Proposed Limestone West Timber Sale
Notice of Public Meeting & Second Scoping Notice

Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation
Central Land Office - Bozeman Unit

June 9, 2016

Dear Bozeman Area Resident,

We will offer a presentation of the proposed Limestone West Timber Sale Project on June 23, 2016 at our Bozeman Unit Office, 2273 Boot Hill Court, #110, Bozeman, MT from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. All interested parties are welcome to come to the presentation and participate in the open discussion afterwards.

We recognize that this is an important area to our neighbors and many community members throughout Bozeman and its surroundings. We want to provide you with every opportunity to ask us questions about the proposed project, provide input, share your concerns, and stay updated on and involved in each step of the process. Please read on to learn more about this proposed project.

The first scoping notice for the proposed Limestone West Timber Sale [http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/trust/forest-management/limestone-west/whats-happening-now] was released on March 1, 2016 and announced the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) Trust Land Management Division (TLMD), Bozeman Unit, proposal for timber harvest activities within the Limestone/Nichols Creek area southeast of Bozeman, Montana. The scoping notice provided general information as the DNRC TLMD was in the initial stages of project development and evaluating the State trust lands.

We are releasing this second scoping notice to provide more detailed information for the proposed Limestone West Timber Sale. Specifically, DNRC TLMD is considering road construction, timber harvest and log hauling activities within sections 3, 4, 9 and 10, Township 3 South, Range 6 East, and log hauling activities in section 34, Township 2 South, Range 6 East *(see Proposed Harvest and Vicinity map)*.

Up to twelve (12) miles of new road would be constructed with up to six (6) miles to be left open for administrative use only, the remainder of the new road would be closed with slash and debris. Up to six (6) million board feet of sawtimber would be harvested from 730 acres of State land. Harvest units would be composed primarily of lodgepole pine, lodgepole pine and Douglas fir or Douglas fir. Harvest methods would include group selection, individual tree selection, seed tree, thinning from below, clear cutting, or any combination of these depending on the species composition and structure of the timber stands.

What are State trust lands?

Upon ratification of the Montana State Constitution in 1889, the U.S. Congress granted certain lands to the State of Montana for support of common schools and other public institutions. To this day, these lands are held in trust for the specific trust beneficiaries to which they were assigned and ultimately for the people of the State of Montana (*1972 Montana Constitution Section 11;* Article X, Section 11). The Board of Land Commissioners (Land Board) and the DNRC TLMD are required by law to manage these State trust lands to produce reasonable and legitimate return for the trust beneficiary institutions while considering environmental factors and protecting the future income-generating capacity of the land (*1972 Montana, Article X, Section 11; Montana Code Annotated,* MCA 77-1-202).

State trust lands within the proposed project area are currently held in trust for the benefit of the Public Buildings and School of Mines *(see Proposed Project Area map)*.

What are DNRC's objectives with this proposed project?

DNRC's mission is to manage the State forest resource for its health and long term sustainability and to protect and enhance the future income-generating capacity of the of the Trust land. The State Forest Land Management Plan

(SFLMP) and State Forest Land Management Rules (SFLMR) are the rules under which DNRC manages forested State trust lands. The SFLMP is premised on the philosophy that the best way to produce long-term income for the trust is to manage intensively for healthy and biologically diverse forests. In the foreseeable future, timber management will continue to be the primary source of revenue and primary tool for achieving biodiversity objectives on forested state trust lands.

DNRC TLMD is proposing the following objectives for this proposed project:

1. Manage the forest resource to promote improved health, productivity, and diversity.
2. Generate revenue for the trust beneficiaries.
3. Capture the value of dead and dying lodgepole pine.
4. Minimize fire and safety risks imposed by these conditions.
5. Enhance and expand the existing transportation system to provide improved access for long-term future management of the area and fire suppression needs.

What activities would be involved with the proposed project?

In order to achieve these project objectives, we anticipate conducting the following activities:

- Road improvement/Road construction/Timber harvest/Log hauling/Slash burning/Weed abatement

What other options or alternatives are there instead of the proposed project?

Administrative Rules of Montana 36.11.451 through 36.11.456 address the option of DNRC to accept applications for a Timber Conservation License in Lieu of Timber Sale and implement the bidding process for the License. A written notice of intent to request this License and a fee must be delivered to the Bozeman Unit office within 60 days of the date this Initial Proposal was provided. For further information, please contact Craig Campbell at the Bozeman Unit office at (406) 556-4507.

How can I participate?

We are currently in the beginning stages of project development and would like your help in identifying potential issues associated with our proposed activities. Although we encourage you to submit comments any time during the MEPA process, we are asking the public to contact us with initial issues and concerns by July 10, 2016. Identifying issues early on in project development will help us develop alternatives under which we can reasonably address concerns through proper project design.

Please send comments:

Via Mail:

Chuck Barone, Project Leader
ATTN: LIMESTONE WEST
PROPOSED TIMBER SALE
Montana DNRC
2273 Boot Hill Court, Ste. 110
Bozeman, MT 59715

Via Email: [limestonewest@mt.gov]

Or Submit Comments Online at: [http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/trust/forest-management/limestone-west/submit-comments].

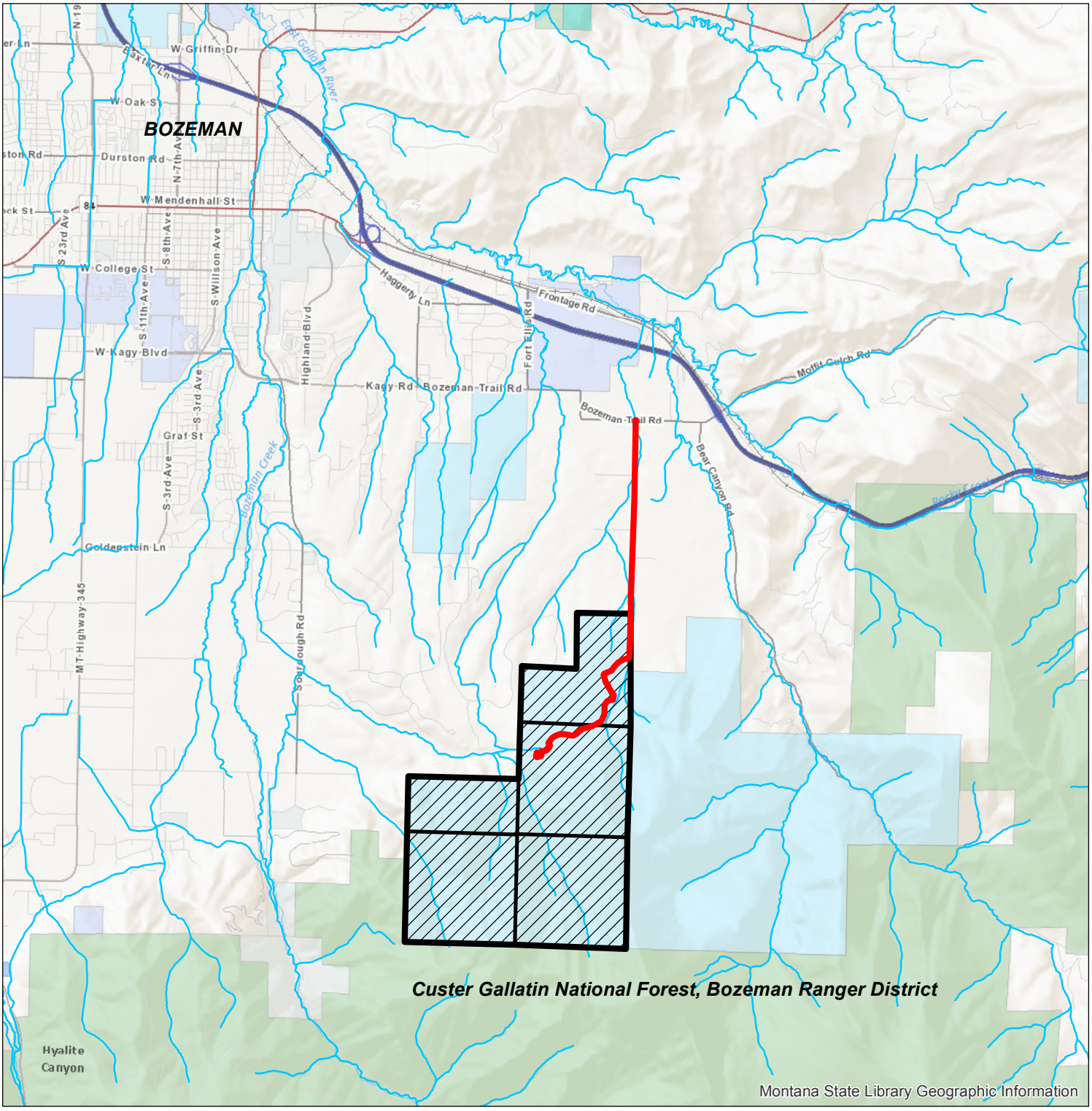
For more information on the proposed Limestone West Timber Sale Project, please visit our project website at [http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/trust/forest-management/limestone-west]. If you have other questions regarding the MEPA process, contact Craig Campbell or Chuck Barone at the Bozeman Unit Office at 586-5243.

Sincerely,

Chuck Barone

Chuck Barone
Bozeman Unit Forester

Limestone West Project Area/Vicinity Map
Central Land Office/Bozeman Unit
Sections 3, 4, 9 & 10, Township 3 South, Range 6 East & 34, Township 2 South, Range 6 East



Limestone West Project Area

Limestone West Log Hauling Route

State Lands

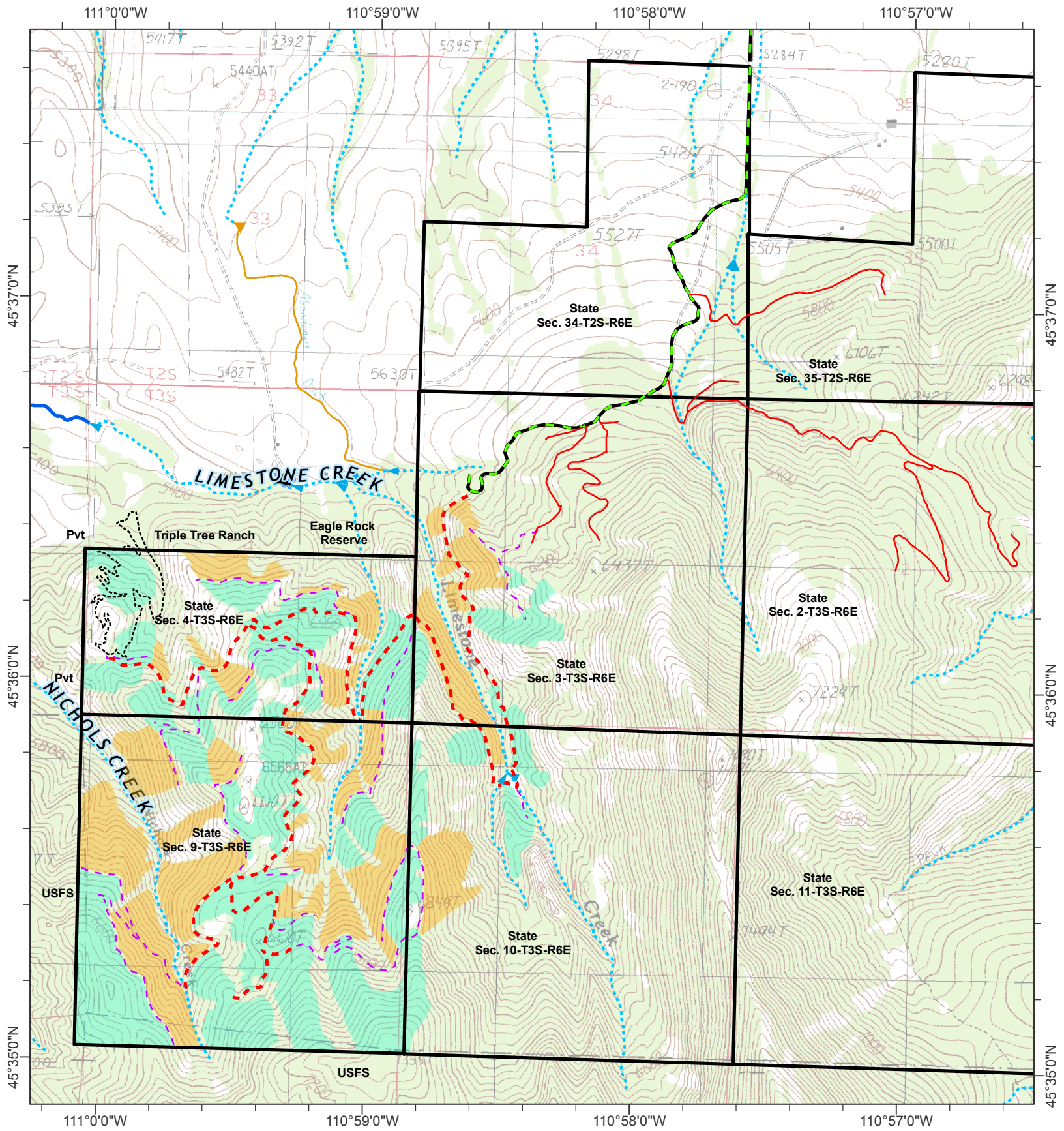
Custer Gallatin National Forest

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

1:80,000

N

Proposed Limestone West Timber Harvest
Sections 3, 4, 9 and 10-T3S-R6E, Gallatin County



Access/Haul Road

Existing Road Restricted

New Road Restricted

New Road Reclaimed

Triple Tree Trail

0 650 1,300 2,600 Feet

Stream

Tractor Unit

Cable Unit

N