
Big Timber Ranger District News Release



For Immediate Release
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Forest Service Proposes Vegetation Treatment Project in Big Timber Canyon

Big Timber, MT... The Forest Service is proposing to thin approximately 220 acres of dense stands of Douglas-fir to increase the health and vigor of the remaining trees and reduce their susceptibility to future Douglas-fir bark beetle attacks. The vegetation treatment project is located in Big Timber Canyon, approximately twenty miles northwest of Big Timber, Montana on the eastern slopes of the Crazy Mountains. The Big Timber Ranger District, is seeking public comments on the Draft Decision Memo during the project scoping/comment period, which will end April 19th, 2006.

“Douglas-fir bark beetles are always present in these stands, but the prolonged drought and the overstocked stand conditions have led to a condition where they are reaching epidemic proportions. This project gives us the opportunity to slow that epidemic down in a way that results in a healthier forest. By taking this limited action now, we can head off having large pockets of dead and falling trees and the resulting high fuel loading in this beautiful canyon”, said Avey.

The primary purpose for the project is to initiate insect control methods including commercial and non-commercial insect control harvesting techniques, as recommended by the Forest Service Regional Entomologist, to help control and prevent the spread of Douglas-fir bark beetles and improve the overall health and productivity of the forest community in Big Timber Canyon. The project could also provide secondary benefits to wildlife habitat/forage by increasing the abundance and diversity of shrubs and other understory plants within the treated areas to help sustain a forage base for wildlife.

For more information regarding this project, or to obtain copies of the draft Decision Memo, please contact Barb Ping, East Zone NEPA Coordinator, (406)-522-2558, or Bill Avey, (406)-932-5155. Additional information can also be found on the Gallatin Forest website at www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin.

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