
Bozeman Ranger District News Release



For Immediate Release
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Bozeman Municipal Watershed Draft EIS Available

Bozeman, MT... The Bozeman Municipal Watershed (BMW) Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is available Friday, August 31 for public review. Comments on the Draft EIS should be received by October 31, 2007.

The purpose of the BMW project is to begin reducing the potential of a severe and extensive wildfire on national forest system lands in order to help maintain a high quality, predictable water supply for Bozeman. The Forest is working closely with the City of Bozeman to begin addressing the four main objectives of the project:

1. Implement vegetation management projects to begin reducing the severity and extent of wildland fires in the Bozeman and Hyalite Municipal Watershed;
2. Focus treatments on reducing the risk of excess sediment and ash reaching the municipal water treatment plant in the event of a severe wildland fire;
3. Provide for firefighter and public safety by beginning to modify potential fire behavior; and
4. Manage the fuels in the wildland urban interface area to reduce the potential of fire spread and intensity between national forest system lands and adjacent private lands.

“The Forest must take steps to address the heavy fuels in the area in order to reduce the threat of sediment or ash impacting the water system, re-introduce fire onto the landscape, and ensure the safety of firefighters and the public,” said Lisa Stoeffler, Acting Forest Supervisor. “We are working closely with the City of Bozeman to develop a strategy to accomplish the project’s objectives on the national forest and city owned lands in these watersheds.”

“The municipal water supply comes primarily from these watersheds and the City of Bozeman shares a role with the Forest Service in ensuring the long-term quality and quantity of water for city residents,” said Debbie Arkell, Director of Public Service for the City of Bozeman. “Watershed Protection Studies completed for the city in 2001 and 2004 note the importance of fuels reduction in the watershed. The City of Bozeman concurs with the municipal watershed project as a step in reducing the potential severity and extent of future wildland fires in the watershed.”

The BMW project area encompasses approximately the lower one third of Bozeman Creek and Hyalite Creek drainages, just south of the Bozeman. The Draft EIS identifies Alternative 5 as the preferred alternative which proposes to treat over 5,000 acres utilizing various fuel reduction methods.

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3710 Fallon Street, Suite C, Bozeman, MT 59718
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin>

BMW Draft EIS documents can be picked up at the following locations:

- Bozeman Ranger District, 3710 Fallon Street, Suite C., Bozeman, MT
- Gallatin National Forest Supervisor's Office, 10 East Babcock, Bozeman, MT.

You can request a hard copy or CD of the Draft EIS by calling (406) 522-2520 or (406) 587-6701. Documents are also available on the Gallatin National Forest web site at http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin/?page=projects/bozeman_watershed . Comments may be submitted electronically at comments-northern-gallatin@fs.fed.us and must be in MS Word, Word Perfect or RTF format. Please indicate BMW Fuels Reduction in the subject line. Written comments should be sent to Gallatin National Forest, P.O. Box 130, Bozeman, MT 59771, attn: Jim Devitt.

The Forest and City of Bozeman have scheduled an open house and a field tour opportunity for those interested in learning more about this project. Depending on interest, additional field tours may be scheduled at a later date.

- BMW Project Draft EIS open house: September 25, Bozeman Public Library, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.
- BMW Project Field Tour #1: October 2, meet at the Bozeman Ranger District office (3710 Fallon St., Suite C), 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. Please RSVP to Jim Devitt by September 25 at (406) 587-6749 or jdevitt@fs.fed.us

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