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Flathead National Forest Releases Draft Revised Management Plan

Will You Attend Open House and Show Support for Wildlands?

June 17, 2016

Dear Friend!:

Please Donate

The Flathead National Forest has released its long-anticipated "*Draft Revised Management Plan*" for the 2.3 million-acre forest. This revised plan will set the course for forest management for the next 15-20 years. Because of the anticipated longevity, it's very important that folks who enjoy and appreciate our local national treasure **to show up and participate** in the revision process.

Please click [here](#) to make your donation Headwaters Montana through our secure, on-line service.

You have two opportunities to attend an open house hosted by the Flathead Forest to learn more about the proposed plan and demonstrate your interest.

Kalispell

When: *Monday, July 20, from 2-6pm*

Where: *The Flathead National Forest Supervisor's Office, 650 Wolfpack Way, Kalispell*

Missoula

When: *July 22, from 2-6pm*

Where:

Hilton Garden Inn, 3720 N. Reserve Street

What's At Stake?

From our initial reading it appear clear that

Flathead Forest managers intend the new plan to 1) minimize legal challenges to both the plan and future management decisions, and 2) provide themselves with the maximum management flexibility and discretion. These two goals aren't necessary bad outcomes. However, we think the new plan should insure the following:

- **Protects the gains** made in restoring and maintaining Grizzly Bear "core habitat." This core habitat benefits most other forest critters as well as water quality for humans and fish.
- **Maintains and improves connectivity** across the forest, particularly across US Highway 2 between Badrock Canyon and West Glacier. This busy corridor also includes the BNSF railroad and creates a challenging break in otherwise fairly continuous habitat. Highway under- and over-passes should be planned as was done in [Banff National Park in Alberta, Canada](#).
- **Recommends a lot more wilderness!** Recommended wilderness represents the highest level of administrative protection for lands important to both wildlife and people. As the Flathead Valley's human population continues to grow, recommended wilderness helps maintain both core habitat and connectivity and provides people a momentary refuge from our increasingly mechanized lives.
- **Maintains wilderness character** in recommended wilderness areas by not allowing "non-conforming uses." This means in part not allowing wheeled and mechanized transportation such as mountain bikes. Solitude, quiet and foot and horse travel are essential elements of the wilderness experience.

Tied to Grizzly Bear Recovery

The Flathead Forest's revised plan is being tied to the anticipated "delisting" of the Grizzly Bear in the Northern Continental Divide Grizzly Bear Ecosystem from protection under the Endangered Species Act. The Flathead Forest will adopt a Grizzly Bear management amendment at the same time it completes the revised forest plan. This amendment will dictate how the Flathead Forest will manage Grizzly Bear habitat into the future.

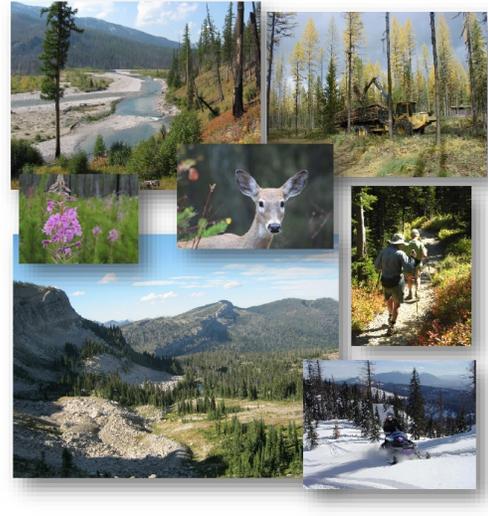
For those of you interested in this issue, the US Fish and Wildlife Service is holding a [public hearing](#) in Missoula on its Grizzly Bear habitat management plan.

When: *Thursday, July 7*

Where: *Double Tree Hotel, 100 Madison Street, Missoula*

Draft Revised Forest Plan

Flathead National Forest



Where to Find More Forest Plan Information

The Draft Plan and its accompanying Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) fill four thick volumes. We recommend approaching this document as follows:

*Look at the maps ([here](#)) of the "proposed action" (**Alternative B**). Do you agree with the FNF's recommended wilderness proposals? What about Backcountry? What changes would you like to see?*

***Alternative C** offers the most recommended wilderness.*

***Alternative D** offers the least.*

Where do you go for your wilderness experience? Is the FNF planning to protect your favorite places?

Stay Tuned-In and Participate

The public comment period for the Revised Forest Management Plan ends on **October 3, 2016**. In the coming weeks, we will provide you with more information and guidance to make your comments most effective.

Public lands belong to all of us and distinguish the US from other countries around the world that have lost - or never had - public ownership of such a treasure. Enjoy the Flathead Forest and participate in its management!

Cheers!



Dave Hadden, Director

406-270-3184 / info@headwatersmontana.org

Headwaters Montana, Inc. | 4068370783 | info@headwatersmontana.org |
PO Box 4310, 511 Lakewood Court, Whitefish, MT 59937

Protecting the Water, Wildlife and Traditional Outdoor Heritage in the Crown of the Continent!

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