



News Release

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Forest Service
Lewis and Clark National Forest
P.O. Box 869
Great Falls, MT 59403-0869

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Contact: Jess Secrest
(406) 547-3361

PUBLIC COMMENT SOUGHT ON FUELS REDUCTION PROJECT

The Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management are seeking public comment on a fuels reduction proposal in the Mass and Geis Creek drainages in the Little Belt Mountains, Lewis and Clark National Forest, approximately 15 miles northeast of White Sulphur Springs. The proposed project covers National Forest System and Bureau of Land Management lands, as well as private lands owned by two adjacent land owners who are interested in having fuels reduced on their properties.

Existing timber stand conditions in this area are unhealthy and hazardous because of a mountain pine beetle outbreak and accumulations of down and dying flammable fuels near private lands with structures. The project proposal consists of approximately 4,400 acres of vegetation and fuels reduction treatments such as regeneration harvesting in lodgepole pine-dominated stands with mountain pine beetle infestation and mortality. Commercial thinning and prescribed burning in predominately Douglas fir stands to remove down woody fuel accumulations, undesirable dead, dying and green trees, and excess juniper are also proposed. The resulting forested stands will be composed of young lodgepole pine and the largest diameter ponderosa pine and Douglas fir. Also, tree removal will create openings in the forest canopy, thus reducing the probability of crown fires or high severity ground fires moving onto adjoining private and National Forest System lands.

Concentrations of hazardous fuels created within the project area will be machine or hand piled and burned under suitable weather and smoke dispersal conditions. Under-burning will be conducted to further reduce common juniper and fine fuels within the stands, as necessary. This project will require about 5.4 miles of temporary road construction and five miles of new road construction.

Send comments to the White Sulphur Springs Ranger District, PO Box A, White Sulphur Springs, MT, 59645 or email: comments-northern-lewisclark-white-sulphur-sprg@fs.fed.us by **January 19, 2007**. For more information, call Jess Secrest at (406) 547-3361.

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