

STILLWATER STATE FOREST

GOOD MARTIN WEST TIMBER SALE PROJECT

INITIAL PROPOSAL

July 9, 2015



INTRODUCTION

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), Stillwater Unit, is proposing the Good Martin West Timber Sale Project. The project is in the initial stages of public involvement and project development for an environmental analysis. This proposal would harvest 3 to 5 million board feet (MMbf) of sawtimber and precommercial thin 250-350 acres from portions of 4,954 acres of State Trust land located approximately 1.5 miles south of Olney and 11 miles northwest of Whitefish. Harvesting would occur in portions of sections 18, 19, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 and 34, T32N, R23W and Sections 1 and 2, T31N, R24W (see attached map).

This project is part of an ongoing effort to produce revenue for the State Trusts while maintaining a healthy and productive forest into the future. Montana State University, School of Mines, MSU Morrill Grant, State Normal School, and Public Buildings are the trusts that could receive income from this project.

COMMENT PERIOD

This notice initiates a 30-day comment period, which provides the public an opportunity to become involved at the initial stage of the project. In addition, this document provides general information about the proposal and its objectives. If requested, another notice with greater detail will be sent once the project progresses and proposed harvest units have been defined.

Comments and concerns you may have about harvesting timber and the associated activities in this area, which include roadwork, site preparation, and precommercial thinning of sapling sized trees are welcome and will be considered during analysis and design of the project.

The comment period will remain open until August 8, 2015.

PROJECT PARAMETERS

The lands involved in this proposed project are held by the State of Montana in trust for the support of various school trusts (see above). The State Board of Land Commissioners 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 would also consider other opportunities that would produce long-term revenue to the State trusts. However, the proposals must show the ability to produce long-term revenue comparable to timber management. *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 the \$100 fee must be delivered to the Stillwater Unit office within 60 days of the date this Initial Proposal was provided. For further information, please contact Mike McMahon at Stillwater State Forest at (406) 881-2670.

DNRC will manage the lands involved in this project according to the philosophy and standards in the State Forest Land Management Plan, 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."

Furthermore, the project design will follow *Montana's Administrative Rules for Forest Management (Annotated Rules of Montana 36.11.401 through 36.11.456)* and the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) when it applies.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Generate revenue for the Trusts while ensuring forest productivity into the future.
- 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.

- Contribute to the annual targets of timber-harvest volumes of DNRC and the Northwestern Land Office. DNRC is required by State law (77-5-221 through 223, MCA) to harvest approximately 57.8 MMbf of timber annually and produce revenue over time.
- Apply Best Management Practices (BMPs) or meet design criteria necessary to promote long term water quality during logging and road construction operations. Road construction may include site improvements, new temporary construction, obliteration, and maintenance.
- To the extent practicable, improve segments of road into the project area which may be open to motorized public activity as defined by the Stillwater Unit's Transportation Plan provided in the HCP.

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT AREA AND OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE AREA TO MEET THE OBJECTIVES

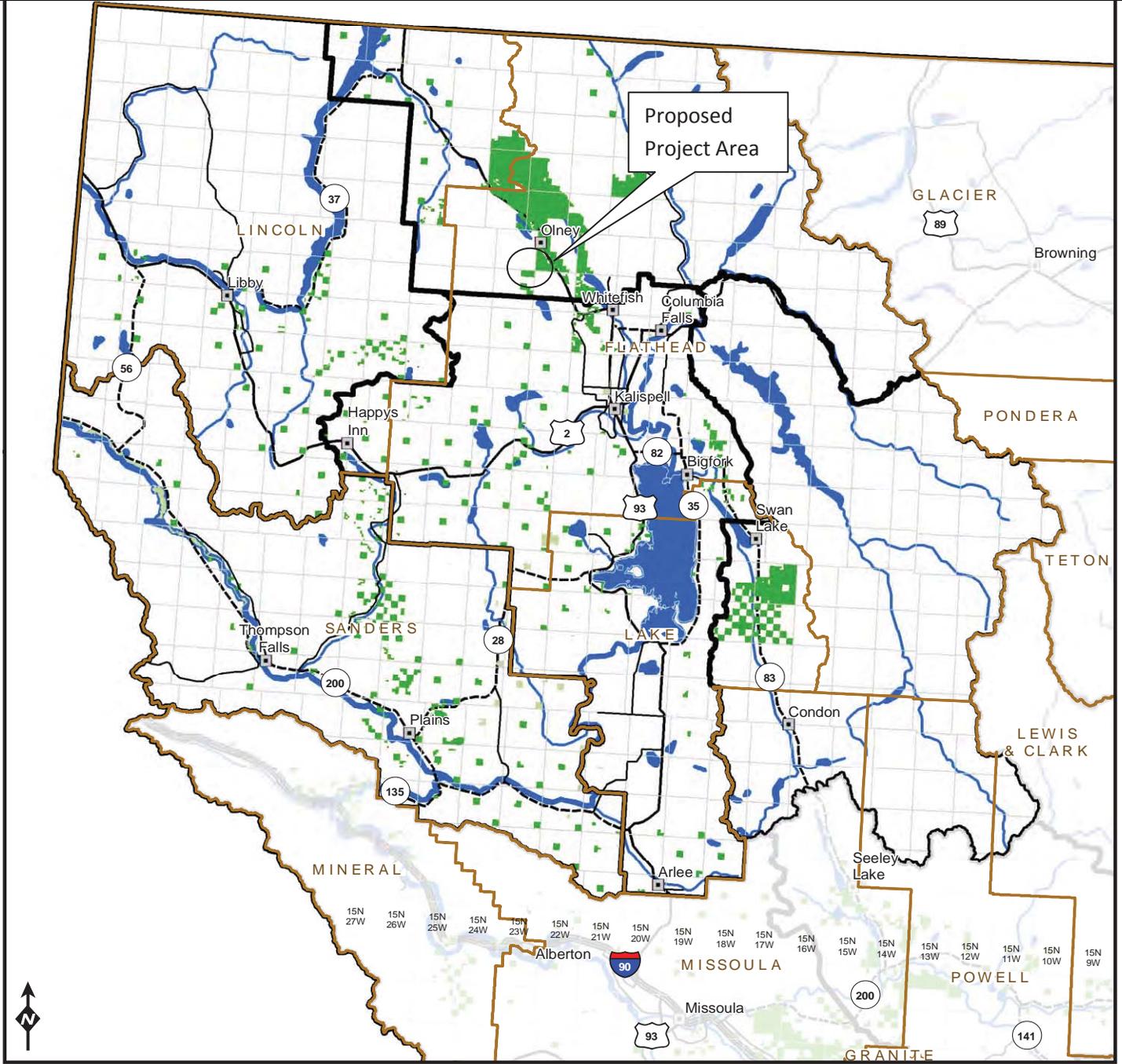
1. The project area is located approximately 11 air miles northwest of Whitefish and approximately 1.5 miles south of Olney (see vicinity map).
2. Much of the project area is comprised of the Douglas-fir/western larch and subalpine fir timber covertypes. Portions of the project area contain older stands (150-years-plus in age and potential old-growth stands). As with all stands in the project area, these areas are being analyzed for health and potential management opportunities.
3. As shown on the map, potential pre-commercial thins and harvest units have been identified. Potential harvest units could receive treatments such as overstory removal, intermediate treatments (such as commercial thins, and group selections which could create small openings less than 3 acres in size), and regeneration treatments (such as seedtree with reserves and clearcut with reserves). These treatments would be accomplished using a combination of ground based and skyline logging. The project objectives are to establish regeneration of the desired species mix, improve vigor/tree growth, meet the Forest Management Rules and Habitat Conservation Plan in relation to wildlife, fisheries, and water quality as well as provide improved access for potential fire suppression efforts. Open roads will be evaluated for possible harvest of small diameter materials (trees less than 5" DBH) within 200 'of the roads for fuels reduction. The map is not intended to portray that our foresters plan to harvest all the acres displayed. At the current stage of project development, considerable adjustment of the location of proposed harvesting may occur as additional field reconnaissance by the Interdisciplinary Team occurs and public input is received.
4. The project objectives are to establish regeneration of the desired species mix, improve vigor/tree growth, meet the *Forest Management Rules* in relation to wildlife, fisheries, and water quality as well as provide improved access for potential fire suppression efforts.
5. Mechanical site prep would be utilized to reduce the hazardous slash fuels and prepare the sites for new regeneration.
6. The proposed roadwork includes incorporating BMPs for site improvements. Existing roads will be used where feasible. In addition, temporary spur roads may be constructed to reach the proposed harvest areas; these segments of road would be closed following harvesting activities. Temporary bridge installations/ removals as well as various stream crossings may be completed to allow access and minimize the risk of sediment delivery.
7. The State is still completing:
 - reconnaissance surveys,
 - timber-stand inventories,
 - watershed and sediment-source surveys,
 - noxious-weed surveys, and
 - an assessment of transportation/logging systems.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR COMMENTS

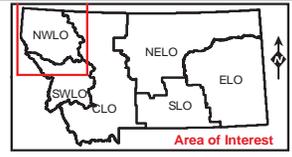
Please submit your comments by August 8, 2015 to: Montana DNRC Stillwater Unit, Pete Evans, P.O. Box 164, Olney, MT 59927; phone this information to 406-881-2371; or email Pete Evans at pevans@mt.gov. If you do not have comments or concerns at this time, but wish to stay involved in the project, please contact Pete Evans by August 8, 2015, or you will be removed from this project's mailing list.

Good Martin West Timber Sale Vicinity Map

Sections 18, 19, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 and 34, T32N, R23W
 and Sections 1 and 2, T31N, R24W Flathead County
DNRC – Stillwater Unit, Olney, Montana



	Interstate Highway		County		City
	U.S. Route		DNRC other		Township/Range
	State Highway		DNRC managed for timber		Management Unit
	Secondary Roads				



6 December 2010
 Montana DNRC
 Technical Services Section/dr



Proposed Good Martin West Timber Sale Project

Sections 18, 19, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 and 34, T32N, R23W
and Sections 1 and 2, T31N, R24W



Legend

- Good Martin West Project Area

Proposed Treatment Areas

- Potential Harvest Units
- Potential Precommercial Thins

Roads

- HIGHWAY
- OPEN
- RESTRICTED

Ownership

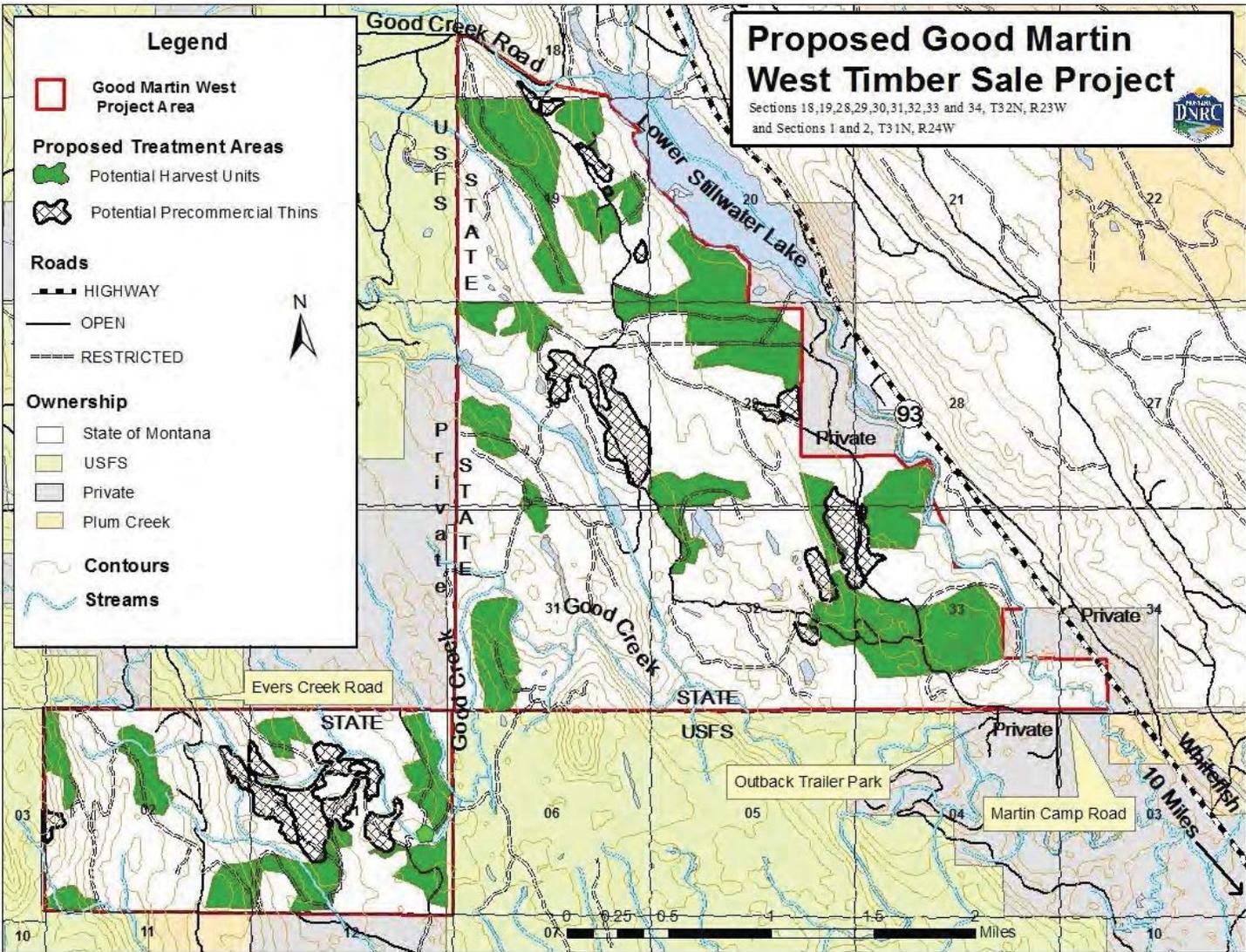
- State of Montana
- USFS
- Private
- Plum Creek

Contours

Contours

Streams

Streams



Whitefish
10 Miles