

Ravalli County Commissioners Office

From: McKay, Tod G -FS <tgmkay@fs.fed.us>
Sent: Monday, January 26, 2015 9:22 AM
Subject: News Release: Forest seeks comments on project
Attachments: DarbyLL Project EA.docx

Forest Seeks Comments on Project

Hamilton, Montana (January 26, 2015) – The Bitterroot National Forest has released its Environmental Analysis (EA) on the Darby Lumber Lands Project and is inviting the public to review and make comments on the proposal. The project encompasses approximately 28,758 acres in the South Fork Sleeping Child and Rye Creek drainages in the Sapphire Mountains east of Darby.

The project is designed to improve watershed and stream health while also creating a sustainable motorized access system and loop-based motorized routes. Several sites with substantial aspen regeneration would also be thinned to reduce competition and promote long-term aspen stands for wildlife habitat. The purpose of the project is to:

- Address the immediate and long-term access needs within the project area
- Reduce chronic sediment from the road system and return land to a productive status by using various treatments on roads
- Improve recreation access and forest diversity

The project area had extensive road systems built decades ago for timber management. Many roads on acquired Darby Lumber Company sections were built without water resources in mind and are negatively impacting local watersheds by chronically elevating sediment levels. There are approximately 275 miles of roads and 15 miles of single-track trail within the project area. Scoping for the project began last year and the forest held an open house at the Supervisor's Office (SO) in Hamilton with resource specialists available to answer questions.


The EA is available online at www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot. Click on Land and Resources Management and select from 'projects' list. Limited hard copies as well as CD's containing the EA are available at the SO in Hamilton and Darby Ranger District.

Submit comments to the Responsible Official: Chuck Oliver, District Ranger, by one of the following methods; mail: 712 North Main, Darby, Montana, 59829, FAX: (406) 821-4264, or email: comments-northern-bitterroot-darby@fs.fed.us (Please put "Comments on Darby Lumber Lands" in the subject line) in order to be considered. Comments on the EA are due February 23, 2015. For more information about the project contact Ed Snook at (406) 363-7103 or esnook@fs.fed.us.



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