



File Code: 1950

Date: May 5, 2009

The Firefighter Environmental Assessment (EA) has been completed, and we would appreciate receiving your comments on this document.

Last spring, we sent a letter to interested individuals and organizations providing information about the proposed Firefighter Project. This project is located on the Hungry Horse Ranger District near Firefighter Mountain, generally located between Forest Road 38 (the main east side reservoir road) and the Hungry Horse Reservoir. The project is intended to manage elk habitat in the Firefighter Mountain area by diversifying forest age and structure classes that could function as foraging areas while maintaining a sufficient amount of closed canopied forest to provide for snow interception in Forest Plan designated elk winter range; to improve grizzly bear security by decreasing wheeled motorized access; to increase forest structural and species diversity at the stand and landscape scales; to reduce fuel loading by removing trees, and reducing slash and surface fuels loadings; and to maintain and enhance the growth of planted Douglas-fir in a genetic test-tree plantation. We received comments/feedback on this proposal from about nine individuals or organizations, through letters, phone calls, or emails.

Since the comment period, a planning team comprised of specialists from many natural resource disciplines reviewed public feedback, developed an alternative to the initial proposal (based on public comment and our field knowledge of the area), and analyzed potential effects from the proposed activities.

An EA detailing potential effects from the proposed management activities has been prepared by these specialists and is now available for public review. Three alternatives were identified and analyzed: Alternative 2 is the initial proposal that was provided to the public last spring; Alternative 3 was designed to address issues related to the enhancement of elk winter range; and Alternative 1 is the No-Action Alternative. A synopsis of these alternatives is displayed in the following table.

Proposed Activity	Alternative 1 (No-Action)	Alternative 2 (Proposed Action)	Alternative 3
Regeneration Harvest	0 acres	716 acres	180 acres
Thinning	0 acres	33 acres	175 acres
Prescribed Burning	0 acres	543 acres	7 acres
Planting	0 acres	476 acres	168 acres
Closed Roads to Have a Change in Closure Method to Bermed or Decommissioned	0 miles	28.7 miles	
Open Roads to be Gated Yearlong	0 miles	1.3 miles	



Those of you who initially commented on this project will receive copies of the EA with this letter. If you did not receive an EA with this letter, you may request a copy by calling the Hungry Horse Ranger Station (406-387-3800), you may pick one up at the Hungry Horse Ranger Station or Flathead National Forest Supervisor's office in Kalispell, or you may download one from the Flathead National Forest website (www.fs.fed.us/r1/flathead/nepa/nepa).

Comments on this EA are requested from you and other reviewers. The Responsible Official (Forest Supervisor Cathy Barbouletos) will consider all comments before making a decision, which is anticipated by the end of July 2009. When submitting comments, please provide specific facts along with supporting reasons that you believe should be considered by the Responsible Official when reaching a decision. Comments may be submitted in writing, orally, or through electronic means. In order to retain your administrative appeal rights, you must provide written, oral, or electronic comments during this 30-day comment period. This legal notice will be published in the Daily Inter Lake; the comment period will start on the day following publication of the legal notice and will end 30 days following the publication date. We expect that the legal notice may be published on **May 7**. Your comments must be postmarked by the end of the 30-day comment period. Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and address of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record, and will be available for public inspection. Please send written comments to:

Jimmy DeHerrera – District Ranger
Firefighter Project
Hungry Horse Ranger District
P.O. Box 190340 (10 Hungry Horse Drive)
Hungry Horse, MT 59919

Normal business hours are 8:00 am – 4:30 pm, Monday – Friday, excluding holidays.

Written comments must be postmarked by the Postal Service, e-mailed, faxed, or otherwise submitted by 11:59 pm on the 30th calendar day following publication of the legal notice. Hand delivered comments must be time and date imprinted at the Hungry Horse Ranger District office by the close of business on the 30th calendar day following publication of the legal notice.

Oral comments must be provided at the Hungry Horse Ranger District office during normal business hours via telephone or in person, or if during non-business hours, must be at an official agency function (such as a public meeting), which is designed to elicit public comments.

Electronic comments may be submitted to comments-northern-flathead-hungry-horse-glacier-view@fs.fed.us. The subject line must contain the name of the project for which you are submitting comments. Acceptable formats include MS Word, Word Perfect, RTF, or PDF. For electronically mailed comments, the sender should receive an automated electronic acknowledgement form from the agency as confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive an automated acknowledgement of the receipt of comments, it is the sender's responsibility to ensure timely receipt by other means.

For more information about this project, please contact Michele Draggoo (Project Leader) at 406-387-3827 or mdraggoo@fs.fed.us.

If you have not made any initial comments on this project and do not respond with comments on this EA, or make a request to remain on the mailing list, you will not be notified of the decision for this project.

Sincerely,

JIMMY J. DEHERRERA
District Ranger