

**SWAN RIVER STATE FOREST  
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND  
CONSERVATION  
LOST NAPA MULTIPLE TIMBER SALE PROJECT PROPOSAL**

**May 3, 2019**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Swan River State Forest, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) is proposing the Lost Napa Multiple Timber Sale Project Proposal. This project would consist of multiple timber sales that would be sold and harvested over several years. This notice is to inform the public about this proposed project and provide an opportunity to become involved at the initial stage of project development.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

The gross sale area is in Lake County approximately 8 air miles south east of Swan Lake, MT in the Swan River State Forest. It covers approximately 12,386 acres of state trust lands in and adjacent to the South Lost, Cliff Creek, Cilly Creek, Soup Canyon, Soup Creek, and Napa drainages. Harvesting could occur on approximately 5 to 20 percent of the gross sale area.

- In Township 24 North, Range 17 West it includes Sections: 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 34, 35, and 36.
- In Township 23 North, Range 17 West it includes Section: 3.

**PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

The primary objectives of this project are to:

- promote biodiversity by moving forest stands toward historic cover type conditions and species composition;
- improve forest health and productivity by addressing insect and disease issues;
- generate revenue to the Common Schools trust for funding public education and to benefit local economies;
- contribute sufficient volume towards DNRC's annual sustained yield target of 56.9 million board feet (MMbf) as required by state law (77-5-221 through 223, MCA) while incorporating and meeting important ecological commitments;
- develop and improve the transportation system and infrastructure for long-term management, fire suppression, and public access;

- improve water quality by removing and rehabilitating sediment point sources, and meet *Best Management Practices* (BMPs) on all project roads, including haul routes to Highway 83.

## **GUIDING POLICIES FOR PROJECT DEVELOPMENT**

In December 2011, the Land Board approved the *Record of Decision* (ROD) for the Montana DNRC *Forested State Trust Lands Habitat Conservation Plan* (HCP). Approval of the ROD was followed by the issuance of an *Incidental Take Permit* by the United States Fish Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Swan River State Forest plans timber sale projects in accordance with the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), which allows for commercial forest management activities, including salvage, in an open geographic subzone for 3 years at a time on a rotating basis. The Lost Napa project area is located within subzone #1 which will be open from 2022 through 2024.

Lands involved in this proposed project are held by the State of Montana in trust for the support of Common Schools. The State Board of Land Commissioners (Land Board) and DNRC are required by law to administer these lands to produce the largest measure of reasonable and legitimate return over the long term for these beneficiary institutions, as required in *Section 77-1-202, Montana Codes Annotated (MCA)*.

DNRC will manage the lands involved in this project according to the philosophy and standards described in the *State Forest Land Management Plan* (SFLMP), which states:

*“Our premise is that the best way to produce long-term income for the trust is to manage intensively for healthy and biologically diverse forests. Our understanding is that a diverse forest is a dynamic forest that will produce the most reliable and highest long-term revenue stream... In the foreseeable future, timber management will continue to be DNRC’s primary source of revenue and primary tool for achieving biodiversity objectives.”*

The project design will follow *Montana’s Administrative Rules for Forest Management (Annotated Rules of Montana 36.11.401 through 36.11.450)*.

In December of 2012, DNRC completed the acquisition of additional land in the far south western corner of the proposed project area. As of Summer, 2018 all acquired lands on the SRSF have been incorporated into the HCP. Management of this land is additionally affected by conservation easements held by the Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks under the Swan Valley Conservation Project Multi-Resource Management Plan.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

Swan River State Forest is in the initial stages of developing this project and is seeking public comment regarding concerns or issues for this proposed timber harvest. In accordance with the *Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)*, public input regarding

the project will be used to identify specific issues, define analyses, guide alternative development, and shape project development of the individual timber sales.

DNRC plans to assemble an Interdisciplinary Team (ID Team) of specialists (wildlife biologists, hydrologists, foresters, etc.) to evaluate the initial public input and to complete an *Environmental Impact Statement* (EIS) on the potential environmental effects of this proposal.

If requested, public meetings and/or field tours may be held as the project progresses.

### **HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR COMMENTS**

The comment period will remain open until June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019. You may submit comments to Clay Stephenson, Management Forester, Swan River State Forest, via mail (34925 MT Highway 83, Swan Lake, MT, 59911), phone (406-754-2301), fax (406-754-2884), or e-mail at [Cstephenson@mt.gov](mailto:Cstephenson@mt.gov).

We would also like to know the best way to keep you or your organization informed and actively involved throughout the project development and analysis period. Please inform us if a particular type of communication is preferable.

If you do not wish to comment at this time, but would like to remain informed of the status of this project, fill out and return the enclosed form. If you do not respond, further documentation regarding the proposed Lost Napa Multiple Timber Sale Project Proposal will not be sent to you.

Thank you for your interest in the management of state trust lands.

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*I do not have concerns or comments at this time but would like to stay involved in the process of project development.*

Name:

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Address:

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Telephone:

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email:

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Please send completed form to arrive by March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

Swan River State Forest

c/o Clay Stephenson

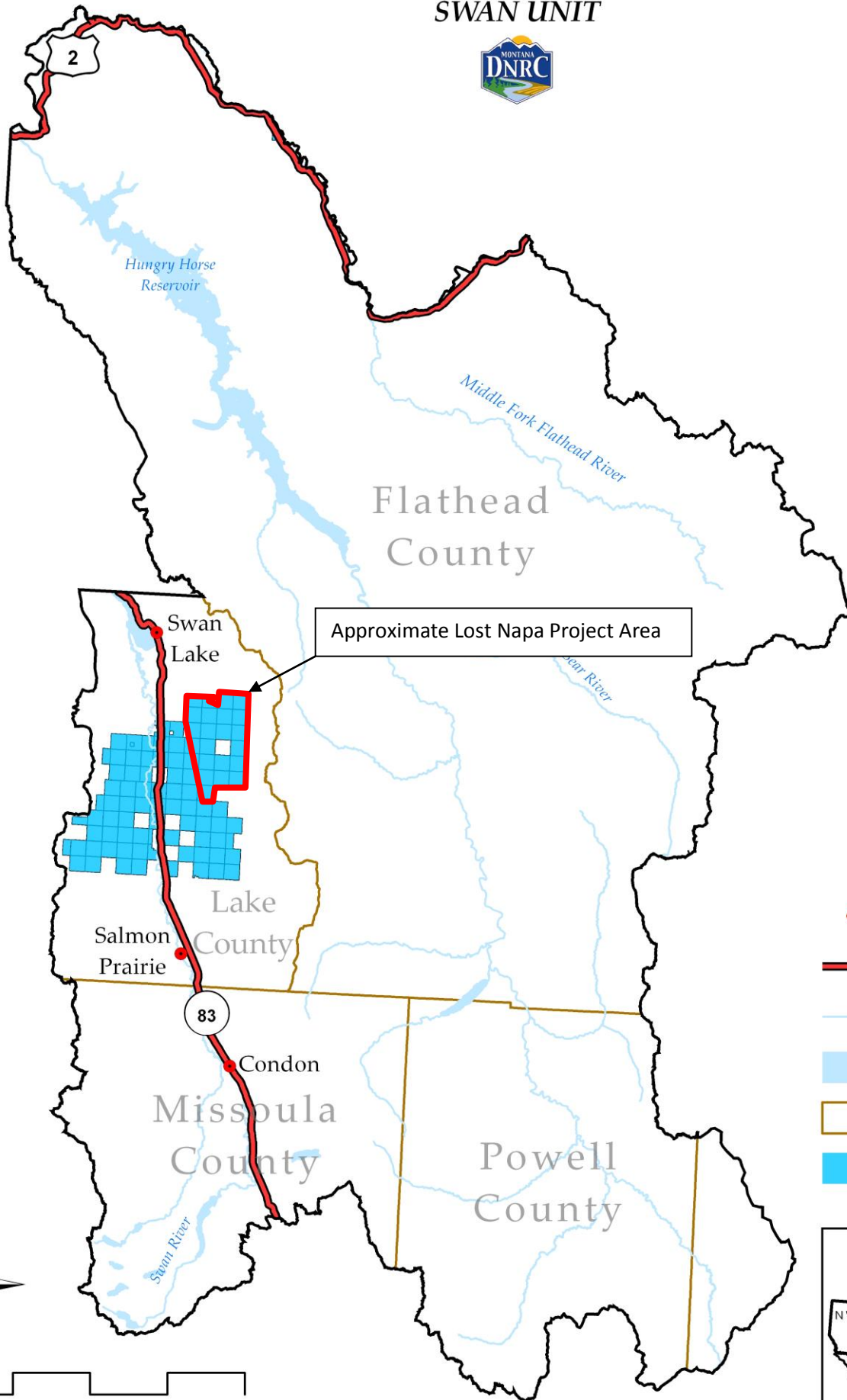
34925 MT Highway 83

Swan Lake, MT 59911

Telephone: 406-754-2301; or e-mail: [Cstephenson@mt.gov](mailto:Cstephenson@mt.gov)

# LOST NAPA VICINITY MAP

## SWAN UNIT

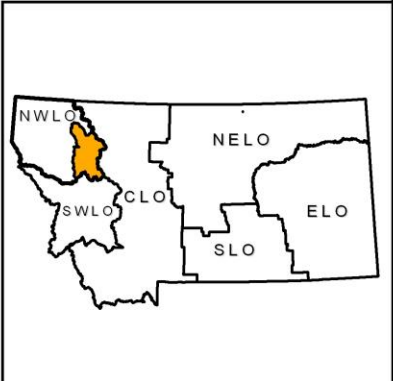


Approximate Lost Napa Project Area

- Towns
- Major Roads
- Rivers
- Water Bodies
- County Border
- State Trust Land



0 2.5 5 10 15 20 Miles



# Lost Napa Multiple Timber Sale EIS: Project Area

