



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Tally Lake
Ranger District

1335 Highway 93 West
Whitefish, MT 59937
(406) 863-5400
Fax (406) 863-5437

File Code: 1950

Date: August 11, 2006

Dear Citizen,

Thank you for your interest in the Valley Face Fuels Reduction Project. Collaboration with the public has been integral to the development of this proposal and I appreciate the many comments we received regarding the design of the project. The Valley Face Project is designed to provide a safer environment for firefighters and the public by reducing the potential for a severe crown fire to occur and improving the health of forest vegetative communities within the treatment areas. This project is also consistent with and contributes towards the implementation of the *Flathead County Community Wildfire Fuels Reduction/Mitigation Plan*, a community-developed plan.

I have enclosed a copy of the Valley Face Fuels Reduction Environmental Assessment (EA). The Preferred Alternative (Alternative C) was developed in response to issues raised by members of the public and resource specialists on my staff. Alternative C would reduce hazardous fuels and improve forest health on approximately 3,354 acres on the Tally Lake Ranger District, Flathead National Forest. Specific actions include approximately 2,225 acres of mechanized vegetation treatments and 1,129 acres of non-mechanized vegetation treatments. Approximately 3.5 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 40 miles of National Forest System roads.

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 Valley Face Fuels Reduction 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 "Valley Face 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 (36 CFR 218.6). The publication date of this legal notice in the *Daily Inter Lake* 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 12, 2006. 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 me or Bryan Donner, Tally Lake Ranger District, 1335 Hwy 93 West, Whitefish, MT 59937, or calling (406) 863-5400.

Sincerely,



LISA A. KRUEGER
District Ranger