

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION



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Initial Proposal Taylor to Swift Forest Management Project October 18, 2024

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), Stillwater Unit is proposing to manage classified forested lands on the following state-owned parcels:

T32N R22W

Sections 6, 7, 17, 19, 20, 29, 30, 31, 32 & 33

The proposed Taylor to Swift Forest Management Project is located approximately 9 miles northwest of Whitefish, MT in Flathead County.

The primary objectives of the proposed project are:

- Generate revenue for the following trusts: MSU 2nd Grant, Montana Tech, MSU Morrill, Eastern College-MSU/Western College-UM, School for the Deaf and Blind, Common Schools,
- Promote biodiversity on State ownership by managing for appropriate or desired stand structures and species compositions based on ecological characteristics such as topography, habitat type, disturbance regime, and unique characteristics.
- Capture economic value of dead and dying trees and promote the regeneration of healthier, more resilient trees.
- Ensure current recreational values such as the Whitefish Trail System are maintained through harvest unit boundary design and prescription selection.
- Establish an effective shaded fuel break on the entire length of Lower Whitefish Road to facilitate enhanced wildland fire protection access adjacent to the boundary of the City of Whitefish (CoW) - Wildland Urban Interface (CoW - WUI). The CoW - WUI is depicted on the included map on page 3.
- Contribute to the Montana DNRC's Annual Sustained Yield.

The proposal would harvest 2-3 million board feet (MMbf) within a project area of approximately 1,880 acres. Harvest prescriptions would vary by unit and could include, but are not limited to, shaded fuel breaks, selective salvage, commercial thinning, understory slashing, pre-commercial thinning, group selection, seed-tree, clear-cut with reserves, shelterwood and old-growth maintenance treatments. Old-growth maintenance is a silvicultural treatment prescription used to improve health and resilience of a forested stand by (generally) removing stems that are susceptible to insects, disease, and other forest health challenges. The old growth stand attributes, such as appropriate large trees per acre, stand age, and tree density, would be retained. The proposed harvest would contribute to the DNRC's sustained yield, as mandated by state statute. DNRC is required by state law (MCA 77-5-221 through 223) to sell approximately 60 MMbf of timber annually and continue to produce revenue over time.

Road maintenance, improvements, and reconstruction may be needed on existing roads to improve function and drainage of the haul route. Up to 2.5 miles of temporary road construction may also be necessary. No permanent roads will be built as part of this project.

Additional forest management project work including precommercial thinning, noxious weed management, tree planting, prescribed burning, slash pile burning, or mechanical scarification may also occur under the proposed action.

NOTE: The City of Whitefish and Whitefish Legacy Partners have applied for the purchase of a Public Recreation Use Easement (PRUE) on approximately 600 acres near Smith Lake and Swift Creek, located in the southeast corner

of the project area. Proposed logging operations on Lower Whitefish Road will necessitate temporarily restricting public access during the work week to facilitate safe harvesting operations.

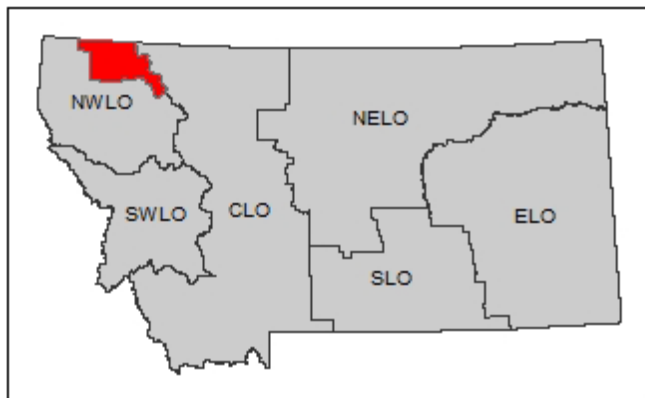
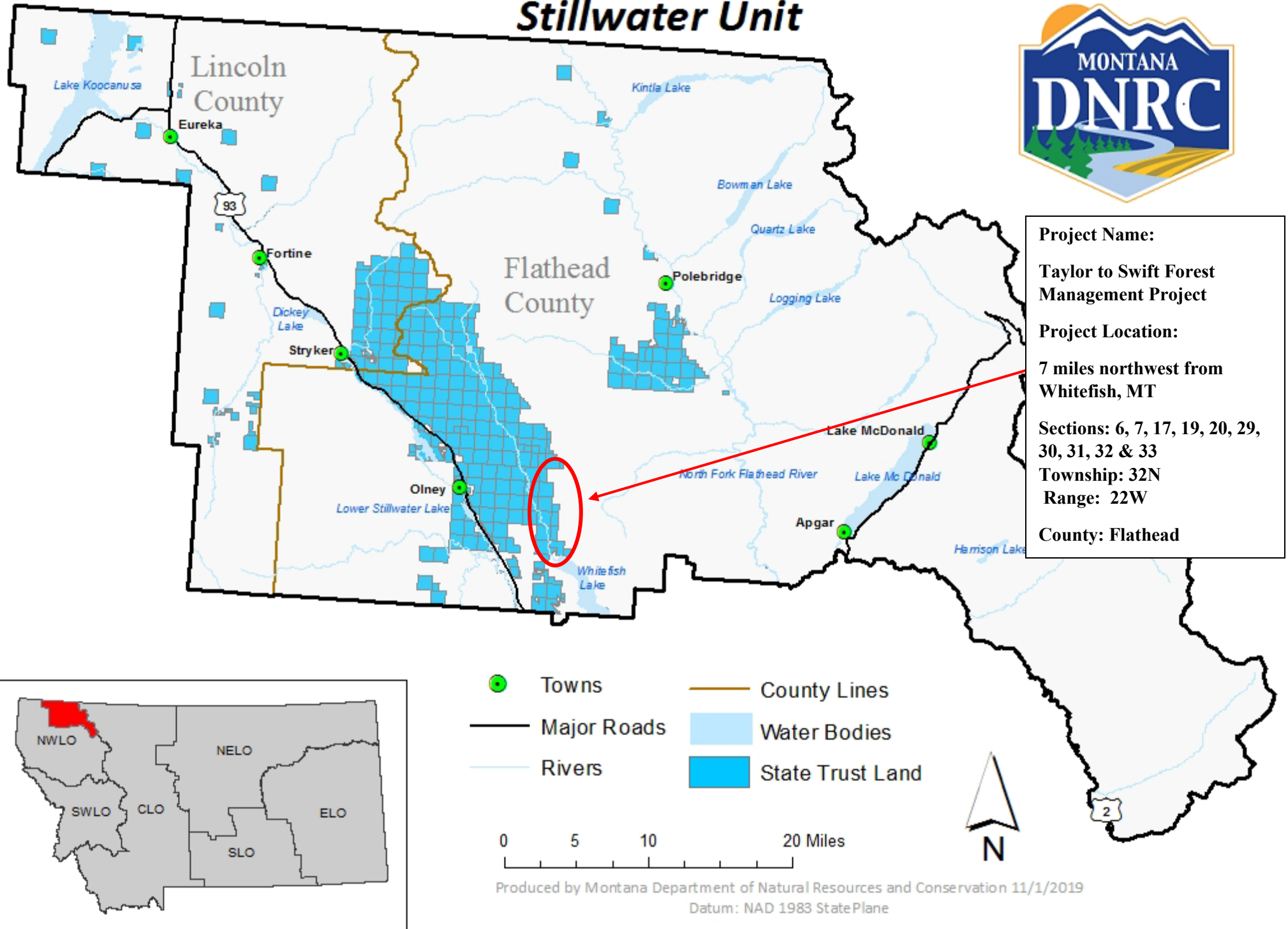
The DNRC is in the scoping phase of the project environmental assessment, so all volumes, acreages and road distances are preliminary estimates. In preparation for this project, specialists such as wildlife biologists, hydrologists, soil scientists, and archeologists will be consulted.

The Montana DNRC invites written comments and suggestions concerning this proposal. Please respond by **November 19, 2024**.

Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
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State Trust Land Vicinity Map

Stillwater Unit



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

0 5 10 20 Miles



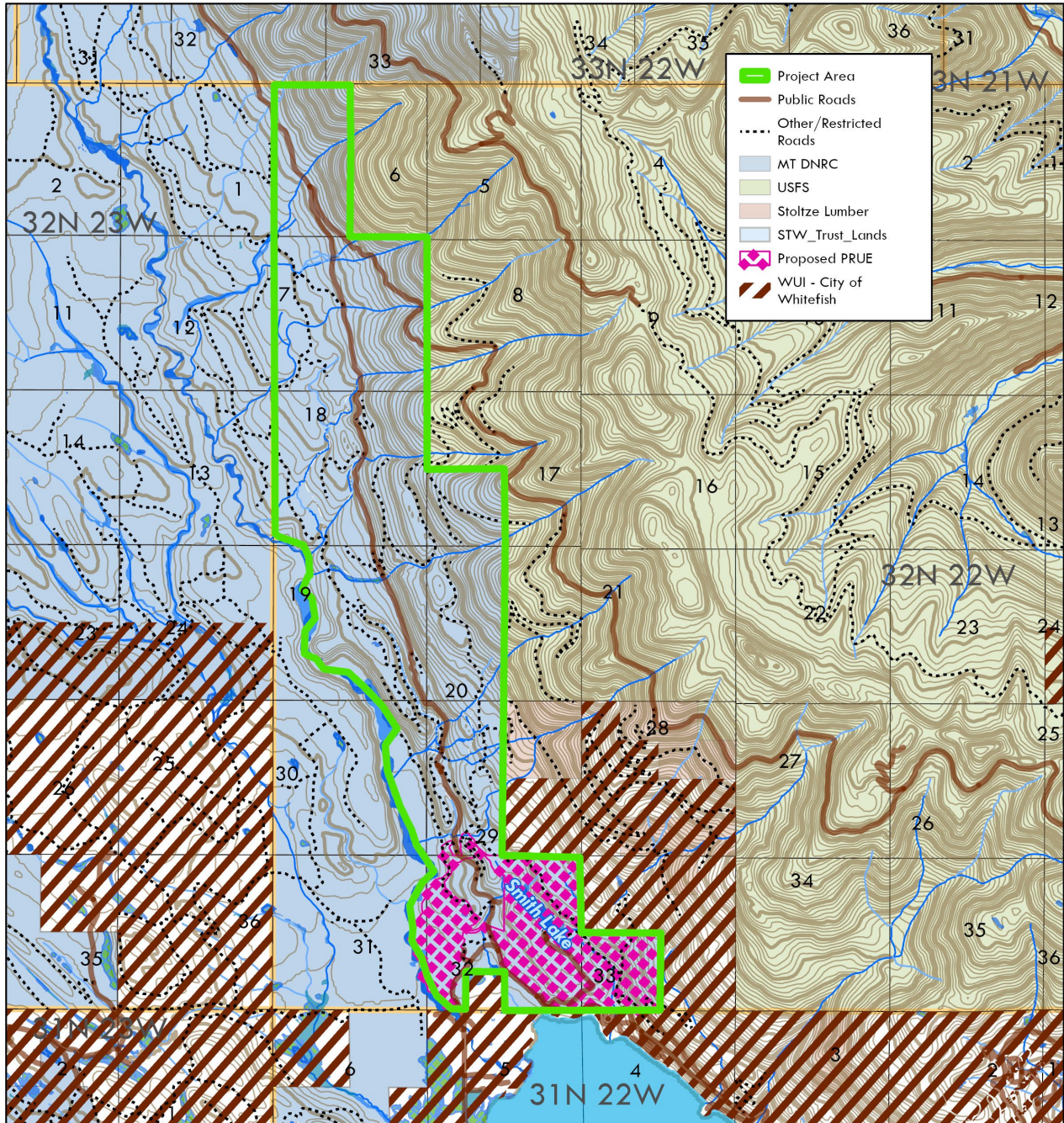
Produced by Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation 11/1/2019

Datum: NAD 1983 StatePlane

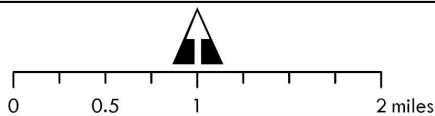
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Initial Proposal



10/3/2024



MRL

