

# DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION

Northwestern Land Office

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GREG GIANFORTE, GOVERNOR

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## STATE OF MONTANA

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HELENA, MONTANA 59620-1601

September 30, 2022

Bill Mulholland, District Ranger  
Tally Lake Ranger District  
650 Wolf Pack Way  
Kalispell, MT 59901

Re: Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Comments on the Round Star Project  
Draft Decision Notice

Dear Mr. Mulholland,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Round Star Project Draft Decision Notice. Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) manages State Trust Lands in this area. Our agencies share the common goals of reducing fire risk and improving forest health in Montana's forest landscapes. The project is not only important for the national forest system lands but also for the state and private lands in the area.

DNRC supports the Proposed Action Alternative which includes 9,190 acres of vegetation treatments. 92 % of the proposed treatment acres are in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) designated by the Flathead County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). The proposed treatments will reduce the intensity of fire behavior near communities and improve egress access for safer wildland fire operations.

With 15 % of the planning area in private ownership and 7 % of the area in state ownership, treating stands to reduce fire behavior in the WUI is critical. Treatments are also needed to increase species diversity and development of large trees in this landscape. The treatments will help maintain relatively low levels of insect and disease activity and provide commercial forest products for local economic sustainability through jobs and income.

DNRC looks forward to working with you in implementation of the project. Consider the use the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) which will retain timber revenue to help fund additional restoration projects.

Because of our strong interest, DNRC is requesting to remain an "interested party" regarding all objections to the Draft Decision. If changes requested by another party present the potential to reduce the ability to meet wildfire risk and forest health goals, or adversely affect DNRC's fire protection of state and private lands, DNRC requests participation in objection resolution discussions.

DNRC is committed to continuing a positive working relationship with the Flathead 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 and watershed management and restoration benefiting both agencies’ missions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Greg Poncin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Greg" and last name "Poncin" clearly distinguishable.

Greg Poncin  
Area Manager  
Northwestern Land Office  
MT Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

CC: Dave Poukish- Unit Manager, Kalispell Unit; Stephen Kimball- Local Government Forest Advisor