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Flathead National Forest Upheld on Salvage NEPA Work

The US District Court for the District of Montana recently denied a preliminary injunction request by Swan View Coalition and Friends of the Wild Swan to halt salvage logging activities related to the Robert Wedge and West Side Reservoir Post-Fire Projects in grizzly bear security core areas on the Flathead National Forest.

In June 2005, salvage logging activities on core grizzly bear habitat were halted, but allowed in areas that did not include core habitat. The recent denial of the preliminary injunction allows activities to continue in all areas of the post-fire projects.

The court's ruling on September 27, 2006 supports that the Flathead National Forest post-fire environmental impact statements (EISs) adequately considered all past, ongoing and reasonably foreseeable future forest service actions in areas affected by the projects, and that the plaintiffs are not likely to succeed on their NEPA claim.

Flathead National Forest Planning Staff Officer Rob Carlin said, "This ruling validates the good analysis work the forest has completed, and continues to accomplish. Many forest service employees worked hard on these post-fire projects and have helped to keep salvage harvest from the wildland fires of 2003 moving forward in light of litigation challenges."

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