



## Flathead National Forest

## Media Release

November 10, 2008

**Contact:** Denise Germann  
(406) 758-5252  
(406) 249-1714 cell

## **Middle Fork Project Proposed, Open House Planned**

The Hungry Horse Ranger District of the Flathead National Forest is hosting a public open house on Wednesday, November 19, 4pm – 8pm at the Izaak Walton Inn in Essex, Montana. The public is invited to stop by any time during the open house and discuss the proposed Middle Fork Fuels Reduction Project with resource specialists. Fuel reduction treatments are being considered on National Forest System Lands along the US Highway 2 corridor from the Nyack Flats area east to the Giefer Creek vicinity. Much of this area is considered wildland-urban interface, an area where private homes are near National Forest System lands.

The goal of the fuel reduction treatments is to lower the risk of future high-intensity/severity wildfire in this area. Fuel reduction treatments would be designed to improve the ability to initial attack and control fires, protect human life and other human and natural resource values, and to increase the diversity of tree species to include more long-lived, fire-tolerant species. Areas selected in the Middle Fork Fuels Reduction Project would likely receive a variety of prescribed burning, thinning treatments and/or the creation of small openings that would reduce tree density and dead woody material.

As a first step in planning the Middle Fork Fuels Reduction Project, Forest Service specialists have made a preliminary identification of broad areas appearing to have the vegetation conditions able to sustain high-severity crown fires that could threaten private homes and lands. No specific treatment sites have been selected for treatment or eliminated from consideration.

Following collaboration with the public and further analysis by Forest Service specialists, specific sites for proposed treatments will be identified. The public will then have an additional opportunity to comment on the project before a final decision is made. A decision is expected to be made by fall of 2009.

Public input regarding the location of possible treatment areas, the level of treatment appropriate, and any comments or concerns about this project are being solicited. Comments should be as detailed and site-specific as possible. Comments regarding this project are encouraged by November 28, 2008. For more information, please contact Project Leader Michele Draggoo at (406) 387-3800.

-END-