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Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the East Valley Fuels Reduction project. I support the overall concept of reducing potential fire intensity in the wildland urban interface.

Please consider the following comments as you further design this project and consider environmental effects.

- 1.Unauthorized creation of trails is a problem in this area. Thinning stands and treating fuels in the urban interface may lead to the creation of more unauthorized motorized and non-motorized trails. Mitigation measures should be developed and enforced to prevent development of unauthorized braided trail systems.
- 2.Existing designated trails (summer and winter) in the area should be protected from logging and fuel treatment activities. Log skidding across the managed trail system should be limited and any trail damage restored.
- 3.Illegal firewood cutting is a major concern. Tree girdling and cutting live trees for firewood is a known problem in this area. Improving access will encourage more illegal firewood cutting. This project should provide for measures to limit or stop illegal firewood harvesting. Along some open road corridors there are few living trees greater than twelve inches in diameter near the road.
- 4.Recommend the use of prescribed fire where it is feasible to reduce fuel loading and provide for healthy forests.
- 5.Krause Basin is known for instability and change in stream water course over time. The project should consider the potential impact on the hydrology in the Krause Basin, both within and outside National Forest lands.
- 6.Noxious weed spread from fuels treatment activities is a concern. The project needs to mitigate the introduction and spread of weeds.
- 7.This will be a highly visible project in the Flathead Valley. I recommend the Forest take advantage of this opportunity to share the importance of forest urban interface management through a public relations strategy.
- 8.Clearly identify property boundaries prior to implementing project work. This will help prevent trespassing by both the Forest Service and adjacent property owners.
- 9.Consider the impact of vegetation management on streams and water flow, and the potential impact to developed properties adjacent to National Forest and downstream. Some streams in this area are on alluvial fans and migrate with time.
- 10.The project area is highly visible to the population in the Flathead and Swan Valleys. In meeting the purpose and intent of the project, visual quality should be a factor considered in the design of project work. Harsh unit edges should be avoided to prevent obvious contrast between treated and untreated timber stands.