



HAMILTON RURAL FIRE DISTRICT

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406.375.5163

May 18, 2022

Bitterroot National Forest
Stevensville Ranger District
88 Main Street
Stevensville, MT 59870

Subject: **Bitterroot Front Project**

Dear Forest Supervisor Anderson:

The Hamilton Rural Fire District (HRFD) would like to go on the record as supporting the Bitterroot Front Project. We provide fire protection to several thousand acres of the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) along the Bitterroot Front.

Our support for the project is based on:

- The need to protect the people and property in the WUI located within the boundaries of HRFD.
- The need to reduce the wildfire risk to people and property in the HRFD.
- The need to improve forest resilience to disturbance by fire.
- The Bitterroot Front Project builds on the tenets of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy.
- The WUI in Ravalli County is at great risk from a significant wildfire, exposing the people and communities to elevated risk of harm.
- Fuels along portions of the Bitterroot Front Project have reached very high levels due to past land use and fire suppression practices.
- Land development in the WUI continues to contribute to the fire protection challenges of local, state, and federal fire agencies.
- Forest health in areas of the Bitterroot Front is in decline. They are in need of hazardous fuels treatments to reduce dangerous fuel levels and restore forest health and resilience.
- The need to make Ravalli County a fire adapted community through appropriate use of hazardous fuels treatments, land use practices in the WUI, and public involvement.

Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,

Bruce Suenram
Chair