



Forest Service News Release

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<https://www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot>

Forest Seeks Comments on Eastside Habitat Improvement Project

Hamilton, MT, May 14 — The Bitterroot National Forest, in partnership with the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes (CSKT), is inviting the public to review and make comments on a mix of non-commercial thinning and prescribed fire treatments which will cover the majority of the “eastside” of the Bitterroot National Forest.

The project area is located east of highway 93 starting at the Stevensville Ranger District near 8 Mile Creek in Florence south to Conner, following the Darby/Sula District boundary and also includes the Sula Ranger District.

The main objectives of the project are to address forest health and habitat improvements over the course of several years. Proposed actions would:

- Improve resilience to insect & disease and catastrophic wildfire in timber stands.
- Reduce fuel loading and tree densities, thereby setting stands up for future use of prescribed fire on a rotational basis.
- Increase the mosaic nature of vegetative regrowth in previously burned areas (2000 and later).
- Improve the natural forage quality and quantity in potential elk habitat and elk winter range.
- Reduce conifer encroachment in meadows and grasslands to improve habitat.

No commercial timber harvests (logging) are proposed in the project. To view maps of the project areas, visit www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot. Click on “Land and Resource Management,” then “Projects.” Implementation is tentatively scheduled to begin in late summer of 2021.

Public comments specific to this project are valuable in helping the Forest Service identify concerns and provide feedback. Comments are due by June 10th, 2021.

To provide electronic comments, please visit the project website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=59985>. The “Get Connected” menu on the right provides an option to comment as well as an option to subscribe to email updates.

If you wish to comment in writing on this proposal, please address your comments to: Bitterroot National Forest, Stevensville Ranger District, Attn: Eastside Forest & Habitat Improvement Project, 88 Main Street, Stevensville, MT 59870. Fax: 406-777-7423.

Comments may also be hand delivered weekdays 8:00 am -4:30 pm at the Stevensville District office.

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

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