

Ravalli County Commissioners Office

From: McKay, Tod G -FS <tgmkay@fs.fed.us>
Sent: Monday, September 29, 2014 12:54 PM
Subject: News Release: Forest seeks public comments on Como project
Attachments: Como Forest Health Project - DEIS.docx



NEWS RELEASE
Bitterroot National Forest

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United States
Department of Agriculture
Bitterroot National Forest
1801 N First St
Hamilton, Montana 59840

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Tod McKay (406) 363-7122

September 29, 2014

FOREST SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENTS ON COMO PROJECT

Hamilton, MT. - The Bitterroot National Forest is inviting the public to review and make comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Como Forest Health Project. The proposed vegetation management project on the Darby Ranger District encompasses 5,711 acres between Lake Como and Lost Horse Canyon.

The purpose of the project is to improve forest health and resilience to natural disturbances, limit potential mountain pine beetle-caused tree mortality, and reduce fuel loads while maintaining the scenic qualities of the area. The project includes commercial and non-commercial timber harvests and prescribed fire for fuels reduction. The Bitterroot Community Wildfire Protection Plan identifies the project area as a 'high priority' for fuels reduction in the wildland-urban interface.

The Como Forest Health Project DEIS describes the effects of implementing three alternatives to the proposed action, including the No Action alternative. Most of the commercial and non-commercial harvests would be followed with some type of prescribed fire such as pile burning, jackpot burning, or understory burn. The project would provide forest products, jobs, and income to the local economy. Alternatives include:

	Commercial Harvest	Non-Commercial Harvest	Prescribed Fire
Alternative 1 - No Action	0	0	0
Alternative 2	1,476 acres	531 acres	1,319 acres
Alternative 3	1,292 acres	924 acres	943 acres

Alternative 4	1,115 acres	769 acres	202 acres
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For more information and to see project maps visit www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot. Click on Land and Resources Management and select from 'projects' list. Paper and CD versions are also available at the Bitterroot National Forest Supervisor's Office, Darby Ranger District, and at the Darby, Hamilton, and Stevensville Public Libraries.

The project is subject to 36CFR 218 subparts A and B. Individuals or organizations who submit timely and specific written comments regarding the proposed project, are eligible to file an objection.

Public comments are now being accepted through November 10, 2014. Written, facsimile, hand delivered, and electronic comments should include: (1) your name, address, and organization represented, if any; (2) reference the Como Forest Health Project; (3) specific facts and supporting information for the responsible official to consider; (4) your signature.

Submit comments to Julie King, Forest Supervisor, Bitterroot National Forest, 1801 N. First, Hamilton, MT. 59840. Business hours for submitting hand-delivered comments are 8am-4:30pm, Monday through Friday. Electronic comments must be submitted in rich text format (.rtf), Word (.doc) or Word Perfect format to comments-northern-bitterroot-darby@fs.fed.us. Fax comments to 406-363-7159. For more information about the project contact Sara Grove, at 406-821-1251 or sgrove@fs.fed.us.

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