



Flathead National Forest

650 Wolfpack Way
Kalispell, MT 59901

Web: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/flathead>

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News Release

Media Contact: Janette Turk
(406) 758-5252
jturk@fs.fed.us



Draft Decision Notice Released for Beaver Creek Landscape Restoration Project

BIGFORK, MT – August 17, 2016 – The Swan Lake Ranger District of the Flathead National Forest has released the *Draft* Decision Notice for the Beaver Creek Landscape Restoration Project. The Beaver Creek Project is located approximately nine miles south of Condon and is bordered by Lindbergh Lake and the Mission Mountains Wilderness Area to the west, the Swan River to the north, State Highway 83 to the east and the Lolo National Forest to the south.

After working with the public over the course of four years to develop the project and modify the proposal based on public feedback, District Ranger Rich Kehr believes that the Selected Alternative finds a balance between treating forest stands to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire while protecting and improving fish and wildlife habitat conditions. “We used the input we received from the public on the proposed action, conversations we had with the public on field trips and at meetings, and the public comments received on the two Alternatives presented in the Environmental Assessment to craft our Selected Alternative,” Kehr said.

The Selected Alternative combines elements of both Alternative 2 and 3, as analyzed in the Beaver Creek Environmental Assessment. Under the Selected Alternative, approximately 4,530 acres of vegetation restoration activities would take place. These include both timber harvest that could produce a commercial product, while achieving restoration objectives, and non-commercial activities such as prescribed burning, pre-commercial thinning, planting, and daylighting activities to improve forest health and reduce hazardous fuels in the Wildland Urban Interface. The project also includes aquatic restoration activities to protect native fish species such as genetically pure cutthroat trout populations and improve passage for other native aquatic organisms.

To conduct harvest activities, the forest will construct approximately 5.5 miles of temporary roads that will be rehabilitated following project activities. The Selected Alternative also includes 12.6 miles of road storage and 4.5 miles of road decommissioning on roads that are already closed to motorized traffic in the project area.

The Selected Alternative includes a Forest Plan Amendment to assign management area direction to approximately 5,457 acres former Plum Creek Timber Company lands that the Forest Service has acquired in the past 15 years.

With the release of the Draft Decision Notice, the project enters into a 45 day objection process where individuals who previously provided comment on the project may object to the activities included in the Selected Alternative. The Draft DN/FONSI can be found on the web at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=43968>, where members of the public can also find information about how to file a formal objection to the project.

For more information, please contact the Swan Lake Ranger District at (406) 837-7500.

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