

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION

Northwestern Land Office

655 Timberwolf Pkwy., Suite 1, Kalispell, MT 59901 Phone: (406) 751-2240 Fax: (406) 751-2287



GREG GIANFORTE, GOVERNOR

1539 ELEVENTH AVENUE

STATE OF MONTANA

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE: (406) 444-2074
FAX: (406) 444-2684

PO BOX 201601
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-1601

May 9, 2022

Kirsten Kaiser, District Ranger
12858 US Highway 2
Troy, MT 59935

Re: Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Support for the Draft Decision on the South Yaak Fire Salvage Project

Dear Ms. Kaiser:

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) supports the draft decision on the South Yaak Fire Salvage project. DNRC is requesting Interested Party status for any objections to the Draft Decision. DNRC manages state trust lands in this area and assists private landowners with treatments on their lands. DNRC also has fire protection interests in this area. Our agencies share the common goals of reducing wildfire risk, improving forest health, and retaining a strong forest products industry in Montana.

DNRC supports the harvest of dead and down trees, removal of hazard trees, and actions to facilitate forest recovery. The proposal includes salvage on 624 acres and 3 miles of roadside hazard tree removal. These actions will enhance recovery of this area and utilize wood material that would otherwise deteriorate rapidly. The project aligns well with the goals and strategies in the Montana Forest Action Plan. The salvage and utilization of dead and down trees for wood products and the associated jobs will help boost the local economy and contribute to retention of a forest industry in Montana.

Prompt implementation of this project is critical to avoid loss of merchantable wood. If there are salvage opportunities on private lands please coordinate treatments on national forest system lands with private landowners.

DNRC is committed to continuing a positive working relationship with the Kootenai National Forest, specifically relating to landscape resiliency, wildfire response, community protection, and sustainable forest management. By working together, we can more effectively work towards an "all lands" approach to forest management and restoration benefiting both agencies' missions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Greg Poncin".

Greg Poncin, Area Manager, Northwest Land office
MT Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

CC: Doug Turman, Libby Unit Manager
Stephen Kimball, Local Government Forest Advisor