



Forest Service

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News Release



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Flathead National Forest Seeks Comments on the Trail Creek Fire Salvage Project Community Invited to Open House

Kalispell, MT., January 26, 2016 – The Spotted Bear Ranger District of the Flathead National Forest is requesting input on the proposed Trail Creek Fire Salvage Project. The proposed project is available for review and public comment through February 11, 2016. The district is hosting an open house on Tuesday, February 2 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Hungry Horse Ranger Station, 10 Hungry Horse Drive in Hungry Horse, to share information on the project and invite public comment.

Started by lightning last August, the Trail Creek Fire impacted 21,456 acres on the Spotted Bear Ranger District, located about two miles northeast of the ranger station. The project area covers about 14,435 acres within the fire area outside the Great Bear Wilderness.

The project would serve multiple purposes, including the timely recovering of merchantable wood fiber affected by the Trail Creek Fire; planting of desired tree and shrub species in burned areas to improve deer and elk winter habitat; preventing the creation of a fish barrier resulting from increased stream flows; and for visitor and worker safety, removing hazardous trees along roads and trails and in developed recreation sites. The proposed action also includes amending the Flathead National Forest Plan to allow up to three 30 day administrative use entries into grizzly bear core habitat.

Proposed project activities include the harvest of 1,351 acres of burned and dead trees; the construction of new and temporary roads and the maintenance and repair of existing roads; the temporary closure of an existing road to vehicle and snowmobile use during log hauling operations; the removal of one culvert; and planting up to 3,000 acres of conifer trees and 500 acres of trees and shrubs in areas burned by the Trail Creek Fire.

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An Emergency Situation Determination (ESD) is being requested for the proposed project. If approved the ESD would grant immediate implementation of the project, necessary to avoid hazards that threaten human safety or avoid economic loss that would prevent the agency from moving forward with actions to protect or restore natural resources. If the determination status is approved the proposed action would not be subject to the project objection process.

Comments on the project are requested by February 11, 2016, so that input may be included in the analysis. Comments will help the planning team develop a list of issues, which may in turn lead to the development of alternatives to the proposed action.

Written, hand-delivered, and oral comments can be delivered to Project Leader Matt Shaffer at 650 Wolfpack Way, Kalispell, MT 59901; by fax (406)758-5367; or by phone at (406)758-5204. Please submit electronic comments to comments-northern-flathead-spotted-bear@fs.fed.us with the project name in the subject line.

For additional information on the Trail Creek Salvage Project, visit the Flathead National Forest website at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/flathead/projects>, or contact the Project Leader, Matt Shaffer, at (406) 758-5204.

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