



File Code: 1950 / 2080 / 2150

Date: November 2, 2006

Dear Forest User,

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision for the Custer National Forest Weed Management project are enclosed. The FEIS discloses the environmental impacts of annual treatments of approximately 1,500 net acres of noxious weeds on the Custer National Forest within about 14,000 mapped gross acres of infestations. The FEIS evaluates a reasonable course of action given new problems, options and opportunities to combat noxious weeds and other undesirable plants. Existing decisions do not provide the Forest with the ability to be more effective in treating increasing weed infestations. Noxious weeds are reducing ecological productivity, spreading to nearby non-infested lands, and increasing the economic burden on private landowners and state / federal taxpayers.

Three alternatives were developed to address issues and meet the purpose and need for the update. Alternative 1 includes all integrated pest management methods used for existing weed control, use of new herbicides, herbicide use within the Absaroka- Beartooth Wilderness Area, and aerial application of herbicides outside of Wilderness. Alternative 2 includes all integrated pest management methods, but without the use of herbicides. Alternative 3 takes no action to change the current integrated pest management including ground based herbicide treatment with only four herbicide choices, and no herbicide use within the A-B Wilderness Area. The selected alternative is Alternative 1.

The Custer National Forest Weed Management FEIS is available on-line on at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/custer> . To request a paper or CD copy of the Final EIS, the Executive Summary, or for additional information contact Kim Reid by phone at 406-657-6205 x233, or by mail at 1310 Main Street, Billings, MT 59105.

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.11. Only individuals or organizations that submitted substantive comments during the comment period may appeal. A written appeal must be submitted within 45 days following the publication date of the legal notice of this decision in the Billings Gazette, Billings, Montana or Rapid City Journal, Rapid City, South Dakota. It is the responsibility of the appellant to ensure their appeal is received in a timely manner. The publication date of the legal notice of the decision in the newspaper of record is the *exclusive* means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Appellants should not rely on date or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Paper appeals must be submitted to: USDA Forest Service, Northern Region, ATTN: Appeal Deciding Officer, P.O. Box 7669, Missoula, MT 59807; or USDA Forest Service, Northern Region, ATTN: Appeal Deciding Officer, 200 East Broadway, Missoula, MT 59802. Office hours: 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Fax (406) 329- 3411.

Electronic appeals must be submitted to: appeals-northern-regional-office@fs.fed.us . In electronic appeals, the subject line should contain the name of the project being appealed. An automated response will confirm your electronic appeal has been received. Electronic appeals must be submitted in MS Word, Word Perfect, or Rich Text Format (RTF).

It is the appellant's responsibility to provide sufficient project- or activity-specific evidence and rationale, focusing on the decision, to show why the decision should be reversed. The appeal must be filed with the Appeal Deciding Officer in writing. At a minimum, the appeal must meet the content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14, and include the following information: the appellant's name and address, with a telephone number, if available; a signature, or other verification of authorship upon request (a scanned signature for electronic mail may be filed with the appeal); when multiple names are listed on an appeal, identification of the lead appellant and verification of the identity of the lead appellant upon request; the name of the project or activity for which the decision was made, the name and title of the Responsible Official, and the date of the decision; the regulation under which the appeal is being filed, when there is an option to appeal under either 36 CFR 215 or



36 CFR 251, subpart C; any specific change(s) in the decision that the appellant seeks and rationale for those changes; any portion(s) of the decision with which the appellant disagrees, and explanation for the disagreement; why the appellant believes the Responsible Official's decision failed to consider the substantive comments; and, how the appellant believes the decision specifically violates law, regulation, or policy.

If an appeal is received on this project there may be informal resolution meetings and/or conference calls between the Responsible Official and the appellant. These discussions would take place within 15 days after the closing date for filing an appeal. All such meetings are open to the public. If you are interested in attending any informal resolution discussions, please contact the Responsible Official or monitor the following website for postings about current appeals in the Northern Region of the Forest Service:
http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/projects/appeal_index.shtml.

If no appeal is received, implementation of this decision may occur on, but not before, five business days from the close of the appeal filing period. If an appeal is received, implementation may not occur for 15 days following the date of appeal disposition.

Thank you for your interest in the management of the Custer National Forest.

/s/ Nancy T. Curriden

Sincerely,

NANCY T. CURRIDEN
Forest Supervisor

Enclosure