

Swan View Coalition Nature and Human Nature on the Same Path



3165 Foothill Road, Kalispell, MT 59901

swanview.org & swanrange.org

ph/fax 406-755-1379

October 1, 2014

Dear Editor;

F.H. Stoltze wants to cut some 55 loads of logs from State Lands where the Broken Leg and Crater Notch trails provide non-motorized access to the Swan Range near Jewel Basin. The Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation is accepting public comment until October 20 on whether or not to grant Stoltze a salvage-logging permit there.

DNRC in 2006 agreed to protect the recreational and aesthetic values of these trails by moving its Foothills Timber Sale clearcuts downhill and out of site of the trails. So we are surprised to see this logging proposal focus precisely on these trail corridors!

We can understand Stoltze wanting to grab some State trees while it is logging dead and dying trees on its own neighboring quarter-section of land. But that convenience is strongly outweighed by the fact these public Forest Service trails lie on DNRC easements in precisely the area targeted for logging.

We are urging DNRC to not allow this logging in the trail corridors and to retain the big old trees as essential habitat for wildlife that depend on dead snags for food and nesting. This is especially important given Stoltze is removing these wildlife trees from its land next door.

No matter how careful the job, using feller-bunchers and grapple skidders to remove trees on these steep hillsides will damage the character of these trail experiences for decades to come. We appreciate DNRC accepting public comments until October 20, but let's retain the public trees for wildlife and people as Stoltze saws its trees into boards.

For more information or to comment, email DNRC's Nick Aschenwald at naschenwald@mt.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized.

Keith J. Hammer
Chair