

*This letter was customized and sent out by individual national forests and BLM units in early September. In late October, the comment period was extended from Oct. 26 to Dec. 10, 2001.*

Dear Interested Person,

The Forest Service and BLM are proposing to add measures to land management plans for 18 national forests and four BLM units in the northern Rocky Mountains to conserve habitat for Canada lynx. The \_\_your local plan name\_\_ Plan is one of the plans that will be modified by the Northern Rockies Lynx Amendment.

This letter will describe why the plans need to be changed, what the proposal is, and how you can participate.

### Why are we amending the plans?

Last year, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the lynx as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. They concluded the chief threat was the lack of guidance in current land management plans. The Forest Service and BLM reached a similar conclusion when they prepared a biological assessment for 57 forest plans and 56 BLM land use plans. In fact, while most of the remaining lynx habitat in the U.S. is on federal land, the plans make little or no mention of the Canada lynx.

The Northern Rockies Lynx Amendment will add management direction to 18 forest plans and 18 BLM land use plans, to reduce the risks to lynx and to provide habitat, so lynx can continue to survive.

### What do Canada lynx need?

The lynx is a rare forest-dwelling cat of northern latitudes that preys primarily on snowshoe hares. In the northern Rockies, it occurs in spruce and fir forests at higher elevations with deep snow.

Biologists from several federal agencies have made the following recommendations for lynx habitat:

- Manage within the historic range of variability for vegetation;
- Provide dense tree understories that support the snowshoe hares on which lynx are so dependant;
- Minimize packed snow trails that enable other predators to compete for the lynx's prey; and
- Provide connections within and between lynx habitat.

### What are we proposing?

The proposed amendment would provide objectives and standards for management activities occurring in lynx habitat. For example, one standard would reduce the level of pre-commercial thinning because snowshoe hares prefer dense stands. Another would limit activities that compact snow like *new* groomed snowmobile trails and maybe some ski area expansion.

We'll examine the effects of these and other objectives and standards during our environmental analysis. For more specifics, see the attachments.

How do I get more information?

We're holding open-house meetings during September and October in Montana, Wyoming and Idaho. The dates and places are listed in Attachment 1.

There's more information at our web site, <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/planning/lynx.html>.

How can I participate?

Comments on the proposed amendment will be accepted until October 26. We'll use the comments to understand how the proposal affects lynx and people, and to develop alternative proposals. The comments we receive become part of the public record.

Please send comments to:

Northern Rockies Lynx Amendment  
Jon Haber  
Northern Region Headquarters  
P.O. Box 7669  
Missoula, MT 59807

**We'll remove your name from the lynx mailing list  
if we don't hear from you.**

We hope you can join us at our local open house on \_\_\_\_*date*\_\_ at \_\_*time*\_\_ at  
\_\_\_\_*place*\_\_\_\_. If you can't come, feel free to call our lynx coordinator \_\_\_\_*name*\_\_\_\_  
at \_\_*address/phone*\_\_.

*Forest Supervisor or BLM Official name & title*