



## Flathead National Forest

## Media Release

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### **Tally Lake District Opens Area for Firewood Gathering**

The Tally Lake Ranger District of the Flathead National Forest will open an area, located about 35 miles west of Whitefish, for personal use firewood gathering. This will allow temporary access for woodcutting on eleven miles of roads that are normally closed to motorized traffic yearlong. The area is accessed by Forest Road #2885, at the western headwaters of the Sheppard Creek drainage.

This area is expected to be open only through August 15, due to concerns about elk security and tansy ragwort, a noxious weed. Tansy ragwort has been found along this road in the past. Herbicide treatments appear to have been successful, however, some plants have survived and the road will close before this weed goes to seed. In addition, viable seeds still occur in the soil and could be transported in dirt and mud on vehicles or boots. Staying on the road and cleaning your boots and vehicle will help prevent the spread of this noxious weed and minimize the chance that any seeds would be carried to new locations.

Both standing dead and downed material are available within 200 feet of the roadway, unless the trees are marked or within 150 feet of a stream. Woodcutters can make this program a success by following all the terms of their wood permit, including:

- Do not cut marked trees. Some trees behind these gates have been marked with paint (a horizontal stripe and a prominent "W"). These trees provide important denning, nesting, and perching habitat for many kinds of wildlife.
- Cutting is prohibited within 150 feet of a lake, stream, or wetland to maintain healthy riparian areas.
- Please clear the road surface and ditches of tops and limbs when you are done cutting firewood, and scatter or pile the material off of the roadway.
- All vehicles must remain on the road surface.
- Forest Road # 2974 and other short road spurs off of Road #2885 are closed with gates and berms and are not open for motorized use.

Woodcutters are reminded to be safe; spread out, keep a lookout for other people and vehicles, and keep the road open and passable for others. Resource damage such as creating "stump roads", ignoring measures for reducing weed spread, or felling marked wildlife trees could result in discontinuing the program. The area will be monitored, as in previous years. Public cooperation has been excellent in past years, and firewood cutters are asked to help continue to make this program a success.

Maps of the woodcutting area, as well as wood permits, are available at the Tally Lake Ranger District Office in Whitefish, and Flathead National Forest Supervisor's Office in Kalispell. For more information call 863-5400 or 758-5208.

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