



GETTING READY TO JUMP BACK IN

One of the First Completed Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) Projects in the US



Forest Restoration Benefits Recreationists

Jumping Creek Campground, a popular recreation site on White Sulphur Springs Ranger District, Lewis & Clark National Forest, has been closed since 2014. Nearly all of the large trees – a mix of Douglas-fir and spruce trees – were at risk of crashing down on the campground because their roots systems were failing due to widespread tomentosus (*Onnia tomentosa*) root disease. The risk to recreationist was too great and the District closed the popular campground indefinitely.

The 2014 Farm Bill and Montana Governor Steve Bullock’s announced Forests in Focus Initiative provided the catalyst for addressing forest health at Jumping Creek Campground. The Montana Department of Natural Resources and the Forest Service began collaborating on a project to address the forest health issues and mitigate risks to campground visitors.

The White Sulphur Springs Ranger District applied and received \$23,000 in Forests in Focus funding to implement recommendations from forest health experts: an aggressive stand removal to

eliminate hazard trees and convert to trees that are more resilient to tomentosus root rot. Knowing the result would be a dramatic change from what campground users were accustomed to when visiting Jumping Creek, the two agencies developed an interpretive sign to explain why removal of essentially all of the trees on the site was necessary to mitigate risk of serious accidents or injuries. New trees will be planted at the site in 2016-17.

A contract was awarded for tree removal/timber harvest pursuant to the silvicultural prescription. Logs from the project were utilized in many ways: those suitable for log home constructions were sent to a mill in the Bitterroot Valley, other logs were sent to RY Timber in Townsend, some were used for pallet stock and firewood.

With a significant amount of small diameter material, downed woody debris and logging slash, the Forest Service faced another challenge in that large piles posed both a fire risk and a safety risk due to their proximity to the

campground. Working together, the DNRC and the USFS determined that Good Neighbor Authority (GNA), authorized by the Farm Bill, would be an appropriate tool to continue with needed project work. Under the state’s first GNA agreement, both agencies contributed funding toward a contract to chip the material and haul to a nearby administrative site for future use in a mine reclamation project. Roughly 2700 cubic yards of chips were processed and transported from the site.

This project illustrates how intensive management is often appropriate to meet recreational and other restoration outcomes and underscores the importance of mill and manufacturing facilities to utilize raw materials coming off of forest management projects.

While there remains some additional work to be done before the campground is reopened, the Jumping Creek project provides an excellent example of interagency collaboration and innovation that’s at the heart of both the Farm Bill and Montana’s Forests in Focus Initiative.



Work was done in the winter, spring and summer.

(Above) Wood chips await their next destination; a mine reclamation project. (Below) A harvester crossing Jumping Creek and a campsite is just about ready for outdoor enthusiasts to utilize.



“The Jumping Creek Project is a great example of the progress that can be made when agencies collaborate on a worthwhile project, align project funding and make use of the tools and authorities provided by the Farm Bill and Montana’s Forests in Focus Initiative.” Paula Short, DNRC

