



F.H. STOLTZE LAND & LUMBER COMPANY

Lumber Manufacturers

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Jeff Durkin
Project Leader
Swan Lake Ranger Station
Flathead National Forest
200 Ranger Station Road
Bigfork, MT 59911



Good for you. Good for our forests.™

Member Company

RE: Rumbling Owl Fuel Reduction Project

Jeff,

I would like to comment in support of the Rumbling Owl Fuel Reduction Project. F.H. Stoltze is the oldest family-owned sawmill in Montana and our company has managed timberlands in Northwest Montana for over 112 years.

I am discouraged to see the reduction in acres treated within this project. The Forest is trending towards lower volume output putting a major strain on the few remaining mills in Montana. Having a healthy forest products infrastructure allows for current and future forest treatments to remain economically viable to complete. This ensures that our forests remain healthy and local sawmills can continue contribute over \$300 million to the state and local economies.

I would encourage the use of all tools the Forest has available to streamline the process of getting this project completed. Using the available emergency authority to increase the pace of the project will allow for the risk of catastrophic wildfire to be reduced sooner, rather than before it is too late. I also support the use of allowing different harvest methods and prescriptions to achieve the desired goals.

I support treatment within riparian zones. Improving the health and reducing the fuel loads in these areas will help maintain stream cover in the long term. I also support the treatments within designated old growth units.

It is crucial to keep trees healthy and growing on our National Forest Lands. Active management will also provide jobs to local workers and much-needed fiber to local mills. Both of which are important to continue the management of the Forest for the desired future conditions. Please continue to manage as many acres as possible commercially. With healthy forests come healthy water, wildlife, and recreation. Commercial management will keep the desired trees growing while encouraging regeneration of the future forest. It's one of the most effective tools of reducing fuels across the landscape and within the WUI.

Sincerely,

Jeff Whitlock
Forester
F.H. Stoltze Land and Lumber



Member Since 1966



Charter Member