board of Ravalli County Commissioners (BCC) would like to express our full support for the Golden Calf and Piquett Projects in our County.

Golden Calf- Stevensville District

The Golden Calf project is truly a cross boundary project, with activities planned across 3 private landholders, 2 State Agencies (MT DNRC and FWP), and the Forest Service. All of it in a contiguous block that well represents the type of “landscape” treatment sought after by Shared Stewardship. The project will improve landscape resilience to disturbances (such as fire, insects and diseases) by diversifying forest structure and composition, reducing fuels, and improve wildlife habitat.

It is a tremendous opportunity to treat in a manner that accomplishes the landscape objectives of improving forest health, reducing fire risk in the WUI, restoration work in critical bull trout habitat, improving rangeland habitat through reduction in conifer encroachment, and improving wildlife habitat on the Calf Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA). There are also 2 trailhead relocations and a campground addition planned that will greatly improve public access to the area.

The analysis conducted in support of the new Montana Forest Action Plan highlighted Willow Creek as a Priority Area for both fire risk and insect & disease hazard. We believe that this project represents a good investment toward achieving the objectives identified in the Action Plan and recommend that the Golden Calf Project be fully funded.


Piquett- West Fork District

The Piquett Project targets fuels reduction and forest resiliency within the WUI through harvest, noncommercial fuels reduction, prescribed fire and road maintenance activities. Adjacent to the project area are approximately 96 private structures, Triple Creek Ranch and Trapper Creek Job Corps Center. The entire project area is within a priority landscape as designated by the Secretary of Agriculture under HFRA section 602(b). The project is also within the Priority Area for Focused Attention for wildfire risk as identified in the Montana Forest Action Plan.

Fire exclusion has created forest stands characterized by high stem densities, hazardous fuels build up consisting of high surface, ladder and crown fuels that are susceptible to uncharacteristic fire behavior. Dense stand conditions have stressed trees causing moderate to high susceptibility to current and future insect and disease mortality. The project will improve landscape resilience to disturbances (such as fire, insects and diseases) by diversifying forest structure and composition, and reducing fuels.

The BCC fully supports the application for Forest Action Plan funding for the Golden Calf and Piquett Projects. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Ravalli County Board of Commissioners



Jeff Burrows, Chairman



Dan Huls, Vice-Chair



Greg Chilcott, Member