



Flathead National Forest

Media Release

February 5, 2007

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Forest Service Hosts Open House on Belton Fuels Project

The Hungry Horse District of the Flathead National Forest is hosting an open house on Monday, February 12, between the hours of 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. at the Hungry Horse Ranger Station, to begin collaboration on the Belton Fuels Reduction Project.

The project will consider fuel reduction treatments on National Forest System land extending from the West Glacier area south to the town of Hungry Horse, and east of the Flathead River to the Belton point ridgeline.

The goal of the fuel reduction treatments is to lower the risk of future high intensity/severity wildfire (i.e. reduce the probability of a crown fire) in this area of intermingled private and National Forest System lands. 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 increase the diversity of tree species to include more long lived, fire tolerant species.

Similar to other fuel reduction projects on the district, areas selected in the Belton Fuels Reduction Project would probably receive a variety of thinning or small openings that would reduce forest tree density and dead woody material.

As a first step in planning this Belton Fuels Reduction Project, Forest Service specialists have made a preliminary identification of some broad areas that appear to have the vegetation conditions that could sustain a high severity crown fire that would threaten private homes and land. 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. At that time, there will be additional opportunity to comment on the project before a final decision.

Public input regarding location of possible treatment areas, the level of treatment appropriate, and any comments or concerns about this project are being solicited. To be most useful, comments should be as detailed and site specific as possible. Comments regarding this project are encouraged by February 19. For more information, please contact project leader Michele Draggoo at (406) 387-3800.

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