
PUBLIC COMMENTS ON GOLD BUTTERFLY PROJECT

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Thank you for your inclusion of the public in the Gold Butterfly project and all your hard work. I have many of the same concerns I had at the beginning of this project so I will include them again with some extra comments.

Old Growth: In this time of Global warming we need to protect our biggest asset to produce oxygen and sequester carbon dioxide which are our trees and plants and not destroy them. They are vitally important in protecting our water source by shading and delaying snow melt and mitigating strong winds.. These are also the trees that are the most resistant to fire. The proposed cutting of trees to 8 remaining per acre is just barely shy of clearcutting and is not preserving old growth forests any more than saving 8 corn plants in a field consists of saving a corn crop. Didn't we learn anything from the 1970's? The logging and burning destroy the undergrowth and make the steep hillsides more susceptible to washouts, land slides , loss of topsoil, weed infestation and sediment impact to the streams. The endangered Fishers use this old growth along with many other species. I believe there should be no new or repurposed roads in Old Growth areas.

Threatened species: I am concerned about Wolverines, Pileated Woodpeckers, Flamulated Owls, Pine Martins, Fishers, Lynx, Bighorn Sheep, Peregrine Falcons, Bats, Elk, Bull Trout, Boreal Toads and possibly the Grizzly corridor. There is a lot of sensitive habitat in the proposed logging ares as illustrated by your own species maps. I understand that trees with visible nests will be spared but it is very difficult to see nests from the ground and thousands of nests will be likely destroyed.



Fire Suppression: I believe we really need to concentrate on the immediate woodland interface and help home owners make their land defensible against fires. Logging does not necessarily help with wild fires as seems to be shown with the huge Oregon fires in logged lands. In addition having a large number of workers, trucks, chainsaws, cigarettes can increase the chance of inadvertently starting fires.

Safety and Road maintenance : There are significant safety and maintenance concerns with Willow Creek road and other roads which will see a massive increase in heavy traffic. I am fearful that there could be injuries to school children, bicyclists, runners and horse back riders who frequently use Willow Creek road. I am also fearful that there will be more accidents on 93 as people try to pass logging trucks on their way to work. It seems the Forest service considers its responsibility to end at 1.5 miles and the rest is the County or State's problem. It seems to me that if someone is making money by increasing the use by weight 100 fold they should be responsible for the road's additional upkeep. I understand that resurfacing a road is \$100,000 per mile. The costs to the state and county will come out of our pocketbook or no maintenance will be provided and Willow Creek road which is already broken in places will continue to degrade to a dangerous level. The bridge over the Big Ditch may not be able to accommodate the additional load. There will also be a marked increase in dust in the unpaved portions. It does not seem that there has been an agreement with Ravalli County on road maintenance

Air quality: What is the effect of burning the slash from 10,000 logging trucks and dust created from the same vehicles? We already have smoke in the summer. It would nice to be able to breath the rest of the year. It seems ridiculous that you will be monitoring air quality from Missoula and Hamilton especially when monitoring dust problems.

Neighborhood Concerns: We are neighbors to this project and the idea of having 10 thousand logging trucks and numerous other vehicles passing by starting at early in the morning is less than appealing. Especially since it is estimated to last 5-8 years or more. We risk loss of property value with disturbance of the currently beautiful viewscape . This is particularly of concern if you are 90 years of age and may need to sell.

Loss of Recreation: We love hiking and skiing up Gold Butterfly. I would be afraid to meet a logging truck on that road. Since there is only one road this leaves the area inaccessible for 5-8 years.

Elk Migration: If there is logging in this whole area and disruption to the winter elk refuge and calving areas it will force the elk down into the valley. As ranchers we raise hay. The Willow Creek elk herd already does a significant amount of damage to our

haystacks and fences. In addition the elk will be pushed down to our property where there is a land easement and no hunting. This will be detrimental to the forest plan goal of maintaining hunting opportunity.

Water Quality and Quantity: As a ranch we depend on getting our water from Willow Creek. Any degradation of quality or quantity of the water can greatly effect our operation.

Weeds: Anytime the soil is disturbed it is at risk for a host of invasive weed species. It was not comforting to me to hear that weed control will be done if there was enough money and not for the long term. Also there is a chance for herbicides to get into our Willow Creek water system which we use for irrigation and watering stock

Money: This project seems to me a questionable use of our taxpayer dollars. The cost of this project has not been updated to reflect current prices and worker availability and will likely make it even more cost prohibitive. We need to build roads to harvest trees and we need to harvest trees to build roads. We have not even been able to maintain the roads we have as evidenced by the landslide several years ago. Staff on this project admit it is a money looser. The negatives outweigh the positives to me.

If we are going to use the medical model of "Treatment" then we also have to adopt the medical pledge of "do no harm ". Please do not be pressured to fulfill quotas. We are trusting you to keep our forests for generations to come.

Sincerely yours, Diane Olhoeft [REDACTED].