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Comments: I have reviewed the Rumbling Owl Fuels Reduction Project and would like to express my support for the project. Not only will the project have the intended impact of mitigating structure risk due to wildfire, this project will also have provide extreme benefit to wildlife, particularly ungulates. After these areas were logged, proper thinning was never conducted, this led to excessive fuels build up and a dense canopy that adequate forage production for ungulates. Forest health in NW Montana is at an all-time low and has led to the lowest ungulate populations in over 100 years.

This will be a very beneficial project for fuels reduction and should save taxpayers a lot of money in firefighting expenses should this area experience a wildfire. This project will also be very beneficial to ungulate populations and will in turn support the large carnivores that are dependent upon them. I would just ask that when the logging units are conducted that designing the timber cuts to maximize the benefits to wildlife be considered. Wherever it would not be detrimental to the fire suppression objectives, my recommendation would be to integrate as much variability into thinning as possible and create a mosaic of heavily thinned areas with lightly thinned or untouched pockets (they can be small ~50-100 yd pockets) of timber for added wildlife security.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment and I hope to see this project move forward and get completed.