

***FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET***

**Meeting Date:** 10 May 2012

**Division:** Wildlife

**Agenda Item:** Mount Haggin WMA Forest Management

**Action Needed:**   X   Approval of Final Rule/Action

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 5 minutes

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**Background:** Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP) proposes to remove standing dead and green beetle-infested lodgepole pine from select areas on Mount Haggin Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in order to reduce road- and trailside hazard trees. Merchantable dead and dying timber will be removed from certain expanded road- and trailside units in order to cover costs of the project which includes removal of noncommercial trees, road improvements, and weed control. Funds generated in excess of project costs will be applied to several maintenance and habitat projects on the WMA such as fence removal and interpretative signs. The proposed action would remove dead and beetle-infested hazard trees on either side of 4.8 miles of road and over 8 miles of ski trails. An additional 800 acres in 16 expanded road-trailside units in close proximity to these roads and trails would also have a portion of the dead and beetle infested lodgepole pine removed. A licensed forester will be contracted by FWP to assist the Butte area wildlife biologist in administering the project. No new roads would be constructed.

**Public Involvement Process & Results:** An Environmental Analysis of this project was released for public comment on April 4, 2012 that included a 21- day public comment period. This project has been discussed with Skyline and Anaconda Sportsmen groups, Deer Lodge County Commissioners, Mile High Nordic Ski Club, owners of Sugarloaf Cabins, holders of patented mining claims within the project area, and Mount Haggin WMA grazing lessees. A decision notice with summary of public comments will be made available at the time of the Commission meeting.

**Alternatives and Analysis:** Don't implement the project, or only implement the Roadside Hazard Tree Removal treatments. Due to the collective benefits to recreationists, wildlife, fisheries and the operations of the WMA, it is desired to implement the full scope of this project as proposed.

**Agency Recommendation & Rationale:** FWP recommends that the Commission approve this project.

**Proposed Motion:** I move the Commission grant final approval of the Mount Haggin Forest Management Project presented by FWP.