



Forest Service News Release

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Piquett Timber Sale begins – Public should expect delays

Hamilton, Montana (May 20, 2022) – Starting this week, crews began moving equipment into the Piquett Creek project. This summer 353 acres will be harvested through the Piquett Timber Sale, sold to Sun Mountain Lumber out of Deerlodge, MT.

Harvest operations are planned to begin next week and be completed in October. Some operations may cause delays on Forest Road (FR) 5720 and limit access to the Piquett Ridge Trailhead #676 located five miles southwest of Conner, MT. Log truck hauling is scheduled to start in mid-June and continue through September, with an estimated 10 loads per day. The public should use caution during weekdays while traveling on FR 49 and FR 5720 and expect to encounter log trucks.

The Piquett Creek Project is a fuels reduction and vegetation management project encompassing approximately 5,800 acres in the Piquett Creek and West Fork Bitterroot River – Lloyd Creek watersheds. Treatments will occur on up to 3,000 acres within the project area. Objectives include:

- Improve landscape resilience to disturbances (fire, insects and disease)
- Reduce hazardous fuels and potential fire severity (Wildland Urban Interface, warm dry forest types)
- Improve habitat diversity, forage quality and quantity for mule deer, elk, and bighorn sheep

Last summer, 623 acres of tree thinning and hand piling was completed by contract crews. New gravel and BMP upgrades were completed on 9/10 of a mile of FR 49, including fixing the approaches on two bridges reducing sediment contributions and improving fish habitat in Piquett Creek. Drainage improvements and new gravel occurred at six stream crossings, where forest roads cross streams that feed into Piquett Creek. Funding for the road and BMP upgrades were provided by partnering with the Montana DNRC and through stewardship receipts from past timber sales.

Also starting in June, contractors will begin thinning and hand piling 947 acres. Of those acres, 703 acres were funded by the [Montana Forest Action Plan](#). A cross-boundary agreement will also treat an additional 34 acres of adjacent private land.

Adjacent to the project area are approximately 96 private structures, Triple Creek Ranch and Trapper Creek Job Corps Center. Nearly 70% of the project area is in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).

[Wildfire Risk](#) to Communities identifies Conner, MT as the most at risk community in all of Montana - based on fire risk, exposure to homes, and the likelihood of wildfire occurrence. This project will help address current conditions and reduce fire risk in the area.

The Bitterroot National Forest utilized a collaborative process to help develop the Piquett Creek Project including numerous public field trips, meetings with local landowners, and presentations to partners including the Ravalli County Collaborative (RCC) and Bitterroot Restoration Committee (BRC).

For additional information contact the West Fork Ranger District at 406-821-3269.

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