



File Code: 1950
Date: July 24, 2017

Dear Interested Party,

The Supplemental Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Glacier Loon Fuels Reduction and Forest Health Project has been completed and is available for public review and comment. You are receiving this EA because you have previously expressed an interest in this project.

A Supplemental EA was prepared in response to a court order issued in 2014 addressing claims that a “no effect” determination was improperly reached for water howellia and bull trout, and that numerical objectives in Forest Plan Amendment 19 now apply to the project area grizzly bear subunits due to recent Forest Service land acquisitions. The Supplemental EA also addresses cumulative effects from projects in the analysis area(s) since publication of the EA in 2012, habitat protection for unoccupied water howellia habitat, and other resource specific guidance changes since 2012.

The Supplemental EA describes many of the changes made to the 2012 EA with a narrative at the beginning of document sections and through the use of red text.

Glacier Loon Project Background

On September 16, 2011, information on the Glacier Loon Project was mailed to approximately 100 individuals, agencies, and groups. This mailing provided information about a management proposal for the Glacier Loon Project Area, which identified opportunities to:

- **Reduce the associated risk of high-severity landscape wildfire risk within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) as identified in the Seeley Swan Fire Plan;**
- **Improve and/or maintain the general health, resiliency, and sustainability of forested stands; and**
- **Provide wood products for local economies.**

A Request for Comments was published in *The Daily Inter Lake*, the Newspaper of Record, on September 16, 2011. Additionally the Swan Lake Ranger District conducted two public field trips to the project area in September and October of 2011; a total of seventeen people from the public attended. In addition, we received 47 comments, either in the form of letters or e-mails, on the project.

The Glacier Loon Fuels Reduction and Forest Health Project Area lies within the boundaries of the Glacier Loon and Buck Holland Grizzly Bear Subunits. It extends south and west of Condon, MT on the west side of MT Highway 83 to the south end of Lindbergh Lake. The project area is located in Missoula County in Sections 2-6 T18N, R17W, Sections 1-3, 5-9, and 16-17 T18N, R18W; Sections 01-4, 7-23, 26-35 T19N, R17W; Sections 2-4, 9-15, 22-27, and 33-36 T19N, R18W; Sections 18-19 and 29-32 T20N R16W; and Sections 1-2, 11-5, 22-37, and 33-36 T20N R17W; Swan Lake Ranger District, Flathead National Forest.



Since the initiation of this project, the Swan Lake District Planning Team comprised of Specialists from natural resource disciplines reviewed public feedback; developed alternatives to the initial proposal based on public comment and field knowledge of the areas, and analyzed potential effects from the proposed activities.

Three action alternatives are analyzed in detail and were developed to meet the Purpose and Need and respond to the major issues. Alternative B is the original proposed action that was presented to the public in September 2011. Alternative C was developed to respond to concerns relative to scenic values and water quality. Alternative D was developed to address concerns about wildlife security.

The Proposed Action (Alternative B) proposes to reduce fuels and restore forest health on 2102 acres using a combination of commercial and non-commercial harvest treatments, remove approximately 10.5 million board feet of forest products, reforest harvest units by planting trees on 400 acres, construct 11.5 miles of temporary road to access treatment units, and application of Best Management Practices on 37.7 miles of existing specified road. Harvest activities would be implemented using hand and tractor logging systems during the summer and winter seasons.

Alternative C proposes to reduce fuels and restore forest health on 1909 acres, remove approximately 9.0 million board feet of forest products, reforest harvest units by planting trees on 340 acres, construct 7.4 miles of temporary road, and application of Best Management Practices on 34.7 miles of existing specified road. Harvest activities would be implemented using hand and tractor logging systems during the summer and winter seasons.

Alternative D was developed to address concerns about wildlife security. Alternative D proposes to reduce fuels and restore forest health on 1150 acres, remove approximately 6.70 million board feet of forest products, reforest harvest units by planting trees on 290 acres, construct 5.8 miles of temporary road, and application of Best Management Practices on 29.1 miles of existing specified road. Harvest activities would be implemented using hand and tractor logging systems during the summer and winter seasons.

In addition to these alternatives, a No Action Alternative (Alternative A) was also analyzed.

Chapter 2 of the enclosed EA describes the alternatives considered for the Glacier Loon Project in more detail. This chapter also includes maps of the alternatives, activities common to all alternatives, and a comparison of these alternatives focusing on the significant issues. The effects analysis of these alternatives, as well as the No Action Alternative (Alternative A), is presented in Chapter 3.

The EA was published for public review and comment in August 2012. Public comment was considered leading to Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) in February 2013. The Decision Notice was subsequently appealed and litigated resulting in the 2014 court order referred to earlier.

The Responsible Official for this project is Forest Supervisor Chip Weber.

Supplemental EA Review

The Supplemental EA document is available on the Flathead National Forest website at: www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=36946. To request a paper copy or CD version of the EA, contact Rich Kehr by phone at 406-837-7501, by mail at Swan Lake Ranger District, 200 Ranger Station Road, Bigfork, MT 59911, or by email at rkehr@fs.fed.us.

Pursuant to 36 CFR 218.25, comments on this proposed project will be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice in the paper of record (*The Daily Interlake*, Kalispell, MT). If the comment period ends on a Saturday, Sunday or Federal holiday, comments will be accepted until the end of the next Federal working day. This legal notice will also be displayed on the

Flathead National Forest website where information about this project is located (see pathway above) within 4 days after the legal notice is published in *The Daily Interlake*.

Only individuals or entities (as defined by 36 CFR 218.2) who submit timely and specific written comments (as defined by 36 CFR 218.2) about this proposed project or activity during this or another public comment period established by the responsible official will be eligible to file an objection. Other eligibility requirements are defined by 36 CFR 218.25 (a) (3) and include name, postal address, title of the project, and signature or other verification of identity upon request and the identity of the individual or entity who authored the comments. Individual members of an entity must submit their own individual comments in order to have eligibility to object as an individual. A timely submission will be determined as outlined in 36 CFR 218.25 (a) (4). It is the responsibility of the sender to ensure timely receipt of any comments submitted.

Please submit your written comments to:

Rich Kehr, District Ranger
Glacier Loon Fuels Reduction and Forest Health Project Swan Lake Ranger District
200 Ranger Station Road
Bigfork, MT 59911

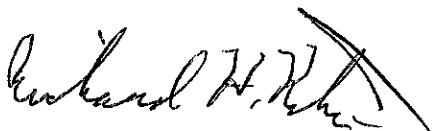
Office hours, for those who wish to hand deliver their comments, are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday (except Federal holidays).

Electronic comments must be submitted in acceptable text formats (pdf, MS Word, Word Perfect, or Rich Text Format) and submitted to: comments-northern-flathead-swan-lake@fs.fed.us. The subject line must contain the name of the project for which you are submitting comments. For electronically-mailed comments, the sender should normally receive an automated electronic acknowledgement from the agency 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 should be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and must include supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider (36 CFR 218.2). Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names, addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection.

I appreciate your time and interest as well as any comments you have already provided on the Glacier Loon Project. If you have any questions concerning this project, please feel free to contact me at the above location, or by calling (406) 837-7501

Sincerely,



RICHARD KEHR
Swan Lake District Ranger