



NEWS RELEASE

Lolo National Forest

United States
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Forest Service
Lolo National Forest
Building 24, Fort Missoula
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www.fs.fed.us/r1/lolo

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Analysis Near Completion for Burned Timber Salvage Projects

Missoula, MT. – Specialists have completed the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Chippy Creek Fire timber salvage project, which burned approximately 47,500 acres on the Lolo National Forest, and also recently distributed the EA for the Jocko Lakes Fire timber salvage. Both projects will remove burned, merchantable timber while also protecting resources by decommissioning roads, removing aquatic barriers to allow for fish passage, and applying ground-based herbicide treatments.

Both projects have also been submitted to the Chief of the Forest Service for an Emergency Situation Determination to allow contracts to be awarded while the projects are in the Appeal Period. The determination is being sought to minimize the potential that timber would decay and lose its economic value.

The public comment period for the draft Chippy Creek EA ended October 24 and the Plains/Thompson Falls Ranger District recently began to analyze comments for substantive issues that will be addressed in the document's Decision Notice. The district received a total of five public comments. The 30 day public comment period for the Jocko Lakes project started on October 29. Like the Chippy EA, public comments will be analyzed and responded to as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

Both projects call for harvesting timber on less than five and fifteen percent of their respective burned areas of the Lolo National Forest. The Chippy Creek project would remove timber on 1,527 acres and the Jocko Lakes project would remove timber on approximately 1,648 acres. The primary intent – or purpose and need -- of both projects is to recover the economic value of burned merchantable timber.

A range of criteria have been established for each project to minimize impacts to the landscape. Although the criteria are different for the two projects, they include the following measures: no harvest in timber stands classified as old growth; measures to protect the post-fire soils, and no harvest activities within 300 feet of perennial fish bearing streams.

For specific information on both projects, please refer to the respective environmental analysis documents. Both the Chippy Creek EA and the Jocko Lakes Fire Salvage EA are available on the Lolo National Forest website, under Plans and Projects (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/lolo/projects/>).

The award of contracts and removal of timber could begin this winter for both projects.

For more information on the Chippy Creek project, please contact Plains/Thompson Falls District Ranger Randy Hojem at (406) 826-4308; for information on the Jocko Lakes project please contact Seeley Lake District Ranger Tim Love at (406) 677-3905.

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