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**Attachments:** Gold Butterfly - DEIS.docx

## **Forest Seeks Comments on Project**

Hamilton, Montana (June 19, 2018) – The Bitterroot National Forest has released its Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Gold Butterfly Project, a proposed vegetation management and fuels reduction project in the Sapphire Mountains east of Corvallis. The project is located on the Stevensville and Darby Ranger Districts between St. Clair Creek to the south and Burnt Fork Creek to the north.

Objectives of the project include:

- Improve forest resilience to natural disturbances (fire, insects, and diseases).
- Reduce chronic sediment sources in Willow Creek watershed to improve water quality and bull trout habitat.
- Restore or improve key habitats including meadows, aspen, and whitebark pine.
- Manage timber to provide forest products, jobs and income to local communities.

Proposed treatments include commercial timber harvest, non-commercial thinning, and prescribed burning to improve forest health.

Approximately 9,500 acres of the project have been designated an insect and disease treatment area due to dense pockets of dead and dying trees. The area is impacted by mountain pine beetle, Douglas-fir bark beetle and dwarf mistletoe and western spruce budworm damage.

The Bitterroot Community Wildfire Protection Plan also identified the area as a ‘high priority’ for fuels reduction within the Wildland Urban Interface.

The collaborative project is proposed under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) as amended in 2014 (Farm Bill).

To learn more about the project and to view maps visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=51486>. These documents are also available in paper or CD formats upon request. Public comments are due by July 30, 2018.

Only individuals or entities who submit timely and specific written comments about the proposed project during the public comment period will be eligible to file an objection.

Submit comments to the Responsible Official: Julie King, Forest Supervisor, by one of the following methods; mail: Bitterroot National Forest, Gold Butterfly Project, 1801 N. First Street, Hamilton, MT 59840. Fax: (406) 363-7159, or email: [comments-northern-bitterroot-stevensville@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-northern-bitterroot-stevensville@fs.fed.us). Comments should include: 1) name, address, phone number, and organization represented, if any; 2) title of project on which the comments are being submitted; and 3) substantive comments including specific facts and supporting information for the Forest Supervisor to consider.

Please put "Comments – Gold Butterfly Project" in the subject line for emailed comments.

For more information or questions concerning the project, contact Tami Sabol, Stevensville District Ranger at (406) 777-5461 or [tjsabol@fs.fed.us](mailto:tjsabol@fs.fed.us) or Jeff Shearer, Gold Butterfly Project Team Leader at (406) 375-2608 or [jeffreyshearer@fs.fed.us](mailto:jeffreyshearer@fs.fed.us)

Stay in touch with us through [www.facebook.com/DiscoverBitterrootNF](http://www.facebook.com/DiscoverBitterrootNF) and [www.twitter.com/BitterrootNF](http://www.twitter.com/BitterrootNF).

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