

BRUCE CREEK to ALPINE 7 to NAPA POINT MOTORIZED TRAILS PROJECT

Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

Flathead National Forest

**Spotted Bear Ranger District
Flathead County, Montana**

**Swan Lake Ranger District
Lake County, Montana**

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BRUCE CREEK TO ALPINE 7 TO NAPA POINT MOTORIZED TRAILS PROJECT

Decision Notice and FONSI

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I. SUMMARY OF DECISION

After careful consideration of the potential impacts of the trail restrictions analyzed and documented in the Bruce Creek to Alpine 7 to Napa Point Motorized Trails Project Environmental Assessment (EA) issued in April 2008, we have decided to close 19.7 miles of trail within the Southern Swan Crest area to wheeled motorized use (refer to Maps 1 and 2). This area is generally located approximately 9 miles southeast of Bigfork and 2 miles west of the Spotted Bear Ranger Station on the Swan Lake Ranger District and Spotted Bear Ranger District, respectively. This decision and the rationale for it is detailed more specifically on pages 6 through 12 of this document.

II. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

The EA on pages 1 and 2 provide the details of the purpose and need for this trail management project. To summarize, the conditions of these trails (now and expected in the future) is driving the purpose of the project. These trails include sections of erosive soils and steep terrain, and are located in areas where there are desired improvements to grizzly bear security. This action would move the Flathead National Forest toward grizzly bear security objectives for the area and would reduce ongoing and potential user/resource conflicts related to tread and switchback rutting. Further, the decision would reduce the potential for user safety conflicts on specific portions of the trails while leaving logical and manageable trail systems in place that would not inherently lead to confusion for various types of trail users. More detail on the specific rationale driving the purpose and need and how that rationale affected the decision can be found in the “Rationale for Decision” section of this document.

III. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

In February 2007, the Spotted Bear Ranger District held an Open House for the public related to implementing national direction for motorized travel management and off-highway vehicles (OHV). The District asked if there was a need for change to the existing open motorized situation, and received 60 letters, emails, other correspondence, phone calls, and visits providing feedback. About half of the comments were related to trails in the Southern Swan Crest area, specifically Bruce Creek and Alpine 7 to Napa Trailhead.

On April 10, 2007, a scoping letter was sent to 77 government agencies, groups and individuals potentially interested in or affected by the project. This letter provided details of the Proposed Action (displayed as Alternative 2 in this EA). We received comments and feedback on the proposed action from 111 people through letters, emails, phone calls, and visits.

The Bruce Creek to Alpine 7 to Napa Point Motorized Trails Project EA was published and made available for public comment on April 4, 2008. Copies of the EA were provided to over 171 interested people and letters were sent to the remainder of the mailing list (over 171 contacted) informing them of the availability of the EA. The EA was posted on the Flathead National Forest website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/flathead/nepa/nepa.htm>.

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Include Map 1 (Project Vicinity Map)

Back of Map 1

The Bruce Creek to Alpine 7 to Napa Point Motorized Trails Project was first listed in the Flathead National Forest's Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) in the April-June 2007 issue. This listing informed the public of our plan to analyze the Bruce Creek to Alpine 7 to Napa Point Motorized Trails area for trail management activities. The Bruce Creek to Alpine 7 to Napa Point Motorized Trails Project has appeared quarterly in the SOPA since the April-June 2007 issue. The SOPA list is displayed nationally and locally on the internet sites located at the Forest Service's Washington Office and the Flathead National Forest.

A legal notice was published in *The Daily Inter Lake* on April 8, 2008 announcing the completion and availability of the Bruce Creek to Alpine 7 to Napa Point Motorized Trails Project EA. The public was provided 30 days to comment on the EA. We received approximately 125 letters, emails, phone calls, and visits commenting on the EA. A summary of these comments and our responses to them are attached to this decision as Appendix A. These comments were fully considered in our decision.

IV. ISSUES

Comments and concerns were identified from our early public involvement efforts. No comments resulted in the development of alternatives to the Proposed Action, which is identified as Alternative 2 in the EA.

V. ALTERNATIVES

The EA considered the Proposed Action (Alternative 2) and one other alternative in detail. Alternative 1 is the No Action Alternative, under which the project area would have no access management changes at this time, and would remain subject to natural or ongoing changes only.

Alternative 1 (No Action)

The emphasis of this alternative is to represent the existing condition against which the other alternative is compared. Alternative 1 proposes no access management changes within the Bruce Creek to Alpine 7 to Napa Point Motorized Trails Project area at this time. It does include those activities listed as ongoing present and foreseeable actions on page 11 of the EA. It does not preclude activities in other areas at this time, nor does it preclude activities in the Bruce Creek to Alpine 7 to Napa Point Motorized Trails Project area in the future. Refer to pages 8 to 11 in the Bruce Creek to Alpine 7 to Napa Point Motorized Trails Project EA for the full text of this alternative.

Alternative 2

Alternative 2 was developed to respond specifically to the Purpose and Need for action. This alternative is the selected alternative and will not be reiterated here but instead in the decision section which is detailed on pages 6 through 8.

VI. DECISION

As the responsible officials for this project, we have made the decision to select Alternative 2 from the Bruce Creek to Alpine 7 to Napa Point Motorized Trails Project EA.

Under this decision, approximately 19.7 miles of currently open motorized trails will be closed yearlong to wheeled motorized vehicles. Trails to be closed to wheeled motorized use include the trails listed in Table 1 below. Map 2 displays these trails:

Table 1. Access Management Decisions

Trail Number	Trail Name	Miles	Existing Travel Status	Selected Travel Status
82A	Bruce Creek Entry	2.7	Open to motorcycles yearlong	Closed yearlong to wheeled motorized vehicles
82	Bruce Creek	3.5	Open to motorcycles yearlong	Closed yearlong to wheeled motorized vehicles
101	Bunker Creek	2.0	Open to motorcycles yearlong	Closed yearlong to wheeled motorized vehicles
101A	Bunker-Alpine Connect	0.9	Open to motorcycles yearlong	Closed yearlong to wheeled motorized vehicles
7	Alpine 7 from jct Trail #101A south to jct Trail #31	7.3	Open to motorcycles yearlong	Closed yearlong to wheeled motorized vehicles
31	Napa Point	3.3	Open to motorcycles yearlong	Closed yearlong to wheeled motorized vehicles
	Total	19.7		

Map 2 – Bruce Creek to Alpine 7 to Napa Point Motorized Trails Project Decision

Back of Map 2.

VII. RATIONALE FOR THE DECISION

We have selected Alternative 2 as the final decision for this project. We have made our decision based on the information in the Environmental Assessment (EA) and the project file, consideration of issues and public comments, and from field reviews of the project area. We have determined our decision is consistent with all laws, regulations, and agency policies, and we have considered the potential cumulative effects and reasonably foreseeable activities. We believe our decision provides the best array of management activities to respond to the purpose and need, issues, public comments, and consistency with the Flathead Forest Plan. The criteria we used to make our decision on this project included:

- Achievement of the purpose and need of the project
- Relationship to environmental and social issues, and public comments

Achievement of the Purpose and Need

This decision was not an easy one. Scoping of the project and comments received on the EA produced many thoughtful comments which we thoroughly considered before coming to a conclusion. The action to close these 19.7 miles of trail to motorcycle use was primarily driven by the conditions on the particular trail system which prompted the purpose and need for the project. The purpose and need results from a combination of site-specific conditions, which taken together, lead us to this decision. We must emphasize, that it is the combination of circumstances taken together, not any one of them alone, which leads us to take this action in this area.

The following includes our rationale as to why we feel Alternative 2 addresses the purpose and need the best:

Reduce the potential for trail rutting and soil erosion in specific areas caused, in part, by motorized use

Portions of these trails contain soil conditions and tight switchbacks which make them less suitable for motorcycle use. As an example, the portion of the Alpine 7 Trail included in this decision was extensively reconstructed from 2003 to 2007 with much of the effort focused on relocation of the trail in areas where past use had led to extensive rutting and erosion. The trail relocation and reconstruction was not able to, in this portion of the Alpine 7 Trail, entirely avoid the moist areas that had originally led to the need for reconstruction. In these portions of the trail, the newly constructed tread remains relatively vulnerable to rutting with the situation compounded by the existence of very tight switchbacks needed to make grade. Over time, the level of rutting in these areas is expected to be beyond levels for which routine maintenance could compensate.

Similarly the Bruce Creek and Bunker Creek portions of the trail system have sections with tight switchbacks and some ongoing trail rutting and trenching, in areas where the problems are likely to be chronic (even with more routine maintenance) due to the combination of soil and moisture conditions. Although we have acknowledged in the EA that motorized use on these sections of

trail is low, we do expect that such use is likely to increase in the future. Our observation has been that even limited motorcycle use on portions of trail with the combination of moist soils, steep grades and tight switchbacks is that such use can and has lead to much more rapid linear erosion and down-cutting of the trail tread in those areas than is observed with non-motorized uses. (EA, page 22, and Project File, Exhibit H-27). In addition to resource impacts, to the extent these conditions exist, users will tend to have a lower quality experience using the trail.

Though any use, over time, will lead to the need for maintenance, it is anticipated that existing levels of routine maintenance can mitigate current and future predicted levels of non-motorized use (EA, page 16). In the specific areas with relatively extensive areas of steep grades, moist soils and/or tight switchbacks, our decision will likely reduce erosion and user conflicts related to tread condition as compared to the current condition (EA, page 22).

Reduce potential user safety considerations on specific narrow portions of the trail system

Another factor considered in the need for this project is the existing terrain combined with existing and likely future patterns of use. In particular, the Napa Point portion of the system receives relatively high use (relative to the rest of the trail system in the immediate area) from non-motorized users, and crosses terrain with extremely steep side slopes where extensive trail relocation is not feasible. A road accesses the trailhead for the Napa Point Trail and this open road alleviates much of the elevation gain needed to access the Alpine 7 Trail compared to all other trailheads in the Southern Swan Crest area. The relative ease of the trail has led to its increasing popularity for non-motorized users. Based on observations of use, motorcycle use on the Napa Point Trail has been very limited to date. As the population of the Flathead Valley continues to grow, we anticipate day use of the Napa Point Trail will continue to increase. Correspondingly, there is increasing potential for user safety conflicts on the narrow, steep portions of this trail. Closing this trail to wheeled motorized use will reduce this potential for safety conflicts, while also avoiding the confusion and management problems that could otherwise occur.

Improve grizzly bear security conditions

Managing motorized use is an important factor in providing habitat security for grizzly bears. The Flathead Forest Plan, through Amendment 19, provides numerical objectives on the amount of motorized use each grizzly bear subunit should strive for (a subunit is considered a home range for a female grizzly bear). Limiting motorized use is one of the most challenging management issues on this Forest as reflected in the comments we received on this project and other projects dealing wholly or in part with access management. Specifically, related to this project, some commenters expressed frustration that motorized use is continually being reduced across the Forest while other commenters expressed positive feedback that closure of motorized use on these trails will increase habitat security for grizzly bear by reconnecting fragmented segments of essential security core habitat.

We recognize motorized road and trail closures have benefits and detriments depending on your perspective. By closing these trails to motorized use, several grizzly bear subunits will make improvements in meeting Forest Plan grizzly bear objectives. We also realize motorized trail

riding is limited on this Forest, often because the trails and our terrain limit those capabilities and due to wildlife habitat and Wilderness management constraints. Although our decision closes about 20 miles of trail to motorized use, about 40 miles of trail in the Southern Swan Crest (and about 52 miles in the Northern Swans) remain open for motorcycle use. These opportunities exist for motorcycle recreation in areas where the combination of issues is not as extensive as it is on the trail segments included in this decision.

Consideration of Issues and Public Comments

We received many public comments on this project and our specific responses to these comments are included in Appendix A of this decision.

Alleviation of social conflicts between motorized users and non-motorized was an issue addressed by many members of the public in the scoping of the proposed action. These types of comments were considered in the EA and are discussed in the response to comments portion of this decision. However, the need for this action is not premised on a need to resolve social user conflicts. Perceptions of the significance of this type of conflict (often noise/experience related) and the need to alleviate it are highly individual as discussed in the EA. In addition to the resource issues discussed above, the types of “user conflict” that focused attention on these trails were site-specific issues that, now and in the future, could be expected to impact the physical use of the trail either by management/congestion/safety issues, or in rutting, and/or erosion leading to a physically degraded trail experience for users

Other commenters suggested multiple use of trails is highly consistent with the Forest Service mission and that user perceptions of conflict is not a suitable criteria by which to decide to close the trails. It should be noted that multiple use trails are common within the National Forest System. Mixed use of trails is not thought of as an issue, which in itself, needs to be resolved. This project did not originate from a need to separate user types due to user perceptions of their experience. However, implementation of the project could have effects in that regard. To the extent possible, these types of effects or perceptions have been analyzed in the EA (pages 17-20).

Some responses from the public questioned why the proposal was not expanded to eliminate stock use and mountain bicycle use if soils and use impacts, including, rutting and erosion, were issues to be resolved. As stated in this decision, the purpose and need for the project does not focus on resolution of any single issue, but several issues in combination as they play out on this particular landscape. Though we considered this permutation of the proposed action, such a design feature would not lead to improvement of grizzly bear security as outlined in Amendment 19 of the Flathead Forest Plan. In addition, horseback and mountain bicycle use, while more impactive to trails relative to rutting, downcutting, than foot traffic, have been observed in our experience in reconstructing these specific trails to be less impactive in sensitive soil/tight switchback conditions than motorcycle use. Elimination of stock and mountain bicycle use would have had only limited incremental benefit relative to the rutting/safety issues, and would not contribute to improvement of grizzly bear security conditions sought under the Flathead National Forest Plan. For these reasons, elimination of stock or bicycle use were not thought to be necessary to achieve to overall purpose and need for the project. Doing so would have

eliminated a portion of the existing use on the trails without meeting the overall objectives of the project.

Another consideration in making this decision was to insure that the selected alternative would not create a fragmented system of trails leading to difficulty in administration and/or in user confusion on the ground. Taken together, the Bruce Creek, Alpine 7, Napa trail segments closed to motorized use can consistently be managed as a non-motorized system without causing isolation of short portions of motorized trail or dividing trails into alternating motorized or non-motorized sections. Nearby motorcycle trails not affected by this decision will continue to have distinct starting and ending points which will maintain their continuity. The decision avoids fragmenting the trail system by user type and, to that extent, should minimize user confusion while leaving the resulting trail system logical and manageable into the future.

VIII. FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

In accordance with CFR 1508.13 and direction provided in the Forest Service Handbook (FSH 1909.15, Chapter 40, Section 43.1), we have determined that the management actions included in the decision for the Bruce Creek to Alpine 7 to Napa Point Motorized Trails Project do not constitute a major federal action, and that the implementation of the decision will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, we have determined that an Environmental Impact Statement need not be prepared for this project. We have followed the implementing regulation for NEPA (40 CFR 1508.27) and other criteria for determining the significance of effects.

Before making our determination, we carefully reviewed and considered the following information:

- The direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of these actions as documented in the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Bruce Creek to Alpine 7 to Napa Point Motorized Trails Project.
- The analysis documentation in the Project File of the Bruce Creek to Alpine 7 to Napa Point Motorized Trails Project.
- Comments received during all scoping, and comments received after the EA was published for this project.
- Past experiences with recreation and trail projects, and wildlife security projects on the Flathead National Forest.

The Interdisciplinary (ID) Team and both Deciding Officials have “screened” the management actions included in the Bruce Creek to Alpine 7 to Napa Point Motorized Trails Project for “significant impact.” The results of this screen are summarized on the following pages.

Significant, as used in NEPA, requires consideration of both **context** and **intensity**.

Context means that the significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts such as society as a whole (human, national), the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality. Significance varies with the setting of the proposed action. For instance, in the case of a site-

specific action, significance would usually depend upon the effects in the locale rather than in the world as a whole. Both short- and long-term effects are relevant (40 CFR 1508.27).

The effects of the proposed actions are limited in context. The project area is limited in size, 19.7 miles of trail. Effects are local in nature and are not likely to significantly affect regional or national resources.

Intensity refers to the severity of impact. Responsible Officials must bear in mind that more than one agency may make decisions about partial aspects of a major action. The following ten aspects are considered in the evaluation of intensity (40 CFR 1508.27):

1. *Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the balance of effects will be beneficial.*

Both beneficial and adverse effects have been taken into consideration when making a determination of significance. While there will be beneficial effects, this action does not rely on those effects to balance adverse environmental impacts. Detailed specialist reports included in the EA and Project File contain comprehensive effects analyses and the findings from these resource specific reports form the basis for our decision.

It is our determination, based on review of these analyses and consultation with specialists, that the decision will not result in a significant impact on the environment. None is deemed irreversible or irretrievable and do not set in motion further effects. All potential direct, indirect, and cumulative effects are evaluated in the EA, specialist reports, and Biological Assessment.

2. *The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.*

The implementation of these trail closures will result in improvement in the potential safety on the trails in the narrow steep sections discussed in the decision due to the elimination of motorized use. Existing motorized use is currently very low. The existing safety concern is also correspondingly low, but would increase with the likely potential increased motorized use of the trails.

3. *Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, parklands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.*

This decision would not adversely affect historic or cultural resources and would not affect parklands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers or ecologically critical areas.

A heritage review has been completed and no previously undiscovered sites within the project area were found. Since the project is non-ground disturbing, there would be no effects to any known or unknown sites in the area.

There would be no jurisdictional wetlands occurring in close proximity to the trails. Therefore, there should be no effect upon wetland resources due to the Decision.

Based on this information, we conclude that the decision will not adversely affect unique resources.

4. *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.*

Though the project has generated considerable comment, with strongly held differences of opinion, the actual effects on the quality of the human environment by taking this action are limited. Current motorized use of the trails is limited and the proposed action is not programmatic in intent or extensive in nature. The decision and its effects are limited to the 19.7 miles closed to motorcycle use due to the site-specific combination of conditions. About 40 miles of trail in the Southern Swan Crest area remain open for motorized use. Based on the limited context of the project, our review of comments received during the scoping of this project, and the analysis documented in the EA and Project File, we do not find any highly controversial effects to the human environment.

We conclude that the effects of the decision are not considered highly controversial by professionals, specialists, and scientists from associated fields of recreation, forestry, wildlife biology, soils, fisheries, and hydrology.

5. *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.*

Based on our review of comments received during the scoping of this project, the comments received after the publication of the EA, and the analysis documented in the EA and Project File, we find the possible effects on the human environment that are uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks are minimal or non-existent.

This project is similar to the other trail and recreation management projects conducted across the Flathead National Forest. Analysis of the Proposed Action considered the effects of these past projects as a frame of reference in conjunction with scientifically accepted analytical techniques, available information, and best professional experience and judgment to estimate effects to the human environment. It is my conclusion that there are no uncertain or unique characteristics in the project area that have not been previously encountered or that will constitute an unknown risk to the human environment.

6. *The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.*

The Bruce Creek to Alpine 7 to Napa Point Motorized Trails Project is a site-specific project that does not set precedence for future actions or present a decision in principle about future considerations. Any proposed future project must be evaluated on its own merits and effects. The selected actions are compatible with the Forest Plan and the capabilities of the land.

We believe that this action does not represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.

7. *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. Significance exists if it is reasonable to anticipate a cumulatively significant impact on the environment. Significance cannot be avoided by terming an action temporary or by breaking it down into small component parts.*

Connected, cumulative, and similar actions have been considered and included in the scope of the analysis. The analysis accounts for past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions of the Forest Service within the project area.

Based on our review of the analysis and disclosure of effects in the EA, specialist reports, Biological Assessment, and other analyses in the Project File, we conclude that the Bruce Creek to Alpine 7 to Napa Point Motorized Trails Project does not represent potential cumulative adverse impacts (EA, page 11; and individual resource sections in the Project File).

8. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.*

A heritage review has been completed in the Bruce Creek to Alpine 7 to Napa Point Motorized Trails Project area and no previously undiscovered sites within the project area boundaries were found (Section M of the Project File, and the EA on page 49). Additionally, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes were contacted in February 2008 and they did not express concerns for the project (refer to the heritage section in the Project File).

We believe that this action will not have a significant effect on scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

9. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.*

A Biological Assessment (BA) for threatened and endangered wildlife species has been completed for the decision and is in the Project File. The EA, BAs, and Decision reveal that this decision will improve grizzly bear security and to that extent is beneficial to grizzly bears. The BA’s prepared for this analysis and supporting documentation led to the following determinations for listed species.

Table 2. Threatened & Endangered Species Determinations

Species	Determination	Project File Exhibit
Grizzly Bear	May effect – but is not likely to adversely affect grizzly bears or their habitat.	J-6
Gray Wolf	May effect – but is not likely to adversely affect gray wolves or their habitat.	J-6
Bald Eagle	No impact – habitat along rivers would be unaffected.	J-3
Canada Lynx	No effect.	J-6

Species	Determination	Project File Exhibit
Bull Trout	No effect.	L-1
Spalding’s Catchfly	No effect.	K-1
Water Howellia	No effect.	K-1

10. *Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.*

As described in the EA (Regulatory Framework and Consistency sections for each resource area), the selected action is consistent with all applicable federal, state, or local laws or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment, including:

- The National Forest Management Act (NFMA)
- The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- The Endangered Species Act
- The National Historic Preservation Act
- The American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
- American Indian Religious Freedom Act
- The Environmental Justice Act
- The Clean Water Act

The decision is consistent with Forest Plan direction.

We have concluded that the selected action does not violate any federal, state, or local laws or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

IX. FINDINGS REQUIRED BY LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND POLICIES

We have determined our decision is consistent with the National Forest Management Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, the American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, American Indian Religious Freedom Act, the Environmental Justice Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Flathead National Forest Land Management Plan (Forest Plan).

X. APPEAL PROVISIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.11. A written appeal must be submitted within 45 days following the publication date of the legal notice of this decision in The Daily Inter Lake Newspaper, Kalispell, Montana. It is the responsibility of the appellant to ensure their appeal is received in a timely manner. The publication date of the legal notice of the decision in the newspaper of record is the *exclusive* means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Appellants should not rely on date or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Paper appeals must be submitted to:

**USDA Forest Service, Northern Region
ATTN: Appeal Deciding Officer
P.O. Box 7669
Missoula, MT 59807**

Or

**USDA Forest Service, Northern Region
ATTN: Appeal Deciding Officer
200 East Broadway
Missoula, MT 59802
Office hours: 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

Electronic appeals must be submitted to:

appeals-northern-regional-office@fs.fed.us

In electronic appeals, the subject line should contain the name of the project being appealed:

Bruce Creek to Alpine 7 to Napa Point Motorized Trails Project Environmental Assessment.

An automated response would confirm your electronic appeal has been received. Electronic appeals must be submitted in MS Word, Word Perfect, Portable Document Format (PDF) or Rich Text Format (RTF).

It is the appellant's responsibility to provide sufficient project- or activity-specific evidence and rationale, focusing on the decision, to show why our decision should be reversed. The appeal must be filed with the Appeal Deciding Officer in writing. At a minimum, the appeal must meet the content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14, and include the following information:

- The appellant's name and address, with a telephone number, if available;
- A signature, or other verification of authorship upon request (a scanned signature for electronic mail may be filed with the appeal);
 - When multiple names are listed on an appeal, identification of the lead appellant and verification of the identity of the lead appellant upon request;
 - The name of the project or activity for which the decision was made, the name and title of the Responsible Official, and the date of the decision;
 - The regulation under which the appeal is being filed, (36 CFR 215)
 - Any specific change(s) in the decision that the appellant seeks and rationale for those changes;
 - Any portion(s) of the decision with which the appellant disagrees, and explanation for the disagreement;

- Why the appellant believes the Responsible Official’s decision failed to consider the substantive comments; and
- How the appellant believes the decision specifically violates law, regulation, or policy.

“If an appeal is received on this project there may be informal resolution meetings and/or conference calls between the Responsible Official and the appellant. These discussions would take place within 15 days after the closing date for filing an appeal. All such meetings are open to the public. If you are interested in attending any informal resolution discussions, please contact the Responsible Official or monitor the following website for postings about current appeals in the Northern Region of the Forest Service:

http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/projects/appeal_index.shtml.”

If no appeal is received, implementation of this decision may occur on, but not before, five business days from the close of the appeal filing period. If an appeal is received, implementation may not occur for 45 days following the date of appeal disposition.

XI. FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

Copies of the Decision Notice can be obtained at the Hungry Horse Ranger Station at 10 Hungry Horse Drive, Hungry Horse, Montana 59919 (406-387-3800), at Spotted Bear Ranger Station (55 miles south of Hungry Horse on the East Side Reservoir Road 38, 406-758-5376) after May 15th, and the Swan Lake Ranger Station, 200 Ranger Station Road, Bigfork, MT 59911 (406-837-7500). For those of you who have access to a computer, we will have the entire document on the Flathead National Forest website at: www.fs.fed.us/r1/flathead/nepa/nepa. You then navigate to the Bruce Creek to Alpine 7 to Napa Point Motorized Trails Project Decision Notice document. The project file is available for review at the Hungry Horse Ranger Station, through May 15. After May 15 it will be available at the Spotted Bear Ranger Station.

For additional information or questions concerning this decision, please contact Deb Mucklow, Spotted Bear District Ranger (406-758-6464) or Dale Luhman, Project Leader (406-758-6460).

DEB MUCKLOW
 Spotted Bear District Ranger

Date

STEVE BRADY
 Swan Lake District Ranger

Date