



United States Department of Interior
106 North Parkmont

Bureau of Land Management

Butte Field Office
Butte, Montana 59701

Contact: Marilyn Krause
Phone: (406) 533-7617

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BLM & MSU PROPOSE ENCLOSURES IN WHITETAIL BASIN AREA

BUTTE (June 2, 2006) – The Bureau of Land Management in partnership with Montana State University are proposing to install four (1 acre) enclosures in two drainages north of Whitehall. The proposed action is affiliated with the Whitetail Basin Prescribed Fire Project which has been ongoing since 2004. Two enclosures are planned for Little Whitetail Creek and two in Hay Canyon.

Land managers and researchers expect that data collected from this study will provide useful information on riparian habitat recovery after fire disturbance. This project is part of a larger project supported by BLM, the Forest Service, MSU, Jefferson River Watershed Council and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

The enclosures will enable researchers to evaluate the interaction of fire and browsing/grazing. One-half of each enclosure will be fenced to a height of 7 feet to exclude ungulates and wildlife while the other half of the enclosure will be 42 inches high to exclude cattle only.

MSU will construct and maintain the enclosures using manual labor and no vegetation will be cut or roads constructed for this project. This proposed action qualifies as a categorical exclusion and no environmental analysis (EA) will be completed. Questions or comments on this project should be directed to Erinn Shirley at the BLM – Butte Field Office, 533-7603 by June 16.