

# MOOSE POST-FIRE PROJECT

## *Final Environmental Impact Statement*

Flathead National Forest  
Glacier View Ranger District  
Flathead County, Montana

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**Lead Agency:**

USDA Forest Service

**Responsible Official:**

Cathy Barbouletos, Forest Supervisor  
Flathead National Forest

**For Further Information, Contact:**

Jimmy DeHerrera, District Ranger  
Hungry Horse/Glacier View Ranger Districts  
P.O. Box 190340  
Hungry Horse, MT 59919  
(406) 387-3800

**Abstract:** The 2001 Moose Fire affected approximately 35,000 acres within the Flathead National Forest. This environmental impact statement discloses the environmental effects of various activities proposed to decrease potential mortality from bark beetles to remaining live Douglas-fir and spruce trees within and outside the Moose Fire area; recover merchantable wood fiber; and reduce future fire risk in the fire area. Five alternatives were identified and analyzed, including a "no action" alternative (Alternative 1). Five additional alternatives were developed but not given detailed study. The range of alternatives defines the significant issues by highlighting different ways to respond to each issue. Activities in each alternative include salvage harvest, beetle controls, and fuels treatments. Also, each alternative includes road management changes to help address Flathead National Forest Plan standards.

**Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative.** No new activities would be initiated at this time.

**Alternative 2 (Proposed Action)** - Activities include: salvage of dead and dying trees on 2428 acres, including 151 acres in inventoried roadless areas and 15 acres within the Wild and Scenic River corridor; alternative beetle control treatments (non-salvage) on about 272 acres, mostly within riparian areas; fuels treatments on approximately 208 acres along private lands and Forest Service administrative sites; wheeled motorized access restrictions on 21 miles of open road; and 57 miles of road decommissioning. All stream-aligned culverts on decommissioned roads would be removed.

**Alternative 3 (Preferred)** – Activities include: salvage of 2266 acres, excluding inventoried roadless areas but including 15 acres in the Wild and Scenic River corridor (North Fork Flathead River); alternative beetle control treatments (non-salvage) on about 272 acres; fuels treatments on 208 acres; wheeled motorized access restrictions on 11 miles of open road; and 56 miles of road decommissioning. This alternative seasonally reopens a part of Big Creek Road #316 previously restricted yearlong to wheeled motorized use, and it seasonally restricts wheeled motorized use on two roads during spring hunting season. This alternative would require Forest Plan site-specific amendments. The Forest Plan would be amended to change open road density and security core standards to 29% and 63%, respectively, within the Werner Creek grizzly bear subunit. In addition, the Forest Plan would be amended to allow 10 specific stream-aligned culverts to remain in place on Road 316E and its adjoining roads, the upper portions on Road 315, and Road 1692, and still be considered a decommissioned road.

**Alternative 4** – Activities include: salvage on 1793 acres, excluding inventoried roadless areas and the Wild and Scenic River corridor alternative beetle control treatments (non-salvage) on 281 acres; fuels treatments on 189 acres; wheeled motorized access restrictions to 25 miles of open road; and 87 miles of road decommissioning. All stream-aligned culverts on decommissioned roads would be removed. This alternative constructs no temporary roads, seasonally closes the majority of the Big Creek drainage during spring hunting season, increases the number of snags and downed woody material, and allows no winter logging.

**Alternative 5** – All salvage, beetle control, and fuels treatments are the same as Alternative 2. This alternative would restrict wheeled motorized access yearlong on the Hallowat Road #315 and the Moose Lake Road #5207, which allows Road #316 to be open for part of the year. Access to Moose Lake would be converted to a 9.3-mile trail, and the campground would be removed. Approximately 21 miles of open road would be restricted to wheeled motorized access and 56 miles of road would be decommissioned. All stream-aligned culverts on decommissioned roads would be removed.