

MONTANA FOREST RESTORATION COMMITTEE
LINCOLN RESTORATION COMMITTEE
PO Box 907
LINCOLN, MONTANA 59639

October 9, 2009

Ms. Amber Kamps, District Ranger
Lincoln Ranger District
Helena National Forest
1569 Highway 200
Lincoln, Montana 59639

Dear Ms. Kamps:

As you know, the Lincoln Restoration Committee (LRC) is a group of private citizens reflecting diverse community interests. We formed in the fall of 2008 with the purpose of developing recommendations for restoration projects on the Lincoln District of the Helena National Forest. The work of our group is supported by the Montana Forest Restoration Committee (MFRC), which in 2007 adopted 13 restoration principles for on-the-ground use. The LRC's monthly meetings have been devoted to assessing where and how these principles might be applied in ways that are beneficial to the Lincoln community, the broader public, and the health of the land.

Enclosed as an attachment is the LRC's first, consensus-based Project recommendation for your consideration. The focus is on the Lincoln Gulch area, site of significant past activities such as settlement, mining, logging, and fire suppression and which has a direct interface with the Lincoln Springs subdivision and other private residences in or near Lincoln Gulch.

In our view the Lincoln Gulch area offers significant opportunities for restoration work benefiting Ponderosa pine, aspen, fish and wildlife habitat, and separately, fuels thinning in proximity to private residences.

Recent deliberations of the LRC have included a discussion of the degree to which this project reflects and constitutes forest restoration versus community-based fuel reduction. From the perspective of our members, the Lincoln Gulch project seems an ideal candidate for our first project because of the nexus between people's homes and private property and the ecological restoration principles.

The Lincoln Restoration Committee agrees that by advancing the Lincoln Gulch Fuel Reduction and Forest Restoration Project the Forest Service has significant potential to achieve the following goals, consistent with the Montana Forest Restoration Principles:

- Restore functioning ecosystems by enhancing ecological processes;
- Apply an adaptive management approach;
- Use the appropriate scale of integrated analysis to prioritize and design restoration activities;
- Monitor restoration outcomes;
- Reestablish fire as a natural process on the landscape;
- Consider social constraints and seek public support for reintroducing fire on the

- landscape;
- Engage community and interested parties in the restoration process;
 - Improve terrestrial and aquatic habitat and connectivity;
 - Emphasize ecosystem goods & services and sustainable land management;
 - Integrate restoration with socioeconomic well-being;
 - Enhance education and recreation activities to build support for restoration;
 - Protect and improve overall watershed health, including stream health, soil quality and function and riparian function; and
 - Establish and maintain a safe road and trail system that is ecologically sustainable.

We accordingly request that you review our Project recommendation in relation to all legal and regulatory requirements including the National Environmental Policy Act and National Forest Management Act. If the Project meets NEPA and NFMA standards, we request you solicit public comment concerning our recommended Project.

We want to take this opportunity to thank you for the technical support you and your staff have provided during our efforts in developing this Project.

Sincerely,
LRC Co-chairs



KD Feedback



Paul Roos

c: LRC members, MFRC Steering Committee, Helena Forest Supervisor, Region I Regional Forester

Attachment

- Site A: Habitat types vary widely throughout Site A with the drier sites on west and southern aspects supporting or historically supporting Ponderosa pine and in some cases, open park-like structures and grassy openings. The more moist sites are habitat types where Douglas-fir and Lodgepole pine are dominant with a treatment goal of fuels reduction. During treatment design and development of silvicultural prescriptions, site-specific habitat typing would determine where fuels reduction would be done and where restoration would be applied. Both would include the reintroduction of fire through prescribed fire. Together this integration of goals and treatments would be applied as an approach to treat the landscape; restore the natural condition; and place the ecosystem on a more natural trajectory by developing a diverse mix of vegetative composition, structure, form and function.. # 14, 44, 45, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20
- Site B: Mining Reclamation Area and logical extension up the course of the drainage on National Forest Lands – Aspen, dredge spoils, water course restoration including property up the drainage. # 10, 11, and 12 upstream to private boundary.
- Site C: General restoration on National Forest and immediately adjacent BLM ground. #2.
- Site D: Forest Service, BLM, private: Stand west of Lone Point Drive and Jerry Cain. 180-200 acres.
- Site E: # 3, 4 Fuels mitigation due to fire risk with Ponderosa pine as ancillary restoration benefit.
- Site F: #5, 6 Ponderosa pine restoration.
- Site G: # 7, 9 Quaking aspen – determine prescription with ground proofing. Additionally, # 28, 29, 30, and 31 for fuels reduction. 300+ acres.
- Site H: Evaluate area between #10 and 21 for opportunities to deal with fuels issues.

The above projects were approved at the September 2009 meeting by consensus vote of the Working Group with the exception of Site A which was approved by consensus vote at the October 2009 meeting.

