



NEWS RELEASE

Lolo National Forest

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United States
Department of Agriculture

Forest Service
Lolo National Forest
Building 24, Fort Missoula
Missoula, Montana 59804

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Contact: Boyd Hartwig 406 329-1024

Comment Period Extended to June 30 for Post-Burn project

Missoula, MT. – The Lolo National Forest has extended until June 30 this year the public comment on planned road management work in several large areas that burned on three ranger districts during the 2000 fire season. The project, titled Post-Burn Roads 2000, would improve big game security and achieve important watershed restoration work -- including improved fish habitat by reducing sediment from some un-surfaced dirt roads. The project would include removing or replacing under-sized culverts that have the potential for blowing out during high stream flows. The scope of the work has not been narrowly defined because the forest hopes to establish a Proposed Action from public comment solicited during the scoping period.

The comment period is being extended to give individuals the opportunity to visit roads on the forest before commenting on the project.

Maps showing proposed changes to individual roads are available at each of the Ranger Districts where the work is proposed – the Ninemile, Superior, and Plains/Thompson Falls Ranger Districts. Maps are also available on the Lolo National Forest website at, <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/lolo/projects/>.

The project intent is to complete needed restoration work while maintaining important public access for recreation. Specifically the project would:

- Reduce road maintenance costs and update forest road management records
- Reduce the risk of culvert failures and reduce sediment and erosion potential on identified roads
- Restore drainage connectivity, provide fish passage and improve wildlife security
- Meet Forest Plan objectives and the intent of the Montana Department of Environmental Quality Water Quality Restoration Plan for the Ninemile Watershed

The work as currently proposed would include the following:

- Placement of approximately 95.5 miles of un-needed road systems in long-term storage.
- Remove (decommission) approximately 55.25 miles of road that are no longer needed for resource management or fire suppression

The project also calls for some changes to the miles of road that are open seasonally and year-round. While the miles of road identified for decommissioning have been identified as no longer needed for resource management, the Lolo National Forest is seeking public comment regarding the whole proposal and is interested in specific concerns related to particular roads.

For more information please contact the Lolo National Forest Public Affairs Office, (406) 329-1024

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