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Comments: I have reviewed the Mud Creek EA and must say it is quite a bit to try to digest, and I certainly do not claim to have any real command of the document's contents, as I may have missed things! Regardless, I appreciate the opportunity to provide what I would consider to be mostly observations and comments, as I am in favor of the project overall.

Organizationally, it might help to provide a glossary of definitions of certain terms and acronyms so the reader does not have to search the text for what it means or not understand terms like "dispersed campsite" or "stand ready" and how "implementation areas" vs "management areas" vs "focal areas" and "indicator species" vs "sensitive species" vs "T&E species" relate to each other.

Regarding plant species, I did not see control of knapweed mentioned specifically, but we are discouraged at the amounts we find when traveling many of the backroads and can only imagine potential for spread with increased transportation related to the project.

Regarding wildlife, in no particular order, I was surprised that moose were not included more than one listing early on, especially considering the recent closure of the hunting season for moose in 250 by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks due to negative population trend concerns. Nest tree avoidance treatment for flammulated owls is mentioned, but what about a buffer area of some size around it to increase the odds they won't desert it, and will there be similar treatment for raptors like bald eagle (which was dismissed for consideration in the EA) and osprey (not even listed) or is the assumption that these species will not be present in the project area, though it includes riparian habitat? Pileated woodpecker does not appear to warrant consideration yet black-headed woodpecker does? Elk disturbance minimums not being accomplished in many areas should benefit from the decommissioned roads, etc. but how about further seasonal road closures to help improve the areas not making the minimum standard. That said, I will admit the discouraging fact of people going around and over barriers, especially considering all the improved ATV/UTV/ORV options available, is an issue!

Related to timber harvest and fire, size of openings greater than 40 acres can be good in that they can create more "edge effect" which tends to improve the relationship of the five basic wildlife habitat component needs: food, water, cover, space and arrangement. However, caution of such activities as timber harvest "temporarily" displacing wildlife species is warranted, as unless it is very short in duration, it sounds good but does not go without impacts because it kind of presupposes that there is unoccupied "carrying capacity" in the adjacent area for displaced individuals, etc.

Regarding recreation, what data is available documenting the need for more trails, campsites, motorized trails, etc. in the project area? The EA states that the project area is already one of the most heavily traversed districts. Last but not least, I believe that some type of outline of the estimated chronology of project implementation would be helpful in understanding how many acres might be affected by each treatment type each year over the life of the project. That would help us to get an idea of what kind of traffic to expect and when to expect it, because regardless of what you call it, West Fork Highway or Road, it will all funnel up and down what amounts to a two lane curvy road that is already quite busy at certain times of the year!

Thank you for all your efforts providing project information and an opportunity for the public to comment!