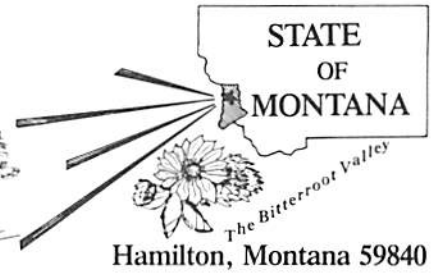


# COUNTY OF RAVALLI



RAVALLI COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
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September 25, 2015

Ryan Domsalla  
West Fork Ranger District  
6735 West Fork Road  
Darby, MT 59829

## **RE: Comments for the Westside Collaborative Vegetation Management Project**

Dear Ryan,

The Board of Ravalli County Commissioners (BCC) would like to thank you and Forest Supervisor King for your attendance at our meeting on September 25<sup>th</sup>. These meetings are important for ensuring the Forest Service understands local concerns and impacts of decisions made in Ravalli County.

The Board of Ravalli County Commissioners in general supports the vegetation management as proposed. It is agreed that our forests are in desperate need of proactive management to prevent mega fires that sterilize the landscape, destroy wildlife habitat, fisheries and view shed. The Board comments on the Westside Collaborative Vegetation Management Project are as follows:

Ravalli County was not engaged in the planning process by the Forest Service until the general public comment period was opened. This process does not meet the literal or intended purpose of a collaborative where agencies, groups and individuals are involved in the development of a proposal.

Ravalli County's "Natural Resource Use Policy" under Roads and Trails: Access and Transportation, Goal (1), Objective (D) states "Decommissioning – Ravalli County is opposed to road and trail closures and/or decommissioning. There shall be no net loss of Forest Service roads/trails. We support additional roads/trails." It is understandable that roads cannot be

maintained in perpetuity, however, the board recognizes that roads provide emergency access for responders, especially for fire suppression. Ravalli County opposes any reduction of public access to public lands and the decommissioning of roads through obliteration.

Ravalli County is concerned about the impacts to county owned roads from heavy equipment and logging trucks. Some of these roads are county maintained and some are privately maintained. Due to resource and financial limitations, Ravalli County would not be able to accommodate the necessary maintenance during the project, nor rehabilitation of the roads after the project is complete. We would request a collaborative solution that would not put a financial burden on the county and/or the citizens who live on these roads.

Sincerely,  
Jeff Burrows, CHAIR, BOARD OF RAVALLI COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

  
Jeff Burrows, Chairman