
Gallatin National Forest News Release



For Immediate Release

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Forest Service to Reduce Hazardous Fuels near West Yellowstone

Bill Queen, Hebgen Lake District Ranger, has issued a decision to implement the Hebgen Basin Fuels Reduction Project. The project is located on the Gallatin National Forest near West Yellowstone, Montana.

According to Queen, "Lands surrounding West Yellowstone are considered a national priority for fuel treatment since the community has been identified as a 'community at risk' of wildfire in the vicinity of federal lands."

The purpose of the project is to reduce the threat to life and property in the wildland-urban interface. Fuel reduction treatments will reduce the risk of crown fire and wildland fire spread by reducing crown closure and removal of dead and down fuels.

He added, "The treatments are narrowly focused in the wildland-urban interface on National Forest System lands near the town of West Yellowstone and recreation developments near the Madison Arm of Hebgen Lake". Another factor in determining the areas to be treated was the need to maintain evacuation routes for the community of West Yellowstone. Highway 191 and Highway 20 provide access to and from the city in



the event that an evacuation related to a large fire is needed. Treatments are planned adjacent to these roadways.

The Hebgen Basin Fuels Reduction project includes these activities:

- Understory thinning of about 800 acres in mixed age lodgepole pine forest with continuous tree crown cover and continuous ladder fuel;
- Commercial thinning on approximately 560 acres of dense forest stands with a mixed age understory;
- Handpiling of about 160 acres of dead and down woody material along Highway 191, Highway 20 and near subdivisions.
- Prescribed burning on about 90 acres of grass, shrub and open conifer forest habitat. The purpose of this prescribed burning is to maintain the current low fire risk condition.

Associated activities include piling and burning or chipping of fuels, about 2/3 mile of temporary road and project specific mitigation. Implementation will occur over the next five to seven years beginning in the fall of 2005.

Copies of the Decision and Finding of No Significant Impact are available on the internet at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin> (click on "Projects and Plans" on the left side of the menu). For additional information on the project, please call Teri Seth, Team Leader at 406-587-6892. To obtain printed copies of the decision document, contact the Forest Supervisor's office in Bozeman, or the District office in West Yellowstone.

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