

Ravalli County Commissioners Office

From: McKay, Tod G -FS <tgmkay@fs.fed.us>
Sent: Wednesday, September 16, 2015 10:20 AM
Subject: News Release: Timber sale area open for firewood cutting
Attachments: Three Saddle Firewood.docx; Three_Saddle_firewood_-min.jpg

Timber Sale Area Open for Firewood Cutting

Hamilton, Montana (September 16, 2015) – The Stevensville Ranger District has announced that beginning this Friday, September 18th it will allow the public to access the Three Saddle timber sale area to gather firewood. The Three Saddle project which began last year is located east of Stevensville on Ambrose Road #428 in the Sapphire Mountains.

Pyramid Mountain Lumber of Seeley Lake is the contractor. They are thinning overstocked areas of the forest through commercial and non-commercial timber harvests, which has resulted in large landing/slash piles along the road. See photo attached. The public is being allowed to access these piles for firewood gathering purposes only under the following conditions:

- You must have (or purchase) a valid firewood cutting permit and have it with you while harvesting wood.
- Cutting is restricted to existing piles only. Please do not cut standing trees or trees with paint on them in the active timber sale units.
- Use wide shoulders and turnouts for parking. No driving off roads or blocking roads.
- Drive defensively and watch for log truck traffic and hunters. Law enforcement will be monitoring the roads.
- Do not tear apart hand/landing piles and bring along a rake for cleaning road surfaces of debris. Pile slash away from roads and ditches.
- Be aware of overhead and walking hazards around the piles. Cut at your own risk as pile material may shift.

Woodcutters are reminded of the requirements to have a spark arrester on their chainsaws and to carry a shovel, bucket, and fire extinguisher at all times.

The Forest and Pyramid Mountain Lumber are opening these areas in an effort to provide more accessible firewood. Allowing the public to access firewood during an 'active' timber sale does not happen very often.

"Easily accessible firewood is becoming harder to find," said Stevensville District Ranger Tami Sabol. "We're hoping this effort will help the public find the firewood they need this winter and they in turn will help us out by keeping these areas cleaned up so we can offer this unique opportunity again in the future."

You can purchase firewood permits at any Bitterroot National Forest office, M-F 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. The cost is \$5 per cord and there is a four cord (\$20) minimum purchase. Each household is allowed a maximum 12 cords of firewood per year. Permits are good through March 31, 2016. ____

For more information contact the Stevensville Ranger District at (406) 777-5461. Stay in touch with us through www.facebook.com/DiscoverTheBitterroot and www.twitter.com/BitterrootNF.

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