



## Flathead National Forest

## Media Release

May 19, 2009

Contact: Denise Germann  
(406) 758-5252  
(406) 249-1714 cell

### **Public Comment Wanted for Travel Analysis of Island Unit Area of Swan Lake District of the Flathead National Forest**

The Swan Lake Ranger District of the Flathead National Forest is seeking public comment to develop a travel analysis for the Island Unit area of the District. The Island Unit is the area of National Forest System lands west of Kalispell surrounding Blacktail and Haskill Mountains. Approximately 46,000 acres of National Forest System land are contained in the analysis area.

In 2008 the Swan Lake District was contemplating the possible addition of motorized all-terrain vehicle (ATV) and off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails in the Island Unit and received informal public input. At this time, the district is starting a travel analysis to meet recent federal direction, as well as to broadly look at opportunities, issues and concerns related to travel management in the Island Unit.

Swan Lake District Ranger Steve Brady said, "The District completed a roads analysis for the Island Unit in 2001 so we are not starting from scratch on a travel analysis for the area." Brady said they will update the existing roads analysis to include trails, in addition to the roads which were originally analyzed in 2001.

Brady said the travel analysis is not a decision document but will help provide the big picture when moving to make site-specific project decisions. Brady said, "When we've completed the broad-based travel analysis for the Island Unit, we plan to move forward with an environmental analysis for specific projects that seem to fit the area as we have time and funding to do so."

Swan Lake District Resource Assistant Andrew Johnson said there are several projects which members of the public have commented they'd like to see in this area. In addition to the motorized trail expansion, there has been interest in the creation of a Foys to Blacktail trail system which would cross National Forest System lands in the Island Unit. There also has been interest from some Lakeside residents regarding a hiking trail from near the community to the top of Blacktail Mountain. Johnson said, "There are likely a lot of different thoughts out there. Public comments will help us understand their travel interests regarding the current and future use of roads and trails in the Island Unit."

The district hopes to complete the travel analysis by mid-summer and is requesting comments by June 22. For more information contact Andrew Johnson at the Swan Lake Ranger District at 406-837-7507.

--END--