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Title:

Comments: Flathead National Forest

Friends of the Clearwater requests you extend the Mid-Swan Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) public review and comment period for at least 45 more days. This is strongly warranted for several reasons. For one, the project area is huge--174,205 acres. Land management actions would occur at least as long as the newly revised forest plan is designed to span--15 years.

Furthermore, the full DEIS is hundreds of pages, and being a "condition-based management" proposal is nothing like the Flathead NF has previously issued. It is essentially a new "forest plan" for the Mid-Swan area.

Also, essential supporting documents are not included on the Mid-Swan Project web page. Submitting a FOIA would essentially reduce the 45-day DEIS comment period by about a month.

Since the Flathead NF continues holding open houses, the resulting additional materials require additional time and effort to review.

The Mid-Swan Project would cause significant direct, indirect and cumulative effects on ESA-listed species, including threatened grizzly bear, lynx and bull trout, as well as on other sensitive native species.

Also, proposing amendments to the Forest Plan also complicates public review.

The initial 45 days is completely inadequate for public review and informed public comment. Again, please add at least 45 days to the current comment period.

Thank you for your timely reply,