



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Hungry Horse and Glacier View  
Ranger Districts  
(406) 387-3800  
Fax (406) 387-3889

10 Hungry Horse Drive  
P.O. Box 190340  
Hungry Horse, MT 59919

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**Date:** March 5, 2009

The enclosed materials are intended to provide you with an update on the progress of the Middle Fork Fuels Reduction Project. As you may already be aware, the Forest Service has been collaborating with interested parties concerning a potential fuel reduction project on National Forest System lands near the Middle Fork Flathead River. The proposed project area extends along the Middle Fork corridor from Moccasin Creek to near Marias Pass (refer to enclosed map). Most of you received a letter and map of broad possible treatment zones this past November, which invited your comments in the early planning of this project. We also held an open house at the Izaak Walton Inn in November, which many of you attended. Based on your input and on our further assessment of the project area, we have identified specific treatment sites. These potential treatment sites are described in the attached documents and displayed on the enclosed map. We now invite your specific comments or concerns on this Middle Fork Fuels Reduction Project Proposed Action.

Our collaborative efforts resulted in valuable input from many people. Generally, comments were supportive of the need for fuels reduction in this area, however there were many concerns raised as well. Some of these included a desire for no new roads, no prescribed burning, leaving down and dead wood in place, adding more treatment units, avoiding treatment near water wells, not treating in old growth forests, and concerns over degradation of wildlife habitat. Comments received during collaboration will continue to be considered throughout the planning process, along with any additional comments we receive on this proposed action.

The location and design of the proposed treatment units represents a refinement of the broad areas under consideration for treatment shown on the map sent in November. This refined proposal resulted from additional field assessment of terrain, access, and forest stand conditions; evaluation of your comments and concerns; and our attempt to balance the sometimes conflicting resource and social interests. Some new areas have been added for treatment, based primarily on input from landowners, and some areas have been removed, based on resource concerns or a limited need for treatment.

Your comments about the proposed actions are very important because they will help the planning team (a group comprised of specialists from many natural resource disciplines) identify issues of concern. These issues could lead to a determination of the level of analysis needed and the development of alternatives to the Proposed Action. So that your input may be included in our analysis, please provide specific **written comments addressing the proposed action by April 10, 2009**. Specific written comments are defined as those which are within the scope, are explicit to, and have a direct relationship to the Proposed Action, and include supporting reasons that the responsible official should consider in reaching a decision. If you cite literature in your comments, please provide us with a complete bibliography or a copy of the referenced materials if they are not commonly available. Attached documents must be submitted in MS Word (\*.doc), rich text format (\*.rtf), portable document format (\*.pdf) or Word Perfect format. Comments received will be available for public inspection and will be considered part of the public record (this includes the name and address of the sender).

Please address your comments to Project Leader James Barnett at the above address or fax number. To submit comments electronically, please send to: [comments-northern-flathead-hungry-horse-glacier-view@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-northern-flathead-hungry-horse-glacier-view@fs.fed.us). Hand-delivered comments should be taken to the ranger station office between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday (excluding holidays). To obtain additional information about this project, please contact James at (406) 387-3805. The Flathead National Forest internet site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/flathead/nepa/nepa.htm> may also be accessed for this project information.



If you would like to receive future mailings about this project, please either send us your comments or contact us to let us know that you would like to remain on our mailing list. Thank you for your continuing interest and involvement in this project and please feel free to share this letter with other interested parties.

Sincerely,

JIMMY J. DEHERRERA  
District Ranger  
Enclosure