

NEWS RELEASE
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge Announces Release of Draft
Environmental Assessment for Hazard Fuel Reduction Plan**
Public Comments Accepted Until September 22, 2014

Due to changes in land use, fire suppression and climate, tree densities have increased and forest health has deteriorated near Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge (RRLNWR) in Beaverhead County, Montana. These conditions have resulted in increased wildfire risk and reduced habitat diversity. In order to mitigate these fire risks, and to improve wildlife habitat, staff at RRLNWR have developed a draft environmental assessment that includes options for forest management, including hazardous fuels reduction, over a portion of the refuge.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) contains two alternatives plus the preferred alternative for timber management options at RRLNWR.

Through consultation with partners, the preferred alternative will allow for mechanical thinning and future prescribed burns. Thinning could begin as early as the winter of 2014-2015.

The nearby town of Lakeview, MT, is located in a wildland-urban interface and this project will help mitigate wildfire risk to citizens of Lakeview and to neighboring residences and structures. By actively managing the forest, hazardous fuels will be reduced to decrease risk of and severity of wildfires. Wildlife habitat on RRLNWR will also be improved through increased forest community health and diversity, including restoration of aspen stands.

The draft EA is available on our website at: [http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Red Rock Lakes](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Red_Rock_Lakes)

Email comments should be addressed to: [David M Farmer@fws.gov](mailto:David_M_Farmer@fws.gov) with “Environmental Assessment Comments” in the subject line.

Comments may also be mailed to:

Red Rock Lakes NWR

Attn: David Farmer – Environmental Assessment Comments

27650B South Valley Road

Lima, MT 59739

Red Rocks Lake National Wildlife Refuge is located in Beaverhead County, 43 miles East of Lima, MT via I-15 Monida exit (28 miles gravel) or 45 miles West of West Yellowstone, via Henry’s Lake, ID (25 miles gravel).

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service.

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