

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
AND CONSERVATION

Trust Land Management Division - Forest Management Bureau

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Public Notice

Supplement to Environmental Impact Statement and
Amendment to Habitat Conservation Plan
12/2/2016

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), Forest Management Program intends to jointly prepare a draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). DNRC and USFWS will prepare the DSEIS under the National Environmental Policy Act and Montana Environmental Policy Act.

The purpose of this notice is to describe the proposed action and notify other Federal and State agencies, potentially affected tribes, and the public of DNRC's intent to prepare a DSEIS.

In December 2011, the USFWS issued DNRC an incidental take permit (Permit) authorizing take of grizzly bear, Canada lynx, bull trout, and two other fish species incidental to DNRC's forest management activities. Grizzly bear, Canada lynx, and bull trout are listed under the Endangered Species Act, while the two fish species, westslope cutthroat trout and Columbia redband trout, may potentially be listed in the future. DNRC, in coordination with the USFWS, developed a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) as a required component of the application for a Permit. The HCP outlines conservation strategies the DNRC follows for the above-mentioned species on 548,500 acres of forested state trust land in western Montana for a Permit term of 50 years.

DNRC is proposing to amend the existing HCP to cover 81,416 acres of additional lands that have been brought into DNRC ownership since the adoption of the Permit and HCP and to incorporate the terms of the following settlement agreement: Settlement Agreement and Release: *Friends of the Wild Swan, et al. v. S.M.R. Jewell, et al.*, in U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit (Appeals No. 14-35875, 14-35923 and 14-35927) and U.S. District Court for the District of Montana (No. 9:13-cv-0061-DWM).

For a more detailed description and background on the DNRC HCP, proposed actions, and statutory requirements, please refer to the USFWS Notice of Intent published in the Federal Register Volume 81, Issue 229 (November 29, 2016) <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/search/pagedetails.action?granuleId=2016-28736&packageId=FR-2016-11-29&acCode=FR&collectionCode=FR>

To access the current DNRC HCP, please visit: <http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/trust/forest-management/hcp>.

To access the settlement agreement, please visit: http://dnrc.mt.gov/landboard/meeting-archive/archive/2015-08-31_land-board_agenda-info-1.pdf.

The public will be notified when the DSEIS becomes available for public review and will have the opportunity to submit comments during that time.

For more information or to comment, please contact:

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