



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Lewis and Clark
National Forest
White Sulphur Springs
Ranger District

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File Code: 1950

Date: December 15, 2006

Dear Forest Friend,

The White Sulphur Springs Ranger District in conjunction with the Bureau of Land Management will be analyzing the effects of a fuels reduction project in the Mass and Geis Creek drainages in the Little Belt Mountains. Existing timber stand conditions in this area are not desirable from a forest health or social perspective due to a mountain pine beetle outbreak as well as a measurable amount of down and dying hazardous fuels near private lands that contain structures.

The project area includes treatments on 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. The project area is within T11N, R7E, Sections 13, 14, 23-26, 35, 36, T11N, R8E, Sections 3, 4, 8-32, and T11N, R9E, Sections 7, 8, 17, 18-21, 29, 30, approximately 15 miles northeast of White Sulphur Springs. The total project area includes approximately 17,600 acres with proposed treatments on approximately 25% of the area. The project will require about 5.4 miles of temporary road construction and 5.0 miles of new road construction. It is anticipated this project will be implemented during the field season of 2008. A map has been enclosed to display the area under analysis and the proposed activities within it.

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 with the objective to remove down woody fuel accumulations, undesirable dead, dying, and green trees, and excess juniper. Resulting forested stands would be composed of young lodgepole pine, and the largest-diameter ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir.



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, if necessary.

Through this project, tree removal will create openings in the forest canopy with the intent to reduce the probability of crown fires or high severity ground fires moving onto adjoining private and National Forest System lands.

At this time, I am interested in knowing if you have any comments, concerns, or questions associated with the Mass Geis project proposal or the area in which the project analysis will occur. If you do have comments, concerns, or questions, please contact Jess Secrest at (406)-547-3361 or email: comments-northern-lewisclark-white-sulphur-sprg@fs.fed.us. Please mail all written comments to the White Sulphur Springs Ranger District, P.O. Box A, White Sulphur Springs, MT, 59645, by January 19, 2007.

I appreciate your interest in activities occurring on the White Sulphur Ranger District.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jess Secrest
Acting District Ranger

for TIMOTHY J. BENEDICT
District Ranger

Attachment: Mass Geis Fuels Reduction Project Proposal Map