



File Code: 1950

Date: May 8, 2008

Cathy Barbouletos, Flathead National Forest Supervisor, signed the Decision Notice (DN) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Red Whale Project today. The project area is located in the North Fork Flathead River drainage on the Glacier View Ranger District, Flathead National Forest. Management activities will occur on National Forest System lands, generally between Moran Creek (just south of Polebridge) north to Whale Creek (approximately 10 miles south of the Canadian border.)

This Decision allows for the mechanical treatment of fuels to reduce the intensity and severity of future wildland fires, improves wildlife habitat and security, and provides access to state owned land near Polebridge. The Decision includes components of each action alternative presented in the Red Whale Project Environmental Assessment (EA), with every unit considered individually prior to being retained, dropped, or changed. Complete descriptions of current stand conditions, proposed vegetation treatments, and proposed prescribed burning treatments can be found in the Red Whale EA. The following activities are allowed in this Decision.

- Mechanical fuels reduction (thinning and patch seedtree treatments) will occur on approximately 2,807 acres intended to reduce the intensity and severity of future wildfires.
- To improve wildlife habitat diversity and forage abundance, prescribed burning will occur on approximately 1,114 acres.
- Wildlife security will be improved through motorized use changes in the Red Meadow Moose and Hay Creek grizzly bear subunits. Approximately 8.1 miles of currently open roads (primarily Hay Creek and Moran Creek Roads) will be open seasonally from July 1 through November 30 and about 0.5 miles of Moran Creek Road will be bermed. Approximately 23.6 miles of currently open motorized use trails will be closed to wheeled motorized vehicles.
- Approximately 0.3 miles of new permanent road will be constructed to provide access across National Forest System land to state land northwest of Polebridge.
- About 338 acres will be planted, primarily with western larch and Douglas-fir.
- Removal of approximately 4.5 million board feet (mmbf) of sawlogs and approximately 2-3 mmbf of other smaller diameter materials for firewood, post/poles, and other biomass.

This Decision is based on information contained in the Red Whale Project EA, the supporting information in the Project File, and on comments received from members of the public and other agencies during the public involvement phase of the project and the 30-day comment period that followed publication of the EA. The response to public comments is contained in Appendix C of the Red Whale Decision Notice.



If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to receive a copy of the Red Whale Project Decision Notice, please contact District Ranger Jimmy DeHerrera (406-387-3800) or Planning Team Leader Michele Draggoo (406-387-3827), you may also write to the above address. Thank you for your interest and involvement with the Red Whale Project.

Sincerely,

JIMMY DEHERRERA
District Ranger