

LINCOLN COUNTY

STATE OF MONTANA

BRENT TESKE, COMMISSIONER
DISTRICT NO. 1, LIBBY

JIM HAMMONS, COMMISSIONER
DISTRICT NO. 2, TROY

JOSH LETCHER, COMMISSIONER
DISTRICT NO. 3, EUREKA

CORRINA L. BROWN
CLERK OF THE BOARD AND COUNTY RECORDER

March 29, 2024

Canoe Gulch Ranger District
12557 Highway 37
Libby, MT 59923

RE: Snowshoe Granite 1000 Roadside Fuelbreak Project Scoping

Hello,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Snowshoe Granite 1000 Roadside Fuelbreak project. We support this important project that addresses the extreme wildfire threat to the community of Libby and the surrounding area. This threat is identified in the Montana Forest Action Plan and the National Wildfire Crisis Strategy Kootenai Complex documents. The Snowshoe Granite 1000 Roadside Fuelbreak project also includes parts of the top two priority areas for treatment in the Cabinet Geographic Area as identified in the 2023 Lincoln County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). Treatments under this project are identified in both Parmenter Face (Priority 1) and Lower Granite/Cherry Creek (Priority 2) of the CWPP. It also appears to treat some sections of the Primary Lines of Defense (PLODs) identified by the Kootenai National Forest and are included in the CWPP.

By treating this area and creating a significant fuelbreak the district will have accomplished several things to reduce wildfire losses. These include community protection, safer egress from homes in the vicinity in the event of an evacuation, establishing a line of defense and safer firefighting conditions when wildfire does occur in this area.

Use of the current authorizations that allow for actions proposed in this project to be excluded from an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statements where there are no extraordinary circumstances is entirely appropriate in this case. We encourage the district to use, not just the money, but also the tools that are allowed under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, as the wildfire threats to our communities are so great at this time that we don't have the luxury of time to address the issue. We all need to move quickly and decisively at this point.

Lincoln County may also be able to facilitate additional cross-boundary treatments by applying for grant opportunities to treat private lands adjacent to the Snowshoe Granite 100 Roadside Fuelbreak project, if or when such opportunities become available.

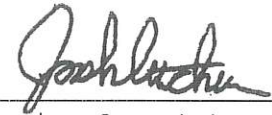
Sincerely,



Brent Teske, Commissioner
District No. 1, Libby



Jim Hammons, Commissioner
District No. 2, Troy



Josh Letcher, Commissioner
District No. 3, Eureka