

Glenda Wiles

From: McKay, Tod G -FS <tgmkay@fs.fed.us>
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Subject: News Release: East Fork Ditch Fish Screen Project
Attachments: East Fork Ditch - Fish Screen Project.docx

East Fork Ditch Fish Screen Project

Hamilton, Montana (April 3, 2019) – The Bitterroot National Forest is inviting the public to review and make comments on the East Fork Ditch Fish Screen Project. The project proposes to install a fish screen on the headgate of the East Fork Ditch. The East Fork Ditch exits the north bank of the East Fork Bitterroot River at river mile 28.7, across from Bonanza lands subdivision 17 miles east of Sula, Montana. The legal location of the point of diversion is T 2 N, R 17 W, S 20 NW ¼.

Installation of the fish screen would require the following activities: (1) excavating and building the foundation for the fish screen, (2) installing the screen, and (3) burying a “go back” pipe between the screen and the East Fork Bitterroot River. The “go back” pipe allows fish that swim up to the screen to be able to get back into the river. The footprint of the excavation is estimated at 20’ wide X 20’ long, centered on the existing headgate. Installation would occur between October 19th and December 1st.

The purpose of the project is to keep fish out of the ditch. In its currently unscreened condition, numerous westslope cutthroat trout enter the ditch throughout the summer, and bull trout are also at risk of becoming trapped and perishing in the ditch when the water is shut off in October.

Public comments specific to this project and/or to individual sites and resources are valuable in helping the Forest Service identify concerns and develop alternatives. Comments are due by April 22, 2019.

Submit comments to the Responsible Official: Eric Winthers, District Ranger, by one of the following methods; mail: PO Box 388, Darby, Montana 59829. Fax: (406) 821-4264, or email comments-northern-bitterroot-darby@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 District Ranger to consider.

For more information contact Michael Jakober at the West Fork Ranger District at (406) 821-3269.

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