

60-Day Opportunity to Object USDA FOREST SERVICE Flathead, Helena-Lewis and Clark, Kootenai, and Lolo National Forests

As directed by the National Forest Management Act, the USDA Forest Service is revising the Flathead National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan (forest plan). The Forest Service is concurrently amending the forest plans of the Helena-Lewis and Clark, Kootenai, and Lolo National Forests to incorporate habitat management direction for the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) grizzly bear population. The Flathead National Forest is incorporating the NCDE grizzly bear habitat management direction as part of its plan revision process. The Forest Service has prepared a single final environmental impact statement for its revised forest plan and the forest plan amendments, a draft record of decision for the revised forest plan, and a draft record of decision for the forest plan amendments.

This notice is to inform the public that a 60-day period is being initiated when individuals or entities with specific concerns related to the Flathead National Forest's revised land management plan, the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy forest plan amendments for the Helena-Lewis and Clark, Kootenai, and Lolo National Forests, or the associated final environmental impact statement may file objections for Forest Service review prior to the approval of the revised land management plan and the forest plan amendments. This is also an opportunity to object to the Regional Forester's list of species of conservation concern for the Flathead National Forest.

The final environmental impact statement, Flathead National Forest revised forest plan, other supporting documentation, and the draft records of decision are available for review starting December 14, 2017, on the Flathead National Forest's plan revision webpage: www.fs.usda.gov/goto/flathead/fpr; on the forest plan amendments webpage: www.fs.usda.gov/goto/flathead/gba

www.fs.usda.gov/goto/flathead/gba amend and on the USDA Forest Service Northern Region's species of conservation concern webpage: <http://bit.ly/NorthernRegion-SCC>. The documents can also be reviewed at the following offices: Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest Supervisor's Office, 2880 Skyway Drive, Helena, MT 59602; Kootenai National Forest Supervisor's Office, 31374 U.S. Highway 2, Libby, MT 59923; and Lolo National Forest Supervisor's Office, 24 Fort Missoula Road, Missoula MT 59804.

ADDRESSES: The following address should be used for objections submitted by regular mail, private carrier, or hand delivery: Objection Reviewing Officer, USDA Forest Service, Northern Region, 26 Fort Missoula Road, Missoula, MT 59804. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding Federal holidays. Please specify whether the objection is related to the Flathead forest plan, the NCDE grizzly bear forest plan amendments, or the Flathead's list of species of conservation concern.

Objections can be faxed to the objection reviewing officer at (406) 329-3411. The fax coversheet must include a subject line with "Flathead Forest Plan Objection," "NCDE Grizzly Bear Forest Plan Amendments Objection," or "Flathead Species of Conservation Concern Objection" and should specify the number of pages being submitted. Electronic objections must be submitted to the objection reviewing officer via email to appeals-northern-regional-office@fs.fed.us, with "Flathead Forest Plan Objection," "NCDE Grizzly Bear Forest Plan Amendments," or "Flathead Species of Conservation Concern" in the subject line. Electronic submissions must be submitted in a format that is readable with optical character recognition software (e.g., Word, PDF, Rich Text) and must be searchable. An automated response will confirm that your electronic objection has been received.

Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The decisions to approve the revised forest plan for the Flathead National Forest, the NCDE grizzly bear forest plan amendments, and the regional forester's list of species of conservation concern will be subject to the objection process identified in 36 CFR Part 219 Subpart B (219.50 to 219.62). An example objection template is available on the websites listed above. An objection must include the following (36 CFR 219.54(c)): (1) The objector's name and address along with a telephone number or email address if available. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to an objection, the Forest Service will attempt to verify the identity of the objector to confirm objection eligibility; (2) Signature or other verification of authorship upon request (a scanned signature for electronic mail may be filed with the objection); (3) Identification of the lead objector, when multiple names are listed on an objection. The Forest Service will communicate to all parties to an objection through the lead objector. Verification of the identity of the lead objector must also be provided if requested; (4) The name of the plan revision, forest plan amendment, or list of species of conservation concern being objected to and the name and title of the responsible official; (5) A statement of the issues and/or parts of the plan revision to which the objection applies; (6) A concise statement explaining the objection and suggesting how the proposed plan decision may be improved. If the objector believes that the plan revision is inconsistent with law, regulation, or policy, an explanation should be included; (7) A statement that demonstrates the link between the objector's prior substantive formal comments and the content of the objection, unless the objection concerns an issue that arose after the opportunities for formal comment; and (8) All documents referenced in the objection (a bibliography is not sufficient), except that the following need not be provided: a. All or any part of a Federal law or regulation, b. Forest Service Directive System documents and land management plans or other published Forest Service documents, c. Documents referenced by the Forest Service in the planning documentation related to the proposal subject to objection, and d. Formal comments previously provided to the Forest Service by the objector during the plan revision comment period.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS: The responsible official who will approve the record of decision for the Flathead National Forest revised forest plan is Chip Weber, Forest Supervisor of the Flathead National Forest, 650 Wolfpack Way, Kalispell, MT 59901, (406) 758-5208. The responsible officials who will approve the record of decision for the amendments are William Avey, Forest Supervisor for the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest Supervisor's Office, 2880 Skyway Drive, Helena, MT 59602, (406) 449-5201; Christopher S. Savage, Forest Supervisor for the Kootenai National Forest, 31374 U.S. Highway 2, Libby, MT 59923, (406) 293-6211; and Timothy Garcia, Forest Supervisor for the Lolo National Forest, 24 Fort Missoula Road, Missoula MT 59804, (406) 329-3750. The responsible official for the species of conservation concern is Leanne Marten, Regional Forester, Northern Region, 26 Fort Missoula Road, Missoula, MT 59804. The regional forester is the reviewing officer for the revised plan and plan amendments since the forest supervisors are

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the deciding officials (36 CFR 219.56(e)(2)). The Chief of the Forest Service is the reviewing officer for the species of conservation concern identification since the regional forester is the deciding official (36 CFR 219.56(e)(2)). All objections should be sent to the objection reviewing officer for the Northern Region, as indicated above. **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:** Project Leader Joe Krueger, 650 Wolfpack Way, Kalispell, MT 59901, (406) 758-5243.

December 14, 2017
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