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West Side Reservoir Post-Fire Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement Available for Review

The Flathead National Forest has completed a draft environmental impact statement for the West Side Reservoir Post-Fire Project that is available for public review and comment.   Comments are requested by October 6. An open house will be Wednseday, September 22, 3-8pm, at the Tally Lake Ranger Station in Whitefish.

The project proposes to recover merchantable materials affected by the Blackfoot, Doe, Beta, Doris, Ball and Wounded Buck Fires of 2003 located in the South Fork drainage, outside of wilderness on the Hungry Horse and Spotted Bear Districts of the forest. The area is located between the crest of the Swan Mountain Range and the Hungry Horse Reservoir.

Four action alternatives have been identified, as well as a no-action alernative. Proposed activities include salvage of 35-56 million board feet on 3900-5400 acres by cable, ground-based equipment or helicopter.   Approximately four miles of temporary roads would be constructed and later rehabilitated to access some of the units. Trees may be planted on 1200-1500 acres within salvage areas. Some road and trail access would be changed to improve grizzly bear sercurity. Varying amounts of road and trail are proposed for closure to wheeled motorized vehicles and between 49-69 miles of

road are proposed for decommissioning. A forest plan amendment specific to the project is proposed related to open motorized access, total motorized access and security core standards.

 An emergency request has been submitted to expedite the removal of merchantable wood products with this project. It the request is granted, certain timber salvage activities could begin immediately after a decision is made.

Visit www.fs.fed.us/r1/flathead/nepa/nepa.htm to view or download the draft environmental impact statement or contact Bryan Donner at 406-863-5408 to request a CD or paper copy, or a summary of the project.

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