

Ravalli County Commissioners Office

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Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2015 8:39 AM
Subject: News Release: Como Forest Health Project
Attachments: Como Forest Health - ROD.docx

Como Forest Health Project

Hamilton, Montana (July 16, 2015) – Bitterroot National Forest Supervisor Julie King has signed the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Como Forest Health Project on the Darby Ranger District. The decision authorizes the forest to move forward on plans to thin approximately 2,254 acres of overstocked forested areas through commercial and non-commercial timber harvests between Lake Como and Lost Horse Canyon.

The Forest will implement **Alternative 4 modified**. 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.
- Utilization of forest products will provide jobs and economic benefits to local communities.

The purpose of the project is to improve forest health and reduce hazardous fuels while maintaining the scenic qualities of the area. In addition to the timber harvest, the project also includes prescribed fire for fuels reduction. The Bitterroot Community Wildfire Protection Plan identified the project area as a 'high priority' for fuels reduction in the wildland-urban interface.

The project will send more than 5 million board feet of timber (1,000 truckloads) to Montana sawmills.

The Como Forest Health Project was subject to public objection under Code of Federal Regulations §218. The Objection Reviewing Officer who reviewed the project found that it complied with all applicable laws and the Forest Plan.

The ROD is available online at <http://fs.usda.gov/project/?project=33829>. For more information contact Sara Grove, West Fork Ranger District at 406-821-3269.

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