

June 1 , 2019

Custer Gallatin National Forest
Attn: Forest Plan Revision Team
P.O. Box 130, (10 E Babcock)
Bozeman, MT 59771

Submitted via Custer-Gallatin Forest Plan Revision Website

Dear Forest Plan Revision Team:

On behalf of our members of the Montana Logging Association (MLA) we would like to comment on the proposed forest plan revision on the Custer/Gallatin National forest. *The mission of the Montana Logging Association is to enhance the professional status of Montana timber harvesters, support their endeavors, and ensure that our state's renewable forests provide opportunity for generations to come.*

In general, tone of this proposed document does not seem view commercial timber harvest very favorably. The truth is commercial timber harvest is one of the best tools for forest restoration and fuels reduction. Commercial timber harvest will also help maintain our current level of timber industry infrastructure and help the USFS get existing roads up to Best Management Practices standards. There are three larger mills in the Custer Gallatin working circle; one in Livingston, one in Townsend and one in Deer Lodge. There are other smaller mills in Clancy, Reedpoint, Roundup, two in Lewistown, Ashland, and multiple post and pole plants. These businesses continued existence may be determined by this forest plan and the actions of the Custer/Gallatin National Forest. The logging industry is directly tied to these mills and our existence depends on theirs, theirs on ours.

First, the MLA would like to note that with ALL alternatives the PTSQ seems low. We talk about needing to get fuels off the forest and with the highest PTSQ of 15mmbf/yr off over a million acres and seems very low. Bottom line, this is not even close to a sustained yield number and the forest is going to be growing and dying at a much higher rate than harvest. The Montana DNRC timber program puts out approx. 57mmbf per year off 780,000 acres....quite the contrast!

Second, the Montana Logging would like to go on record in support of **Alternative E**. The reason we support Alternative E is because it designates the most manageable lands—604,502 acres of Forest suitable for timber production and 608,056 acres of Forested acres unsuitable for timber production but where timber harvest may occur for other purposes. This total of 1,212,558 acres (slightly more than 1/3 of the total acres) should be used for multiple use,

including timber production. This alternative will boost local economies and lessen all of our liabilities for wildfire.

Lastly, the health of our forests and the health of our communities depend on a healthy forest. We strongly ask that you consider commercial timber harvest as a tool to accomplish this goal and by using this tool you will be supporting local jobs and economies.

Thanks for your time and attention,

Jason Todhunter

Headwaters Region Representative

Montana Logging Association