

# WESTERN MONTANA COOPERATIVE BIOLOGIST REPORT

DAVID NIKONOW

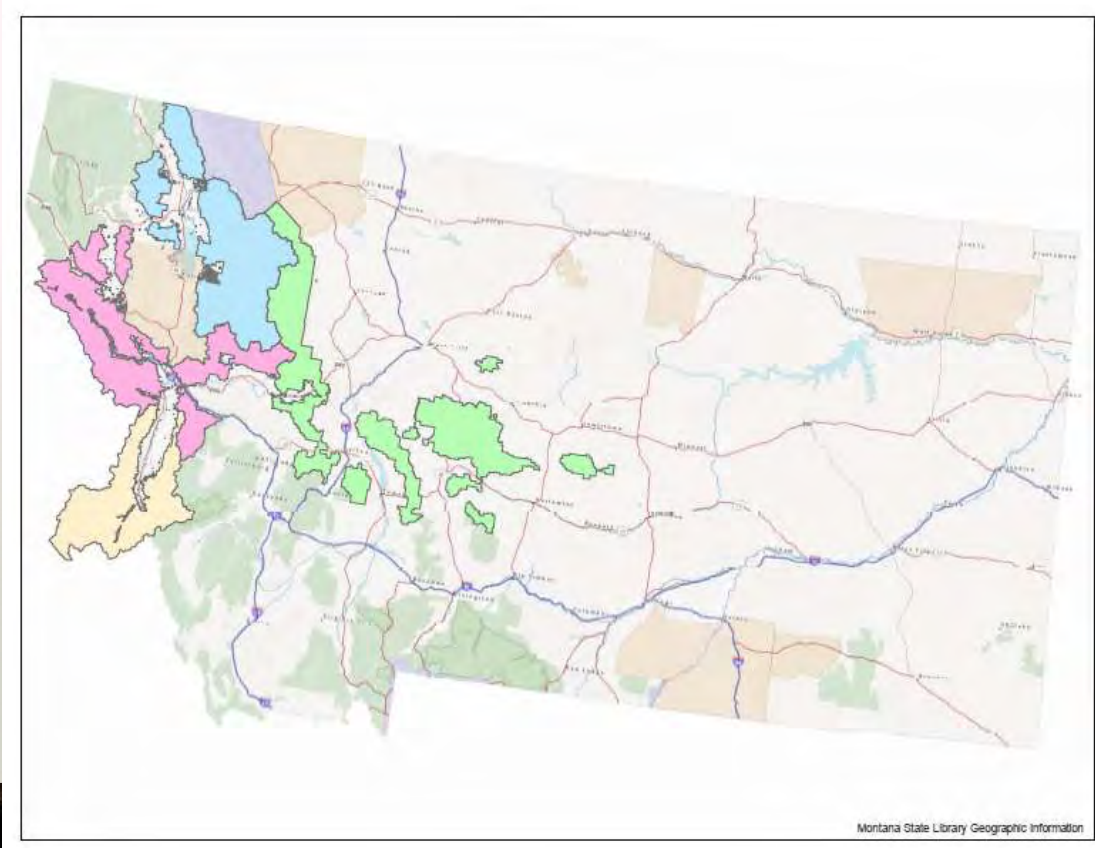
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UGBEP FALL 2022 CAC MEETING

9/12/2022



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# PRIMARY DUTIES

- Provide technical assistance to Forest Service managers and specialists on projects before and during implementation to improve upland game bird habitat quality
- Fill USFS capacity voids to assure project analyses or implementation is completed on time
- Assist in grant writing to supplement implementation funding
- Assist in project planning during NEPA to assure projects benefit upland game bird habitat



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# TARGET TREATMENT AREAS

- **Ponderosa Pine Savanna**

- Restore open forest conditions through conifer harvest and/or prescribed fire
- Removing overstocked Douglas fir understory
- Increased vigor of grasses and forbs which improves insect abundance for poult forage
- Increased growth of berry producing shrubs which provide fall and winter forage for ruffed grouse and wild turkeys



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# TARGET TREATMENT AREAS

- **Montane Grasslands and Shrublands**

- Often on south facing slopes
- Treatments include prescribed fire and thinning to reduce conifer encroachment on meadows and shrub fields
- This retains a high abundance of grasses and forbs which are critical for high insect populations improving summer forage for wild turkeys and dusky grouse
- Rx burning can also increase the abundance of soft mast producing shrubs for fall forage



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# TARGET TREATMENT AREAS

## • Aspen and Cottonwood Forest

- Restore and enhance aspen stands through conifer removal with harvest, hand felling, or Rx fire
- Reduced competition for light and water along with site disturbance will increase suckering and enhance aspen quality
- Improves spring/summer forage and nesting habitat for wild turkeys and ruffed grouse
- Aspen forest types have extremely high levels of biodiversity including an abundance of insects which are critical for brood rearing



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# EXAMPLES AND PROJECT UPDATES

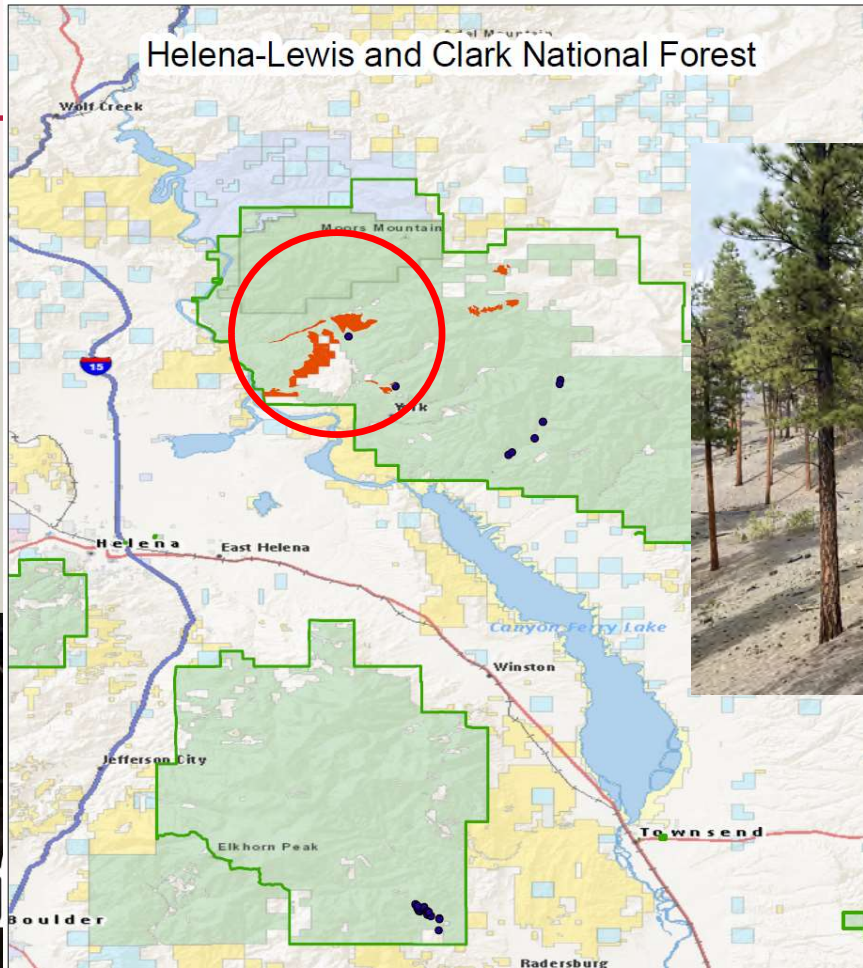
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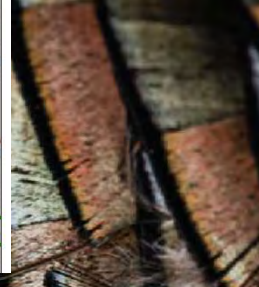
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# HELENA – LEWIS & CLARK NATIONAL FOREST



- Beaver Soup/ Bull Sweats Rx Burning – 826 acres



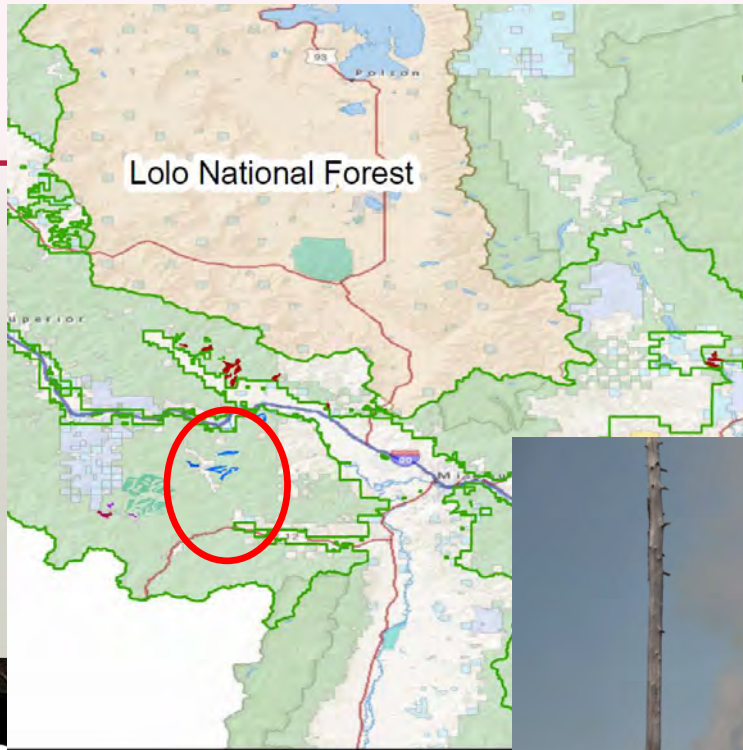
# LOLO NATIONAL FOREST



- Frenchtown Face RX Fire - 244 acres



# LOLO NATIONAL FOREST



- Frenchtown Face Rx Fire - 244 acres
- Petty Creek Rx Fire - 130 acres



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# LOLO NATIONAL FOREST



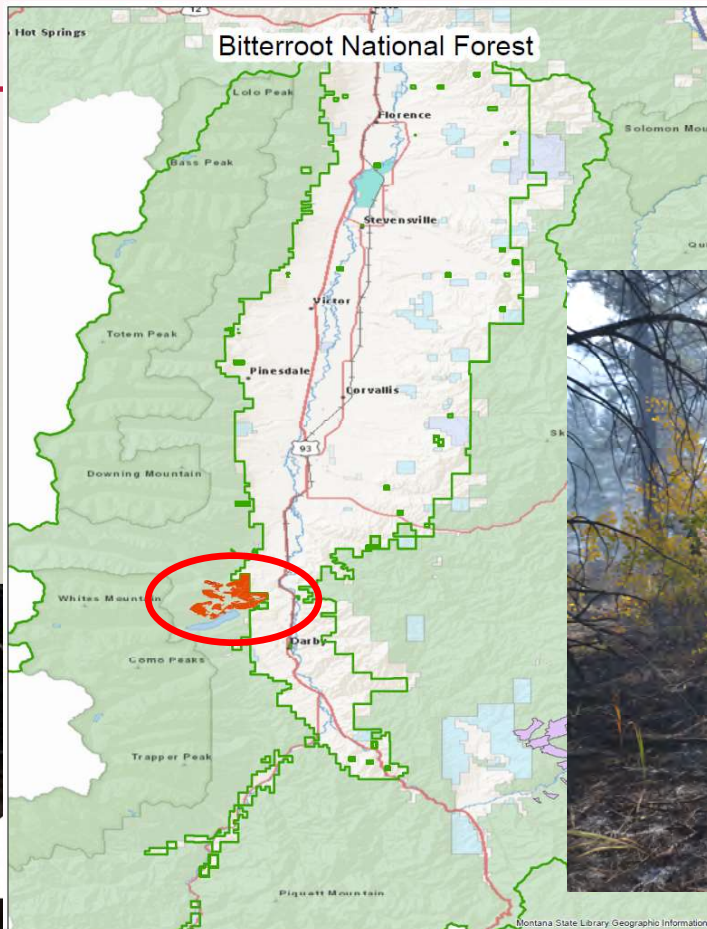
- Frenchtown Face Rx Fire - 244 acres
- Petty Creek Rx Fire - 130 acres
- Horseshoe West/ Colt Summit Thinning and Rx Fire – 500 acres



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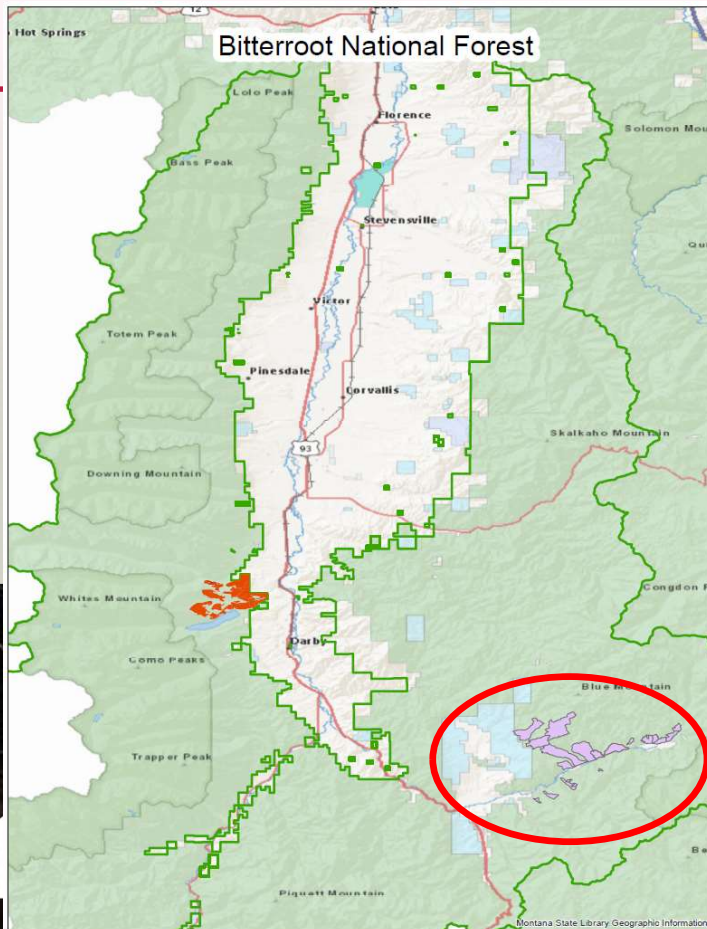
# BITTERROOT NATIONAL FOREST

- Como Horselick Rx Burning and Thinning – 147 acres



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# BITTERROOT NATIONAL FOREST



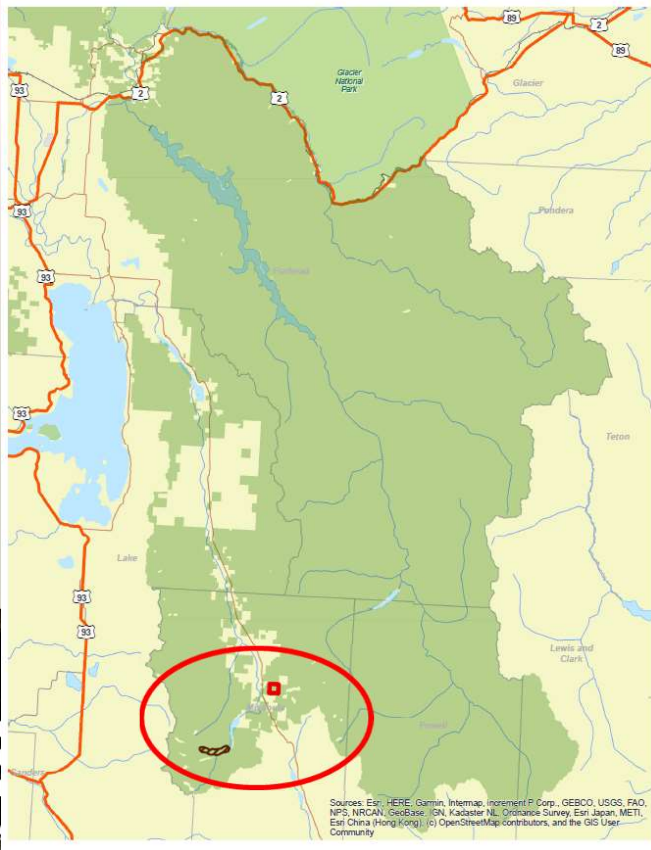
- Como Horselick Rx Burning and Thinning – 147 acres
- East Fork Bitterroot Rx Burning and Thinning – 240 acres



Harvests.

# FLATHEAD NATIONAL FOREST

- Swan Valley Bottom Rx Burning – 181 acres



# ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE SEPTEMBER 2015

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- Accomplished 11,926 acres of Rx fire, thinning, or harvest treatments with my technical assistance/involvement
- Secured \$115,315 in grants for project implementation from RMEF, MDF, WSF and other partners
- Influenced 7,300 of “expected” acres through NEPA assistance



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# QUESTIONS?



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