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Comments: Comments on the H-L&CNF Forestwide Prescribed Fire Project March 4, 2024

Jess Secrest, Secrest Fire Solutions supports the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest Forestwide Prescribed Fire Project.

The Forestwide Prescribed Fire Project will help reduce the time and resources needed to satisfy the NEPA requirements. This should increase the time, resources, and dollars to implement projects on the ground.

I think the overall objective mix is correct and should cover most energy reduction / fire adapting projects that don't have commercial product removal.

The objectives of the Forestwide Prescribed Fire Project to Reduce the risk of high intensity wildfire through the reduction of hazardous fuels and Promote vigorous and resilient forest conditions that enable forested areas to withstand disturbances more easily, such as insect outbreaks and drought are great objectives. In most areas to meet these objectives will be costly and person power intensive. As you determine which areas to treat and which objectives to achieve. Total number of acres vs the right areas to treat needs to be in the discussion. Implementation of projects at the level prescribed in the Forestwide Prescribed Fire Project is a significant increase over your present level. Meeting this increase will require a shift in focus from wildfire management to wildland fire management. Where prescribed fire is on the same level and focus as dealing with wildfires. With this shift an increased tolerance of risk will be needed.

Project selection will be a interesting topic with the leadership group. As mentioned earlier treating acres and treating the right acres needs to be in the discussion.

Within Meagher County a project in Williw Creek drainage of the Castle Mountains is needed. Objective to reduce the fuel loading, create a fire adapted ecosystem to reduce the impact from wildfire on the municipal water source of White Sulphur Springs.

Please let me know the progress of this project.

Thanks Jess

Jess Secrest

Secrest Fire Solutions