



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

December 2007



Cooney McKay Forest Health & Fuels Reduction Project

Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Swan Lake Ranger District, Flathead National Forest
Lake and Missoula Counties, Montana



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**Cooney McKay Forest Health and Fuels Reduction
Draft Environmental Impact Statement
December 2007**

Lead Agency: USDA Forest Service

Responsible Official: Cathy Barbouletos
1935 3rd Ave. East
Kalispell, MT 59901

For Information Contact: Steve Brady
200 Ranger Station Road
Bigfork, MT 59911
(406) 837-7501

Abstract: The Cooney McKay Forest Health and Fuels Reduction Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is proposed to restore desirable vegetative conditions in the project area, meeting the needs to: restore forest health, reduce hazardous fuels, and provide commercial and personal wood products for the local communities. The project area is located in the Swan Valley near Condon, Montana; stretching from the Swan Mountain Range to the east, Highway 83 to the west, Cooney/Rumble Creek Divide to the south, and Lion/Meadow Creek Divide to the north. A No Action Alternative, and three action alternatives that meet the purpose and need for this project are analyzed in this DEIS. At this time, the agency has not identified a Preferred Alternative.

Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative.

Alternative 2 – Proposed Action. Focuses on improving forest health and reducing hazardous fuel buildup through various commercial and non-commercial vegetative treatments.

Alternative 3 – Responds to concerns regarding old growth and old growth dependent species. This alternative would not treat stands which have old growth attributes.

Alternative 4 – Responds to concerns regarding white-tailed deer winter habitat. This alternative would not treat Seed Tree Units in MA9, and would modify treatment of stands with old growth attributes.

Reviewers should provide the Forest Service with their comments during the review period of the draft environmental impact statement. This will enable the Forest Service to analyze and respond to the comments at one time and to use information acquired in the preparation of the final environmental impact statement, thus avoiding undue delay in the decision making process. Reviewers have an obligation to structure their participation in the National Environmental Policy Act process so that it is meaningful and alerts the agency to the reviewers' position and contentions. Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC, 435 U.S. 519, 553 (1978). Environmental objections that could have been raised at the draft stage may be waived if not raised until after completion of the final environmental impact statement. City of Angoon v. Hodel (9th Circuit, 1986) and Wisconsin Heritages, Inc. v. Harris, 490 F. Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980). Comments on the draft environmental impact statement should be specific and should address the adequacy of the statement and the merits of the alternatives discussed (40 CFR 1503.3).

Send Comments to: Steve Brady, District Ranger
Swan Lake Ranger District
200 Ranger Station Road
Bigfork, MT 59911

Date Comments Must Be Received: January 28th, 2008

This page intentionally left blank