

Ravalli County Commissioners

From: McKay, Tod G -FS <tgmkay@fs.fed.us>
Sent: Monday, December 16, 2013 9:02 AM
Subject: News Release: Forest seeks public comments on project
Attachments: Darby Lumber Lands Project.docx



NEWS RELEASE

Bitterroot National Forest

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United States
Department of Agriculture
Bitterroot National Forest
1801 N First St
Hamilton, Montana 59840

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Tod McKay (406) 363-7122

December 16, 2013

FOREST SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENTS ON PROJECT

Hamilton, MT. - The Bitterroot National Forest is inviting the public to review and make comments on a watershed improvement and travel management project on the Darby Ranger District. The Darby Lumber Lands project encompasses approximately 22,267 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 in the area 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 aspen longevity. The purpose of the project is to:

- Address the immediate and long-term access needs within the project area
- Reduce chronic sediment and long-term expense of the road system
- Improve recreation access and forest diversity

The project area had extensive road systems built decades ago for timber management. Many roads on recently 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. For more information or to see project maps visit www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot. Click on Land and Resources Management and select from 'projects' list.

Public comments are now being accepted through January 15, 2014. Written, facsimile, hand delivered, and electronic comments should include: (1) your name, address, and organization represented, if any; (2) reference the Darby Lumber Lands project; (3) your signature.

Submit comments to Chuck Oliver, District Ranger, Darby Ranger District, 712 Main, Darby, MT. 59829. Business hours for submitting hand-delivered comments are 8am-4:30pm, Monday through Friday. Electronic comments must be submitted in rich text format (.rtf), Word (.doc) or Word Perfect format to comments-northern-bitterroot-darby@fs.fed.us . For more information about the project contact Ed Snook at (406) 363-7103 or esnook@fs.fed.us . An open house with resource specialists available to answer questions is planned for Wednesday, January 8th from 6-8pm at the Supervisor's Office in Hamilton.

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