

Marshall Woods Restoration Project

Lolo NF, Missoula RD



January 2015

Project Area Overview

- 13,000 acres – 56% is NFS lands
- 34% (4,400 acres) is in non-wilderness portion of Rattlesnake National Recreation Area (NRA)
- Includes 2 sections of acquired lands
- 3,959 acres of proposed treatments - 2,305 acres of this is located in Rattlesnake NRA
- 31 miles of road on NFS lands – about 30 are closed year-long
- 20 miles of system trails
- Valuable area –municipal watershed, dispersed recreation, environmental education, habitat for variety of wildlife

Working Together

- Project area selected by Lolo Restoration Committee (LRC) in 2008
- ID Team and LRC visited in field in May 2009
- Two jointly-hosted open houses in February 2010
- Two public field trips in August 2010
- Scoped proposals in August 2010



Purpose and Need

- **Restore functioning ecosystems by enhancing natural ecological processes**
- **Emulate fire's natural role on the landscape through vegetative treatments including prescribed fire**
- **Provide education opportunities to build support for restoration**
- **Provide for diverse trail-based recreation opportunities and reduce road density in Section 31**

Four Alternatives

Alternative A – No Action

Alternative B – Proposed Action

Alternative C

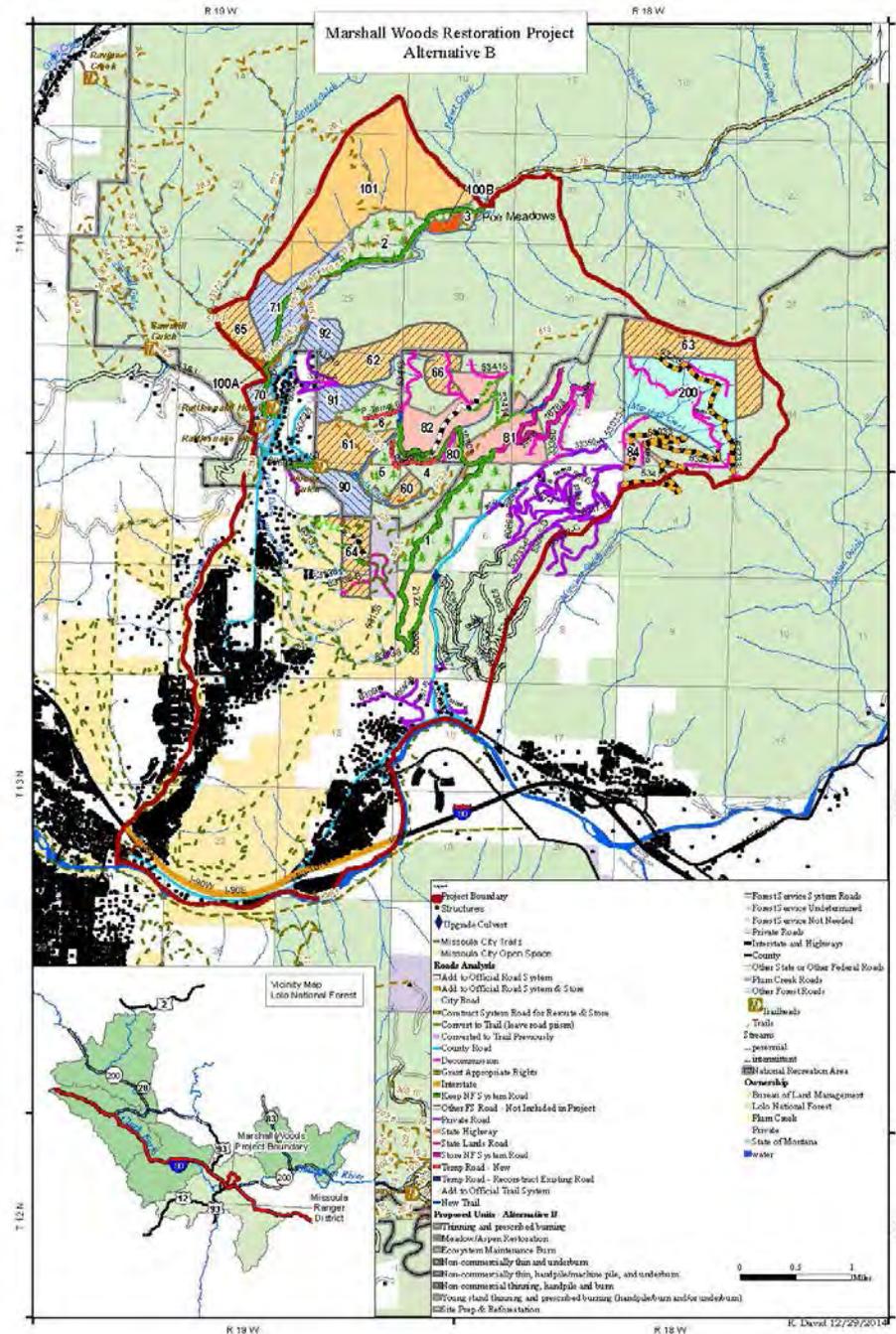
Alternative D

Alternatives B, C, and D Proposed Treatments

- Vegetation Treatments
- Road and Trail Management
- Watershed Improvements
- Weed Treatments

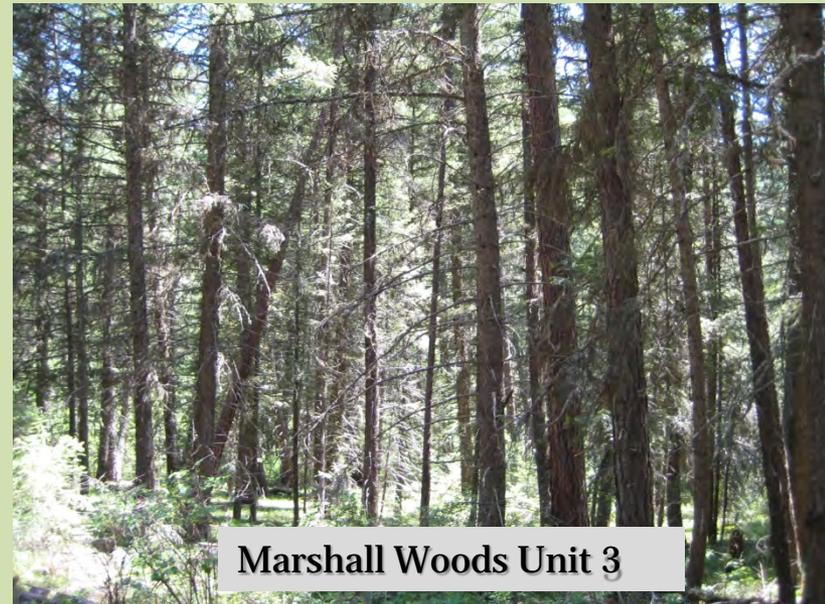
Alternative B Vegetation Treatments (3,959 acres)

- **Thinning & burning (740 acres)**
- **Young stand thinning & burning (477 acres)**
- **Ecosystem maintenance burning (729 acres)**
- **Ecosystem maintenance burning & small tree thinning/slashing (1,275 acres)**
- **Non-commercial thinning & hand piling & burning (248 acres)**
- **Meadow & aspen restoration (40 acres)**
- **Site preparation & reforestation (450 acres)**



Vegetation treatments designed to:

- Reduce crown fire potential
- Restore fire within low intensity, high frequency and mixed severity fire regimes
- Maintain or increase the species composition of ponderosa pine, larch, and aspen
- Improve stand resilience to natural disturbances (fire, insects, disease)
- Maintain and increase resilience of large diameter (≥ 21 " diameter) ponderosa pine and western larch trees to fire, competition, and pathogens
- Create stand conditions that could provide large trees in the future



Thinning Small Diameter Trees

Before Treatment



Unit 70

Before Treatment



Unit 71

Thinning Small Diameter Trees

Before Treatment



After Treatment



This treatment on a similar project was designed to favor ponderosa pine, reduce competition, enhance growth and vigor, and modify stand conditions to lessen the risk of potential insect caused mortality and the risk of a stand-replacing fire.



**Existing Stand Conditions
Marshall Woods Unit 5**

Similar Treatment After Harvest

50%+ overstory removed

Skyline, whole tree yarding

Underburned Spring 2006

Understory slashed 2+ years prior to burn



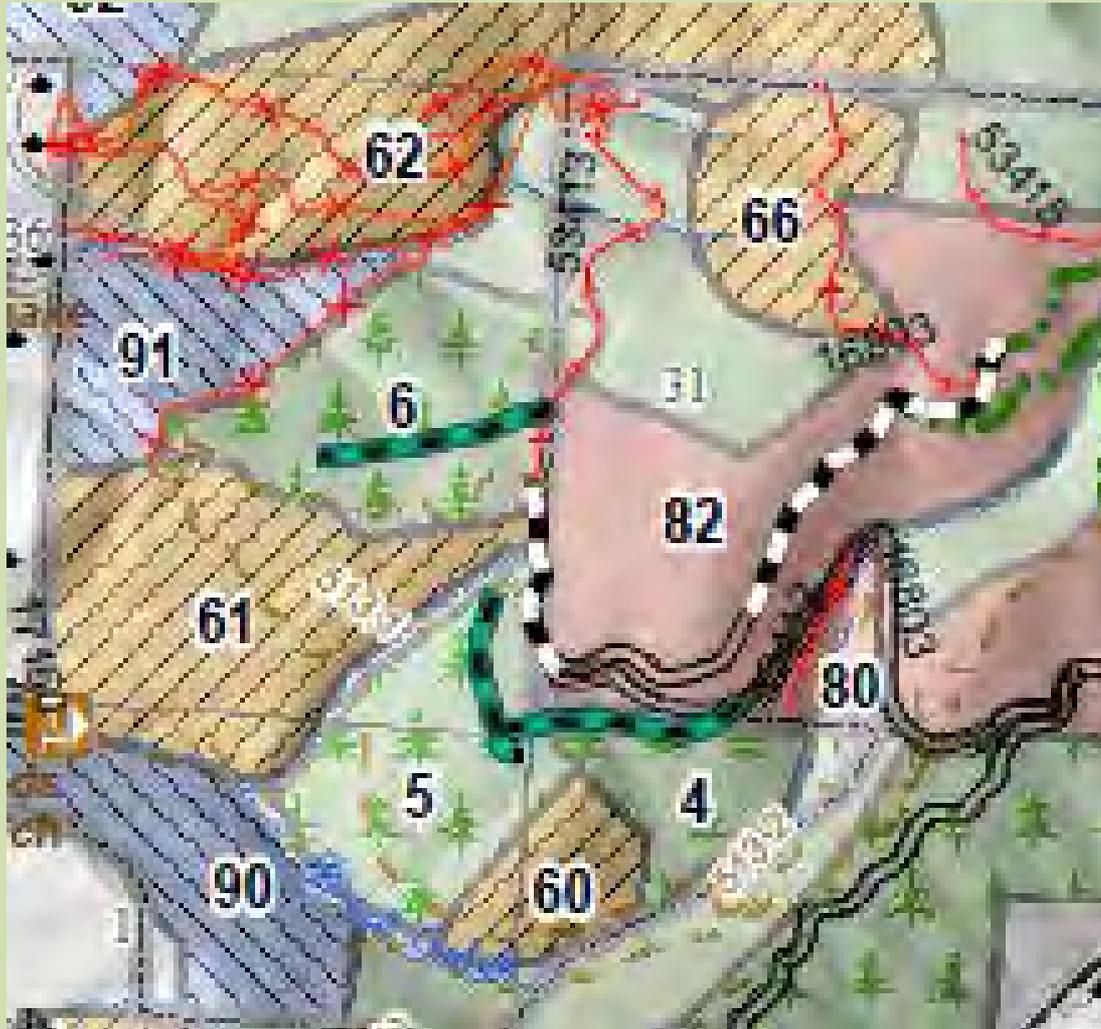
Alternatives B, C, and D

Road and Trail Management

Proposed Activity	Approx. (miles)
Decommission ¹ unneeded roads	7.4
Store ² roads until needed	6.7
Re-align and store road	0.1
Convert road to trail ³	1.4
Connect Rd. 53414 to Rd. 2122 by constructing a trail to create a loop trail and add it to the trail system.	0.2
Reconstruct non-system road for temporary road (Alts. B and C <i>ONLY</i>)	0.1
Construct temp road (Alts. B and C <i>ONLY</i>)	1.0

Alternatives B and C

Temporary Road Construction



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Alternatives B, C, and D Watershed Improvements

- Upgrade the culvert on Rd. 2122 just past the junction with the Marshall Canyon Road (Rd. 357).
- Improve drainage on Rd. 17150 near Woods Gulch Trailhead (about 0.25 mile).

Alternatives B, C, and D

Weed Treatments

- Treat weeds as needed including on travel routes, and decommissioned roads, landings and other areas where ground-disturbance would occur as a result of this project (760 acres).
- Treat weeds (aerial and ground applied herbicide and bio-controls) on NFS land in Sections 1 and 12 (T13N, R18W) **subject to** the City of Missoula and MT FWP cooperatively treating their land at the same time to make a logical geographic unit (160 acres).



Need For Site-specific Forest Plan Amendment(s)

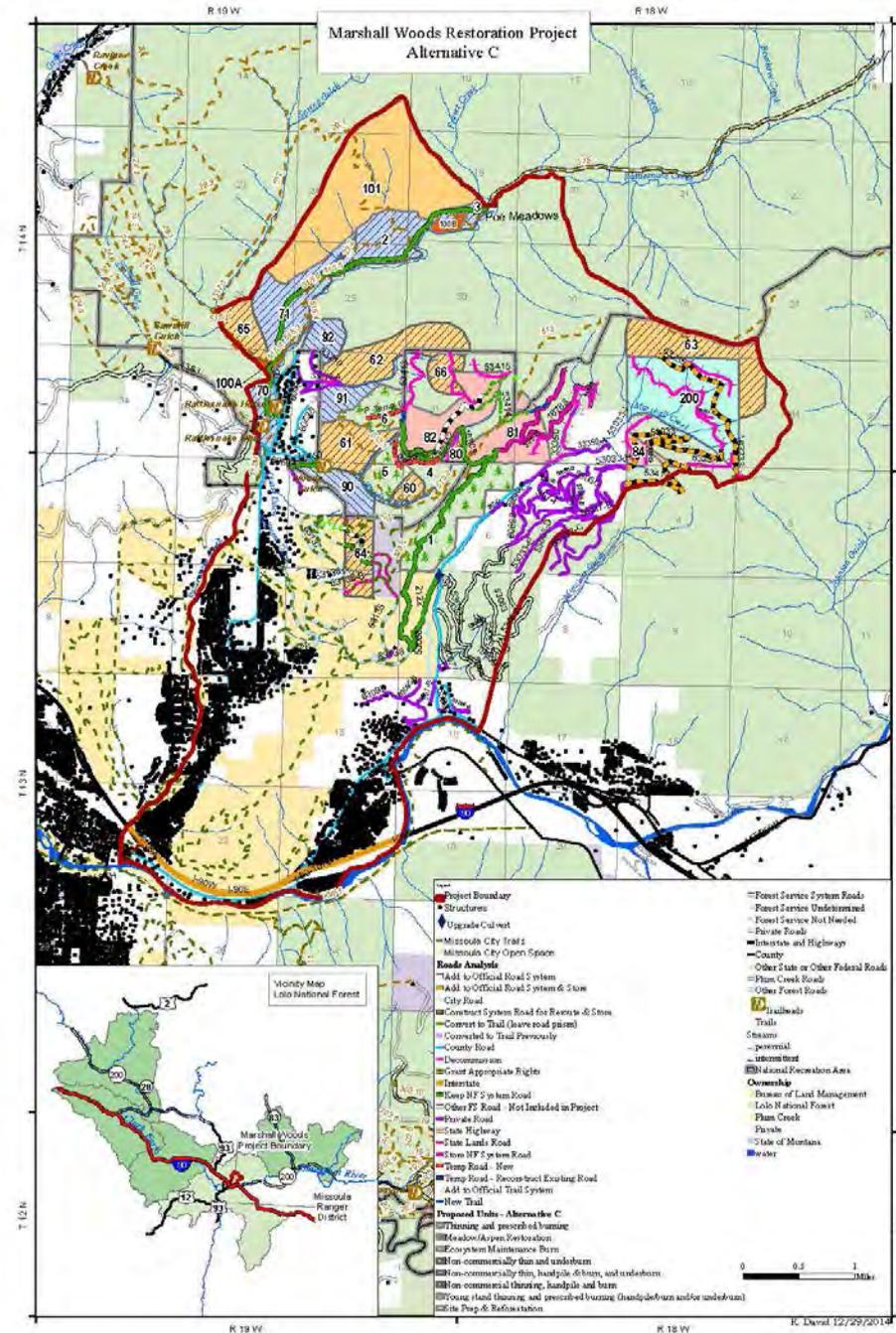
Impacts of tree cutting and other activities proposed in Rattlesnake NRA (2,305 acres) would not meet Retention VQO in short-term (Alternatives B and C)

Change MA designation in Section 33 (Alternatives A, B, C, and D)



Alternative C Vegetation Treatments (3,959 acres)

Alternative C includes the same treatments as Alternative B; except no commercial harvest or mechanized vegetation treatments would occur in the main Rattlesnake corridor.



Next Steps...

- Winter 2015 – Release EA and host public meetings
- Spring 2015 - Respond to comments on EA
- Summer 2015 - Issue DRAFT Decision Notice and start objection process
- Fall 2015 – Issue final Decision Notice and begin implementation

