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First name: Wayne

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Organization: Kootenai Forest Stakeholders

Title:

Comments: Dear Nate, The Kootenai Forest Stakeholders Collaborative (KFSC) is pleased to provide this letter of support for the Swamped Project on the Libby District of the Kootenai National Forest. KFSC supports the project's integrated approach to improving forest health and resilience, reducing hazardous fuels, providing sustainable forest products, and supporting the economy and communities of the area. As you know, the Kootenai Forest Stakeholders Collaborative (KFSC) is a group comprised of individuals from the conservation community, timber industry, various recreational groups and local political and community leaders. It is our charter to be a partner with the Kootenai National Forest in the assessment and successful implementation of well planned and balanced projects across the forest. In review of the proposed Swamped project, much of the project area is within the wildland urban interface (WUI) and due to a lack of disturbance in the project area, tree density is at a level that the agency deems management is necessary to mitigate fire danger. Also, we noted that the Swamped Project is similar to that of the nearby Ripley Project and we hope that the recent court decisions are helpful in the design of this project. We also endorse the agency's management activities to include both commercial and noncommercial treatments including pre-commercial thinning, slashing and the re-introduction of a fire regimen into the ecosystem. In closing, we are aware that the agency is proposing to treat a large percentage of the project area. We appreciate your willingness to include the KFSC team as a working group on the development of this project. We feel we can offer input that is valuable and enhances the project given its location and proximity to Libby. KFSC would like to express our appreciation to your team for preparing an excellent project.