



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Flathead
National
Forest

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File Code: 1950-1

Date: August 19, 2005

Arlene Montgomery
Friends of the Wild Swan
Friends of Wild Swan Box 5103
Swan Lake, MT 59911

Thank you for your written comments on and involvement in the development of the Holland Pierce Fuels Reduction and Forest Health proposal. Your comments have helped us in the design of the Holland Pierce Fuels Reduction and Forest Health Project. This project is designed to provide a safer environment for firefighters and the public by creating defensible space for initial attack fire suppression actions, and restore and maintain the health of forest vegetative communities within the fuel reduction treatment areas. This project is also consistent with and contributes towards the implementation of the *Seeley Swan Fire Plan*, a community developed plan.

I have enclosed a copy of the Holland Pierce Fuels Reduction and Forest Health Environmental Assessment (EA). The Proposed Action would reduce hazardous fuels and improve forest health on approximately 1,760 acres on the Swan Lake Ranger District, Flathead National Forest. Specific actions include approximately 1,652 acres of mechanized vegetation treatments and 107 acres of non-mechanized vegetation treatments. The Proposed Action includes 6.7 miles (300 acres) of defensible fuel profile zones and 1,460 acres of fuel reduction zones. Approximately 3.8 miles of temporary road would be constructed to provide access to units; temporary roads would be reclaimed after the vegetation treatments have been conducted. Best Management Practices would be applied on approximately 22 miles of National Forest System roads. Activities associated with the implementation of the fuel reduction treatments would yield approximately 3.5 MMBF of forest products.

I have also enclosed a copy of the draft *Finding of No Significant Impact* (Appendix A of the EA) that was developed specifically for this project. Based upon past experience with similar projects on the Flathead National Forest and the effects determinations conducted by the resource specialists, significant effects are not expected from the implementation of the proposed activities, which is why an EA has been prepared.

This project has been conducted under the authorities as defined by the Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003, section 101(2). With release of this EA for public review, this project is now at the point of the Predecisional Administrative Review Process (referred to as the 'objection process') pursuant to 36 CFR 218, subpart A. It is not subject to notice, comment, and appeal provisions pursuant to 36 CFR 215 (see 36 CFR 218.3). Objections to the Holland Pierce Fuels Reduction and Forest Health EA must be filed with the Reviewing Officer in writing. The Reviewing Officer is Abigail R. Kimbell, Northern Regional Forester. Objections may be submitted to her by mail at: USDA Forest Service, Northern Region, P.O. Box 7669, Missoula, MT 59807; by FAX at: (406) 329-3411; or by Email at: appeals-northern-regional-office@fs.fed.us. The acceptable formats for submitting an electronic objection are: MS Word, Word Perfect, or RTF. Please type "Holland Pierce Objection" in the Email subject line. Hand-delivered objections will be accepted at the Regional Forester's Office, 200 E. Broadway, Missoula, MT, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. All objections shall be open to public inspection during the objection process (36 CFR 218.7(a)).



Objections will be accepted only from those who submitted written comments specific to the proposed project during the scoping period on the proposed action (36 CFR 218.6). The publication date of this legal notice in the *Daily InterLake* is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection (36 CFR 218.9(a)). Those wishing to object should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. An objection, including any attachments, must be filed (regular mail, fax, Email, hand-delivery, express delivery, or messenger service) with the Reviewing Officer within 30 days of the date of publication of the legal notice for the objection process (36 CFR 218.9(a)). The legal notice is expected to be published on August 21, 2005. Incorporation of documents by reference shall not be allowed in the objection (36 CFR 218.7(c)).

At a minimum an objection must include the following (36 CFR 218.7(d)): 1) The objector's name and address, with a telephone number, if available; 2) a signature or other verification of authorship upon request (a scanned signature for Email may be filed with the objection); 3) when multiple names are listed on an objection, identification of the lead objector. Verification of the identity of the lead objector shall be provided upon request; 4) the name of the proposed authorized hazardous fuel reduction project, the name and title of the Responsible Official, and the name(s) of the National Forest(s) and/or Ranger District(s) on which the proposed authorized hazardous fuel reduction project will be implemented; and 5) provide sufficient narrative description of those aspects of the project that are objected to, to identify specific issues related to the proposed project, and to suggest remedies which would resolve the objection (36 CFR 218.7(b)).

If an objection is received on this project, the Reviewing Officer and objector may meet and/or converse by telephone to discuss issues identified in the objection and potential resolution. The Reviewing Officer has the discretion to determine whether or not adequate time remains in the review period to make a meeting with the objector practical. These meetings would take place soon after the closing date for filing an objection. All meetings are open to the public. If you are interested in attending any resolution discussions, please contact the Responsible Official or monitor the following website for postings about current objections in the Northern Region of the Forest Service:
http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/projects/appeal_index.shtml.

I appreciate your time and comments you have already provided on this project. If you have any questions concerning this project, please feel free to contact Keith Soderstrom, Project Team Leader, Swan Lake Ranger District, 200 Ranger Station Road, Bigfork, MT 59911 or calling (406) 837-7510.

Sincerely,

/s/ Cathy Barbouletos
CATHY BARBOULETOS
Forest Supervisor

Enclosure