



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Helena National Forest

Helena Ranger District
2880 Skyway Drive
Helena, MT 59602
406-449-5490

RECEIVED

File Code: 2510

Date: June 21, 2013

JUN 26 2013 *DE*

CITY MANAGER

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JUN 24 2013

CLERK OF COMMISSION
CITY OF HELENA

*c: Comm
Mngt*

Dear Interested Party,

Thank you for your past interest in the Red Mountain Flume Chessman Reservoir Project on the Helena Ranger District of the Helena National Forest (HNF). This letter announces the release of this project's Preliminary Environmental Document for a 30-day opportunity to comment. The primary purpose of this project is to reduce the likelihood of physical damage to the municipal watershed infrastructure (Red Mountain Flume and Chessman Reservoir) in the event of a wildfire or fallen trees. Proposed activities include the cutting and removal of dead and dying trees, thinning of live trees, removing large downed fuels, and prescribed burning on 490 acres along the flume and surrounding the reservoir. Mechanical harvest, hand treatments, and prescribed fire would be used to accomplish these activities. The proposed treatments compliment similar recent work that the City of Helena has performed on segments of the flume located on other ownership.

The Helena National Forest has reviewed and analyzed issues that were submitted during the project scoping period. The Forest has moved forward with analysis of the proposed action along with a no action alternative. Several other alternatives were considered, but have not been carried forward in detailed analysis. See the Preliminary Environmental Document for reasons and rationale for eliminating those alternatives.

A site-specific amendment for Forest Plan Big Game standards 3 and 4a would be needed for this project. For more information on the site specific amendment and the status of big game in the project area please refer to the Preliminary Environmental Document.

This project is subject to the Project-Level Pre-decisional Administrative Review (36 CFR 218 subparts A and B) (commonly called the Objection process). Comments on this proposed project will be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice in the Helena Independent Record. If the comment period ends on a Saturday, Sunday, or Federal holiday, comments will then be accepted until the end of the next Federal working day. Within 4 days of the date of publication of the legal notice in the Helena Independent Record, a digital image of the legal notice, or an exact text of the notice will be made available on the HNF website.

Only individuals or entities as defined by 36 CFR 218.2 who submit timely, *specific written comments* regarding this proposed project during this or any designated opportunity for public



comment (36 CFR 218.5) may file an objection. Other eligibility requirements are defined by 36 CFR 218.25 (a)(3) where individuals and entities must have provided the following during the comment period: name and postal address, title of this project, specific written comments as defined in 218.2 along with supporting reasons, and signature or other verification of identity upon request. Individual members of an entity must submit their own individual comments in order to have eligibility to object as an individual. A timely submission will be determined as outlined in 36 CFR 218.25 (a) (4). It is the responsibility of the sender to ensure timely receipt of any comments submitted.

The Preliminary Environmental Document and a variety of supporting documents and maps are available for review on the Helena National Forest website at: www.fs.usda.gov/helena/. On the left side menu of that website, 'click' on "Land & Resources Management"; then 'click' on "Projects"; and scroll down the page and 'click' on the project you are interested in for that project's supporting documents. The Preliminary Environmental Document is also available upon request at the Helena National Forest Supervisor's Office at 2880 Skyway Drive, Helena MT.

An environmental assessment will be prepared this summer, following receipt and evaluation of public comments on the Preliminary Environmental Document.

Submit comments to Heather Degeest- Acting Helena District Ranger, by one of the following methods; mail: 2880 Skyway Drive, Helena, MT 59602, facsimile: 406-449-5740, or email: comments-northern-helena-helena@fs.fed.us (please put "Flume Chessman" in the subject line) in order to be considered. Office hours, for those who wish to hand deliver their comments, are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday (except Federal holidays). Acceptable formats for electronic comments are text or html e-mail, Adobe portable document format (.pdf), and formats viewable in Microsoft Office applications (.doc; .docx). You may also provide comment at the 'Open House' held at the Supervisor's Office on June 27th, 2013 from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm.

For additional information or questions, please call me, Heather DeGeest, at (406) 449-5490 or Jan FauntLeRoy, Project Team Leader, at (406) 449-5201.

Sincerely,



HEATHER DEGEEST
Acting Helena District Ranger