



Lake County Conservation District Proposes Land Management Transfer

60,000 Acres of Flathead National Forest At Risk

May 25, 2017

Dear Greetings!:

Over the past year, the Lake County Conservation District has been promoting a proposal to transfer management of 60,000 acres of the Flathead National Forest to the Conservation District's management in order to fund District projects. The proposal is titled: **["The Swan Forest Initiative."](#)**

This proposal represents a variation on the public land transfer concept. Headwaters Montana opposes the transfer. If you haven't commented on this proposal you have until [June 30 to submit your comment.](#)

Rather than the typical proposal of transferring federal public lands to the states, this calls for the *transfer of management authority* for 90 years from the US Forest Service to the Montana Department of Natural Resources (DNRC) that would manage the 60,000 acres with the same revenue generating focus as they manage State Forests.

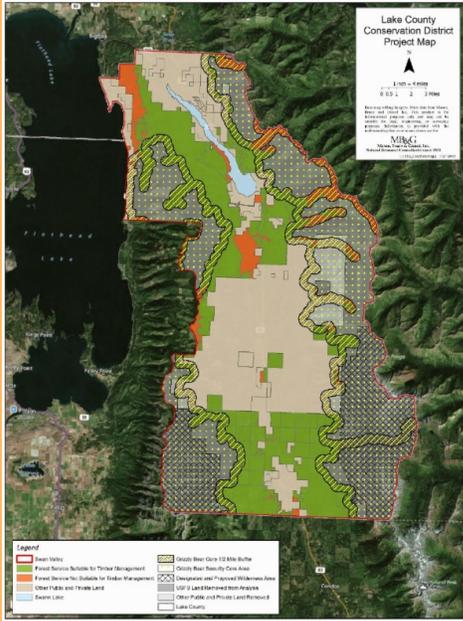
What You Can Do:

[Please consider writing a short letter](#) to the Lake County Conservation District (LCCD) [opposing](#) the transfer of 60,000 acres of the Flathead National Forest for management by the LCCD. [Comment deadline is June 30, 2017.](#)



[A Flathead National Forest creek](#)

Clean water, wildlife, recreation access, and other multiple use objectives common to publicly owned National Forest lands are some of the values at risk with the [Lake County Conservation District's proposal](#) to assume management and skim profits off 60,000 acres of the Flathead Forest, Swan Lake Ranger District. (Photo: Steven Gnam, www.gnam.photo)



The Swan Forest Initiative proposes to transfer management authority of 60,000 acres of the Flathead National Forest to the Lake County Conservation District for its sole financial benefit. Green areas on map represent the lands proposed for transfer.

A member of the LCCD has proposed that Congress legislate the transfer of management of 60,000 acres of the Swan Lake Ranger District on the Flathead National Forest to the LCCD. The LCCD would then cut national forest timber to raise approximately \$1,000,000 annually to fund LCCD projects. The LCCD has proposed that the Montana Department of Natural Resources (DNRC) conduct the actual management and timber harvest. The LCCD would receive the proceeds from the timber sales, and the Flathead Forest and the American Public would be left holding the proverbial empty bag.

Consider these talking points to include in your letter:

- These lands are national forest lands, not state or LCCD lands. The proposal represents a transfer of property and rights that undermines the national ownership of these lands.
- This proposal serves only the interests of the local LCCD. The national forests were established to serve the people of the United States as a whole and to maintain clean water, wildlife, wilderness, recreation, as well as timber production.
- The Montana DNRC would manage the lands. The DNRC's mandate is to only consider the financial benefit of cutting trees. These 60,000 acres would be managed intensely for timber. Other values like water, wildlife and recreation would be given much less consideration.
- The LCCD would reap the financial benefit alone. LCCD projects have nothing to do with national forest management issues or multiple use management. The American public would have to bear the impact from management activity, including reduced access.
- Recreation access could be limited and could require a state recreation license.
- Montanans overwhelmingly reject the idea of public land transfer to states or other local government bodies. This proposal goes against strong public opinion.

Where to Send Your Comments:

Email: swanstudy@gmail.com

Lake County Conservation District

ATTN: Swan Forest Initiative

64352 Hwy 93,

Ronan, MT 59864

***Thank You for taking a few minutes to write the LCCD.
Every letter is important... Your letter is important!!!***



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