

# Forest Health and Timber Harvest

## Helena and Lewis & Clark National Forests, Forest Plan Revision

### Overview

Forest structure and composition are influenced by many drivers and stressors including climate, insects, diseases, wildfire, and human activities. The HLC has been recently impacted by a wide-scale bark beetle outbreak. Timber harvested on HLC NFs lands provides a variety of wood products, and is used as a tool used not only to provide products and contribute to the local economy but also to achieve multiple resource objectives.



### What's Changed Since 1986?

- Average yearly timber product volume sold has generally declined by decade.
- The recent bark beetle outbreak has changed the availability of timber products.
- The recession from 2007-2009, the related financial crises, the housing collapse, and low prices for lumber have affected the forest products industry.
- Vegetation conditions and the role of timber harvest in meeting ecosystem management and social/economic objectives have changed.
- Inventoried Roadless Areas have been designated, limiting harvest opportunities.



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### What Needs to Change in the Forest Plan?

- Update timber production estimates and associated components to be based on the best available vegetation data and modeling tools.
- Determine the suitability of lands for timber production based on current information and land designations.
- Update desired vegetation conditions based on current data and best available science with an enhanced consideration of how natural processes and future climates will influence resiliency.
- Adjust plan components as appropriate based on an understanding of the natural range of variation to ensure the plan provides for ecological sustainability.
- Update plan components to reflect the best available science and policy regarding hazard and risk from forest insects and diseases as informed by the natural range of variation and expected future conditions.

