

File Code: 1950
Date: April 30, 2021

Hello,

The Forest Service has prepared the Wildfire Adapted Missoula Environmental Assessment (EA), which discloses the environmental effects of vegetation and road management activities proposed to reduce wildfire hazard and associated risk in strategic locations around the Missoula valley. The intent of this cross-boundary effort in Missoula County is to work with local communities focusing on the multiple facets of risk reduction (www.wildfirerisk.org). The project area surrounds the communities of Missoula, Lolo, East Missoula, and Clinton. The EA describing a detailed proposal of work on National Forest System lands is available upon request and is posted on the Lolo National Forest website: www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=58943.

Because we aim to connect public lands to private landowners, we created a story map which describes the background and process used to develop the proposal. The story map also describes how we as a community can come together to reduce and manage, not eliminate, our collective wildfire risk (<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/ea1f3b22598441bb9adfc2740200a57b>). Ideas and tools for private landowners and the management of their property are available on the story map as well as the Missoula County site at wildfirepartnersmissoula.org.

We heard a variety of thoughts and concerns from the Missoula community when we scoped this project last October. Thanks so much for your thoughtful comments, engaging, and letting us know what is important to you. We heard that you appreciate the completed and ongoing work in areas such as the Rattlesnake and Pattee Canyon and that you are concerned about wildfire risk to your home and property. Because of our community's feedback, this project will scale up these efforts and fuel treatments to areas all around Missoula. We also heard you say that you would like to see localized conversations about mechanical treatments, and that is our plan. We have worked with interagency partners such as Missoula County Emergency Services, Montana State Department of Natural Resources, Missoula Rural Fire Department, and the Homeowners Association in Hayes Creek for the current proposed action. We will then take what we have learned working with the Hayes Creek, Pattee Canyon, and Rattlesnake communities and apply it to our future work with other neighborhoods. One step this project does near each community is establish shaded fuel breaks along critical access routes. This work will address ingress and egress for forest visitors and first responders and will set us up to have more localized discussions with various communities on what comes next.

Your Involvement

Comments will be accepted for 30 days following the date of publication of the legal notice in the Missoulian which is anticipated to be May 4, 2021. Pursuant to 36 CFR 218, only those who submit timely and specific written comments during this or another public comment period established by the Responsible Official will be eligible to file an objection. Comments should be within the scope of the proposed activities, have a direct relationship to the proposed activities, and must include supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider. Other eligibility



requirements include commenter's name and postal address, title of the project, and commenter's signature or other verification of identity upon request and the identity of the individual or entity who authored the comments.

Please send comments to: Wildfire Adapted Missoula Project Leader, Missoula Ranger District, 24 Fort Missoula Road, Missoula, Montana 59804. Comments may also be submitted electronically to: comments-northern-lolo-missoula@usda.gov. Please put the name of the project in the subject line. For electronically mailed comments, the sender should normally receive an automated electronic acknowledgement as confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive an automated acknowledgement of the receipt of comments, it is the sender's responsibility to ensure timely receipt by other means.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be part of the public record for this project. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered but will not be eligible for objection per §218.5.

A virtual public meeting will be held sometime later in May. When finalized, details of the meeting will be posted on the Lolo National Forest webpage and sent out in a News Release.

Please contact Sara Rouse, Project Manager at (406) 859-8231 for more information or visit our website at www.fs.usda.gov/main/lolo/home.

Thank you for your interest and involvement with this important project!

Sincerely,

Jennifer J. Hensiek
JENNIFER HENSIEK
District Ranger