



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Gallatin National Forest

Supervisor's Office  
10 East Babcock  
P.O. Box 130  
Bozeman, MT 59771

File Code: 1950-3

Date:

Dear Interested Party:

### REQUEST FOR REVIEW AND COMMENT

Enclosed is a copy of the Main Boulder Fuels Reduction Project Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for your review and comment. The Main Boulder Fuels Reduction DSEIS incorporates by reference the entire Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), supplementing the northern goshawk analysis by replacing pages 3-80 and 3-81 of the FEIS and includes an amended Biological Evaluation.

The January 2005 Record of Decision for the Main Boulder Fuels Reduction Project was reversed by the Regional Office due to discrepancies between the northern goshawk analyses and determinations in the FEIS and the Biological Evaluation. As a previous commenter, you are being given an opportunity to comment on this DSEIS.

The Main Boulder EIS addresses the effects of implementing a hazardous fuel reduction project on up to 2500 acres on National Forest System lands outside of the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness in the wildland/urban interface areas along the Main Boulder River Corridor. The project area is adjacent to the Boulder River, encompassing a distance of approximately 24 miles by  $\square$  mile and is located approximately 30 miles southwest of Big Timber, Montana on the Big Timber Ranger District of the Gallatin National Forest. The legal description for the project is T3S R12E, T4S R12E, T5S R12E, and T6S R12E P.M, Sweetgrass and Park Counties, MT.

The EIS analyzes the Proposed Action Alternative and the No Action Alternative, along with 5 other action alternatives considered but dropped from detailed analysis. Based on the analysis presented in the EIS, the preferred alternative is Alternative B, the proposed action, because it best meets the purpose and need for the proposal and addresses the issues considered in the analysis.

We invite your comments on the Main Boulder Fuels Reduction DSEIS, now through the end of the comment period. Per the requirements of (36 CFR 215.5 (b))5, comments will be accepted for a period of 45 days from the date of publication of the Notice of Availability (NOA) in the Federal Register. It is anticipated the NOA will be published on May 6, 2005.

The Responsible official, Gallatin National Forest Supervisor, Rebecca Heath will consider your comments before making a decision on the project. In submitting comments, please provide specific facts along with supporting reasons that you believe should be considered by her in reaching a decision. Please include: (1) Your name, address, telephone number, and organization represented (if applicable); (2) title of the EIS upon which you are commenting; and (3) specific facts or comments, with supporting reasons, that she should consider in reaching a decision. Comments are most helpful when they point out inconsistencies or errors, provide additional information pertinent to the analysis, or provide rationale for support of an alternative. Any changes to the EIS made as a result of public comments will be available



for public review in the Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (SFEIS). A Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (SFEIS) and a new Record of Decision (ROD) will document her decision. Copies of the SFEIS and ROD will be mailed to those individuals or groups that comment on the SFEIS as well as those requesting a copy.

Comments may be submitted in writing, orally, or through electronic means. In order to retain your administrative appeal rights, you must provide substantive written, oral, or electronic comments during the 45-day comment period. A legal notice will be published in the newspaper of record, however, the official comment period begins on the date of publication of the Notice of Availability (NOA) in the Federal Register.

Written comments must be postmarked by the Postal Service, e-mailed, faxed, or otherwise submitted by 11:59 p.m. on the 45<sup>th</sup> calendar day from publication of the NOA in the Federal Register. Hand delivered comments must be time and date imprinted at the correct Responsible Official's office by the close of business on the 45<sup>th</sup> calendar day from publication of the NOA in the Federal Register.

Please address your written comments to:

Barbara Ping, Interdisciplinary Team Leader  
Main Boulder Fuels Reduction Project  
Forest Ecology Group, Bozeman Ranger District  
3710 Fallon Street, Suite C; Bozeman, MT 59718

Oral comments must be provided at the Responsible Official's office during normal business hours via telephone or in person, or if during non-business hours, must be at an official agency function (such as a public meeting), which is designed to elicit public comment.

Business hours are Mon- Fri, 0800-1630

Electronic comments may be submitted to [comments-northern-gallatin@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-northern-gallatin@fs.fed.us). Insert Main Boulder in the subject line. Acceptable formats are MS Word, Word Perfect, or RTF. For electronically mailed comments, the sender should normally receive an automated electronic acknowledgement from the agency as confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive an automated acknowledgement of the receipt of comments, it is the sender's responsibility to ensure timely receipt by other means.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed project and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Parts 215 or 217 (if applicable). Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and to whom the request may be resubmitted with or without name and address within 15 days.

According to 36 CFR 215, for a person to appeal they must meet the following criteria prior to decision: 1) have submitted comments in response to a DEIS subject to review, or 2) have provided comment or otherwise expressed interest in a particular proposed action by the close of the comment period. If you

have not previously shown interest in this project, you must show interest by the end of the 45-day comment period to ensure your ability to challenge any Forest Service decisions regarding this proposal.

The DSEIS and original FEIS, complete with maps displaying the alternatives and activities proposed are also available for viewing and downloading on the Gallatin NF website at: **<http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin>**.

To request an additional paper copy of the DSEIS contact Barbara Ping by phone at (406) 522-2558, or by mail at Forest Ecology Group; 3710 Fallon Street, Suite C; Bozeman, MT 59718. or by email to Barbara Ping at [bping@fs.fed.us](mailto:bping@fs.fed.us). Paper copies are also available at the Big Timber Ranger District Office.

If you have additional questions regarding this project, please direct them to project leaders Barbara Ping at the above address, phone (406) 522-2558 or Brent Foster at the Big Timber District Office, phone (406) 932-5155.

Sincerely,

/s/ Rebecca Heath  
REBECCA HEATH  
Forest Supervisor

cc: William Avey, Steve Christiansen