

From: McKay, Tod G -FS <tgmkay@fs.fed.us>
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Subject: News Release: Forest Seeks Comments on Canyon Lake Dam Repairs
Attachments: Canyon Lake Dam - EA.docx

Forest Seeks Comments on Canyon Lake Dam Repairs

Hamilton, Montana (December 10, 2018) – The Bitterroot National Forest has released its Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Canyon Lake Dam Access Repair Project, and is inviting the public to review and make comments on the proposal. Canyon Lake Dam and reservoir are located in the upper Canyon Creek drainage, west of Hamilton within the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. The dam is owned and operated by the Canyon Creek Irrigation District (CCID).

The purpose of the proposed project is to authorize CCID adequate access to their high hazard dam to repair deficiencies required by federal dam safety laws. The repairs are necessary to protect downstream public health and safety, and store and release water for agricultural and domestic use.

The Forest Service is proposing to authorize adequate access (round trip helicopter flights) to allow for the work to be done on the dam, safely and effectively, starting as early as September 2019. Helicopter use is being requested to transport equipment and heavy construction materials necessary to accomplish the repairs. It is not safe or feasible to physically pack this heavy equipment and materials in with stock.

Helicopter flights will be staged on private property east of the dam and the majority of the flights would be concentrated at the beginning and end of the project. The timeframe for the project is estimated at 4 to 6 weeks.

The EA is available at www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=55165 online. It is also available for review at the Supervisor's Office in Hamilton.

Public comments specific to this project and/or to individual sites and resources are valuable in helping the Forest Service identify concerns, develop alternatives to the proposed action, and refine the analysis to focus on issues. Comments are due by January 7, 2019.

Submit comments to the Responsible Official: Kurt Steele, Forest Supervisor, Bitterroot National Forest, Canyon Lake Dam Access Project, by one of the following methods; mail: 1801 N. First Street, Hamilton, MT 59840, FAX: (406) 363-7159, or email: comments-northern-bitterroot@fs.fed.us. Hand delivered comments must be delivered between 8am-4:30pm weekdays, excluding holidays.

Comments should include: 1) name, address, phone number, and organization represented, if any; 2) title of the project on which the comments are being submitted; and 3) substantive comments including specific facts and supporting information for the Responsible Official to consider.

Please put "Comments – Canyon Lake Dam Access Project" in the subject line for emailed comments. An automated response will confirm that your electronic comment has been received. All comments are open to public inspection and will be posted to the Forest Service website.

For more information or questions about the project, contact Terri Anderson, ID Team Leader at (406) 363-7100.

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