

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
OCTOBER 15, 2020

Contacts:

Keith Hammer, Swan View Coalition, (406) 253-6536, keith@swanview.org

Arlene Montgomery, Friends of the Wild Swan, (406) 886-2011

Gary Macfarlane, Wilderness Watch, (208) 882-9755, gmacfarlane@wildernesswatch.org

**Massive logging proposal threatens grizzly bears, lynx and bull trout  
Mission Mountains Wilderness also targeted for heavy-handed management**

Kalispell – Several western Montana conservation groups expressed their opposition in comments to the Flathead National Forest’s Mid-Swan Landscape “Restoration” Project, which calls for 40 miles of new road construction and an additional 40,000 acres of commercial logging across a 272-square-mile area. The 15-year proposal, which also proposes to burn a large area of the Mission Mountains Wilderness and landscape the Wilderness with tree plantings, strikes at the heart of Wilderness as a place free of human intervention. The Forest Service claims the project will benefit terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity and reduce wildfire, but opponents see it as a massive make-work project that will further fragment habitat, exacerbate climate change and trammel the Wilderness.

“The Forest Service wants the public to believe that removing 60,000 trucks full of logs will restore the already heavily logged Swan Valley,” said Keith Hammer, Chair of the Swan View Coalition. “If the agency was being honest about restoration, it would instead decommission most of the logging roads that bleed sediment into streams and harm bull trout, and reduce road density to levels that would benefit lynx and grizzlies. This project will, unfortunately, do the opposite and further fragment crucial fish and wildlife habitat.”

“The Mid Swan project will increase sediment in bull and westslope cutthroat trout spawning streams in the Swan Valley by building roads in riparian areas and allowing over 500 miles of Forest Service logging roads to remain on the landscape,” said Arlene Montgomery, Program Director for Friends of the Wild Swan. “The huge scope and scale of this project will impact fish and wildlife for over 15 years yet the Flathead hasn’t bothered to survey conditions on the ground and instead is relying on aerial photos. When they do get around to letting the public know where they want to log it will be too late to comment or object. It’s a travesty.”

The highly controversial proposal also calls for helicopters to ignite fire across 13,500 acres of the Mission Mountains Wilderness, as well as the planting of 2,000 acres of White Bark Pine. An alert issued by Wilderness Watch generated 14,000 comments to the Forest Service.

“One of the fundamental tenets of Wilderness is that it is intended to be free of heavy-handed human manipulation. We don’t think that prescribed burns and planting trees are what the

authors of the Wilderness Act had in mind,” said Gary Macfarlane, board member, of Wilderness Watch. “The Forest Service should get out of the landscaping business and let the Mission Mountains Wilderness chart its own course.”

The public review and comment period for the Mid-Swan DEIS ended Oct. 13, 2020.

Swan View Coalition’s comments are at:

[http://www.swanview.org/reports/SVC\\_et\\_al\\_on\\_Mid-Swan\\_DEIS\\_201013.pdf](http://www.swanview.org/reports/SVC_et_al_on_Mid-Swan_DEIS_201013.pdf)

Friends of the Wild Swan’s comments are at:

[http://www.swanview.org/reports/FOWS\\_Mid\\_Swan\\_DEIS\\_comments\\_10-12-20.pdf](http://www.swanview.org/reports/FOWS_Mid_Swan_DEIS_comments_10-12-20.pdf)

Wilderness Watch’s comments are at:

<https://wildernesswatch.org/images/wild-issues/2020/10-13-2020-WW-Comments-Mid-Swan-Burn-Plant.pdf>