



## Flathead National Forest

Media Release

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### **Forest Service Announces Decision on West Side Reservoir Post-Fire Project**

Flathead National Forest Supervisor Cathy Barbouletos signed a Record of Decision for the West Side Reservoir Post-Fire Project. The decision involves timber salvage, access management, tree planting and insect and disease management activities on National Forest System land affected by the 2003 Blackfoot, Doe, Beta, Doris, Ball and Wounded Buck Wildland Fires.

Salvage of approximately 38 million board feet of burned timber will take place on about 3,169 acres using ground-based, cable and helicopter logging systems. There will be four different salvage sales available for public bid with this project.

Approximately three miles of temporary road located on existing road templates will be constructed to access the salvage units. These temporary roads will be rehabilitated after logging activities.

Trees will be planted on approximately 700 acres of the salvage units. Pheromone-based treatments and trap trees will be used to help address potential bark beetle outbreaks as a result of fire damage to trees.

The project includes approximately 30 miles of wheeled motorized restrictions on open roads, 49 miles of road decommissioning and 27 miles of restrictions to wheeled motorized vehicles on trails. These actions will help to improve grizzly bear security within the project area.

Project-specific forest plan amendments for grizzly bear subunits are included in this decision to change open and total motorized access, and security core standards associated with Amendment 19. Barbouletos said, "This decision reflects the goals of the Flathead National Forest to continue to provide and improve habitat conditions for grizzly bears while continuing to provide sufficient motorized access to the forest."

The forest initially proposed this project in February of 2004 in response to wildland fires of 2003 located in the South Fork drainage, outside of wilderness, on the Hungry Horse and Spotted Bear Ranger Districts. The purpose of the project is to recover

merchantable wood fiber affected by fires in a timely manner to support local communities, and contribute to the long-term yield of forest products while striving to meet direction of the forest plan.

This project received an exemption of stay authorization that allows implementation of the project to begin during the project appeal period. If an exemption was not granted, an appeal and appeal decision period would have to expire before any action could happen on the ground.

The first salvage sale bid opening related to this project is anticipated at the end of January. For more information about the West Side Reservoir Post-Fire Project, contact 406-387-3827 or visit [www.fs.fed.us/r1/flathead](http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/flathead).

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