



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Bitterroot National Forest

1801 N. First
Hamilton, MT 59840
406-363-7100

File Code: 1950

Date:

*DVD + 2
VERY LARGE
BOOKS - Record
of Decision
+ Final
Impact on
my
counter*

RECEIVED

MAR 10 2015

Ravalli County Commissioners

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Commissioners
Ravalli County Commissioners
215 S. 4th Street, Suite A
Hamilton, MT 59840

Dear Ravalli County Commissioners,

Enclosed is a printed copy (and CD) of the Como Forest Health final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and draft Record of Decision (draft ROD). I am the responsible official for this decision and plan to implement Alternative 4 with the modification of adding units 3, 8, 10, 26, 38, and 57 as analyzed under Alternative 2. Unit 8 was proposed as a non-commercial thin in Alternative 4 and I am changing the treatment to an intermediate harvest. Twelve acres of ponderosa pine old growth were not proposed for treatment in Unit 10 in Alternative 4 but I am including this area for treatment in the decision. The modifications to Alternative 4 will increase the area of commercial harvest by 185 acres and the commercial volume by about 1,500 hundred cubic feet. The reasons I propose these modifications to Alternative 4 are described in the draft ROD. A summary of my rationale is they increase the area of treatment in ponderosa pine stands susceptible to mountain pine beetle infestation in the wildland-urban interface. The Como Forest Health Project requires a project-specific Forest Plan amendment to reduce coarse woody debris levels to 5-10 tons/acre in fire groups 2 and 4, reduce the visual quality objective in Unit 8, and exempt the project area from thermal cover requirements on winter range. The FEIS and draft ROD are also available on the internet at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=33829>.

The Como Forest Health project is an activity implementing a land management plan and not authorized under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA); therefore, it is subject to 36CFR 218 subparts A and B. Objections are only accepted from those who submitted specific written comments about the proposed project during scoping or other designated opportunities for public comment in accordance with 36 CFR 218.5(a). Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted, timely comments on the proposed project unless the issue is based on new information arising after the designated comment opportunities.

The following address should be used for objections sent by regular mail to: Objection Reviewing Officer, USDA Forest Service, Northern Region, P.O. Box 7669, Missoula, MT 59807

Objections sent by private carrier or hand delivery must go to: Objection Reviewing Officer, USDA Forest Service, Northern Region, 200 East Broadway, Missoula, MT 59807. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 4:30pm, excluding Federal holidays.

Objections can be faxed to the Objection Reviewing Officer at (406) 329-3411. Please specify



“Como Forest Health Project Objection” on the subject line of the fax cover sheet and the number of pages submitted.

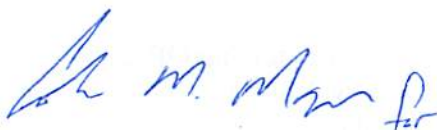
Electronic objections must be submitted to the Objection Reviewing Officer via email to appeals-northern-regional-office@fs.fed.us, with “Como Forest Health Project Objection” in the subject line. Electronic submissions must be submitted in a format that is readable with optical character recognition software (e.g. Word, PDF, Rich Text) and be searchable. An automated response should confirm your electronic objection has been received.

The objection must meet the content requirements of 36 CFR 218.8(d), and include the following information: 1) the objector’s name and address, with a telephone number or email address, if available; 2) a signature or other verification of authorship upon request (a scanned signature for email may be filed with the objection); 3) when multiple names are listed on an objection, identification of the lead objector as defined in 36 CFR 218.2 (verification of the identity of the lead objector shall be provided upon request); 4) the name of the project being objected to, the name and title of the responsible official, and the name of the national forest and ranger district on which the project will be implemented; 5) a description of those aspects of the project addressed by the objection, including specific issues related to the project and, if applicable, how the objector believes the environmental analysis or draft decision specifically violates law, regulation, or policy; suggested remedies that would resolve the objection; and supporting reasons for the reviewing officer to consider; and 6) a statement that demonstrates the connection between prior specific written comments on the particular project or activity and the content of the objection, unless the objection concerns an issue that arose after the designated opportunity for formal comment. With certain exceptions (36 CFR 218.8(b)), all documents referenced in the objection must be included with the objection.

An objection, including attachments, must be filed with the appropriate reviewing officer within 45 calendar days following publication of the objection filing period legal notice in the newspaper of record, the Ravalli Republic. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection. Objectors should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. It is the objector’s responsibility to ensure timely filing of a written objection with the reviewing officer pursuant to 36 CFR 218.9. All objections are available for public inspection during and after the objection process. Responses that do not adhere to these requirements make review of an objection difficult and are conditions under which the reviewing officer may set aside an objection pursuant to 36 CFR 218.10.

If you have any questions concerning the FEIS and draft ROD filing, please contact Chuck Oliver, Darby District Ranger at 406-821-4244.

Sincerely,



JULIE K. KING
Forest Supervisor

Ravalli County Commissioners Office

From: McKay, Tod G -FS <tgmkay@fs.fed.us>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2015 11:37 AM
Subject: News Release: Como Forest Health Project
Attachments: Como Forest Health - FEIS.docx

Como Forest Health Project

Hamilton, Montana (March 18, 2015) – The Bitterroot National Forest has released its Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Draft Record of Decision (Draft ROD) for the Como Forest Health Project on the Darby Ranger District. The proposed vegetation management project encompasses 5,711 acres between Lake Como and Lost Horse Canyon.

Forest Supervisor Julie King has decided to implement **Alternative 4 modified** and include Units 3, 8, 10, 26, 38 and 57. The benefits of Alternative 4 modified are:

- Reduces mountain pine beetle infestation hazard in most of the high hazard ponderosa pine units
- Reduces the potential for crown fire
- Improves strategic opportunities to manage wildfire
- Maintains wildlife habitat components by not treating or modifying treatments in areas of hiding and thermal cover.

The purpose of the project is to improve forest health 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 FEIS and Draft ROD are posted on the Bitterroot National Forest website at <http://fs.usda.gov/project/?project=33829>. Printed copies and CDs are also available for review at the Supervisor's Office in Hamilton, the Darby Ranger District, and at local libraries.

The decision is subject to public objection under Code of Federal Regulations §218. Objections may only be filed by those who previously submitted comments specific to the project. All objections must be submitted to the Forest Service by April 28, 2015.

Objections may be mailed to: USDA Forest Service, Northern Region, ATTN: Objection Reviewing Officer, P.O. Box 7669, Missoula, MT 59807 OR hand delivered to: USDA Forest Service, Northern Region, ATTN: Objection Reviewing Officer, 200 East Broadway, Missoula, MT 59802, Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Electronic objections may be submitted to: appeals-northern-regional-office@fs.fed.us. Faxed objections may be submitted to (406) 329-3411. Please specify "Como Forest Health Project Objection" in the subject line.

If you have questions concerning the FEIS and Draft ROD, please contact Chuck Oliver, Darby District Ranger at 406-821-4244. Stay in touch with the Bitterroot National Forest through www.facebook.com/DiscoverTheBitterroot and www.twitter.com/BitterrootNF.

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Tod McKay
Public Affairs Officer

Forest Service
Bitterroot National Forest

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Hamilton, MT 59840

www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot



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