



Flathead National Forest

Media Release

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Environmental Assessment Completed for Mid Swan Blowdown Salvage Project **Public Comment Encouraged**

The Swan Lake District of the Flathead National Forest has completed an environmental assessment for the Mid Swan Blowdown Salvage Project and is requesting public comment on the project. The project proposes to recover merchantable timber from areas affected by wind damage and provide wood products for local economies.

The Mid Swan Blowdown Salvage Project is in response to two large-scale wind events that occurred in June and July of 2008 in the Swan Valley, south of Swan Lake in the vicinity of Montana Highway 83. The June windstorm occurred in the vicinity of Goat Creek while the July windstorm affected a larger area, including the Piper Creek drainage on the west and the Lion Creek drainage on the east. Trees on federal, state and private lands were affected with various uprooting, stem breakage, and severe bending. The environmental assessment will only address activities on national forest system lands.

The environmental assessment for the project includes three action alternatives, in addition to a no-action alternative. Natural resource specialists from the Flathead National Forest developed the action alternatives based on earlier public comment, field knowledge of the area and resource expertise. Issues identified and responded to via the three alternatives include blowdown removal in old growth and blowdown removal in riparian habitat conservation areas.

The amount of acres on which salvage harvest would occur varies between alternative from 690 acres to 622 acres, with 5.2 to 4.8 million board feet of timber salvaged. Fuels treatment activities would take place, as would tree planting in some of the areas. Minimum temporary road construction of less than .3 miles is anticipated and historic road templates would be utilized.

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The public is encouraged to provide written comment on the environmental assessment by March 18, 2009. Comments should be forwarded to Swan Lake District Ranger Steve Brady. For more information please contact Project Leader Joleen Dunham at 837-7510 or visit www.fs.fed.us/r1/flathead.

A decision is anticipated in May with implementation this summer.

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