



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

September 25, 2020

**CONTACT:**

Paige Cohn, Communications Coordinator  
Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation  
406.459.7206

**MONTANA FOREST ACTION ADVISORY COUNCIL ANNOUNCES THE RELEASE OF  
THE DRAFT MONTANA FOREST ACTION PLAN**

*The Montana Forest Action Advisory Council welcomes the public to provide input on the DRAFT  
Montana Forest Action Plan*

MONTANA—The Montana Forest Action Advisory Council (MFAAC) today announced the release of the draft 2020 revision of the Montana Forest Action Plan (MFAP). MFAP is Montana's all lands, all hands plan for addressing forest health and wildfire risk issues across the state of Montana and consists of a statewide *Assessment of Forest Conditions*, designated *Priority Areas for Focused Attention*, and a set of recommended goals and strategies to achieve cross-boundary forest restoration and management. These products are the result of the deliberations of MFAAC and are issued for public review and comment through October 23, 2020.

**“The Montana Forest Action Plan is just one example of how Montanans come together to do what’s best for our state,”** said Governor Steve Bullock. **“The Montana Forest Action Advisory Council has worked collaboratively to draft long-term, landscape recommendations to improve forest health and reduce wildfire risk, while protecting our natural resources. I welcome the input of Montanans as we continue to work together to protect our communities.”**

With the release of [Forests in Focus 2.0](#), Governor Bullock initiated the 2020 revision of MFAP and designated the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) as the key convener to unite interagency partners, tribal nations, and organizations from around the state to develop and implement MFAP. Governor Bullock then signed [Executive Order No. 7-2019](#) on May 20, 2019 to form MFAAC, a statewide collaborative group charged with updating the Montana Forest Action Plan to address long-term efforts to conserve working forest lands, protect forests from harm, and enhance public benefits from forests throughout the state. MFAAC consists federal, state, local, and tribal governments; industry partners; conservation organizations; collaborative and watershed groups; recreation organizations; and other relevant partners.

**“As a County Commissioner, I know healthy forests mean healthy communities,”** said Mark Peck, Lincoln County Commissioner and member of MFAAC. **“The release of the draft Montana Forest Action**



**Plan is the result of over a year's worth of work done by the Montana Forest Action Advisory Council, and we are already working to utilize the plan at the local level to coordinate work across different land ownerships that will make our community more wildfire resilient and improve the condition of our local forests."**

**"The Montana Forest Action Plan is an important step in working with our partners and neighbors across the state to get more work done on the ground,"** said John Tubbs, Director of DNRC. **"The public release of the draft Montana Forest Action Plan shows the commitment to cross-boundary work that both the DNRC and our partners are moving forward with."**

Since the Council's first meeting on August 6, 2019, they met eight times over the course of the next year to develop three main deliverables: the statewide *Assessment of Forest Conditions*, the *Priority Areas for Focused Attention*, and a set of recommended goals and strategies to accomplish cross-boundary forest restoration and management. The [statewide Assessment of Forest Conditions](#) examines current conditions and trends affecting all forested lands in Montana and was used to inform the development of the Montana Forest Action Plan. The [Priority Areas for Focused Attention](#) uses a data-informed geospatial model to identify priority landscapes for forest restoration and management action that could lead to coordinated projects shared across jurisdictions. The Council also produced a set of recommended goals and strategies for local land managers and partners to utilize when designing cross-boundary projects and to better help facilitate coordination.

**"The Montana Forest Action Plan prioritizes and amplifies collaborative efforts across the state to achieve landscape scale forest restoration and management,"** said Sonya Germann, State Forester and Co-Chair of MFAAC. **"Through the work of the Council, we've brought together Montanans representing diverse perspectives, interests, and expertise to develop actionable, collaborative solutions that will benefit all forested landscapes across the state."**

**"It's been a privilege to serve as co-chair on The Montana Forest Action Advisory Council, a tremendous example of representatives with diverse interests coming together to develop a plan that benefits resources and sustains communities throughout the state of Montana,"** said Leanne Marten, Northern Regional Forester for the USDA Forest Service. **"The willingness to have the really tough discussions and work through challenges, while being purposeful about complimenting other strategic planning efforts across the state, continues to be evident throughout the process."**

Initially, the Council was set to deliver the final MFAP to the Governor at the end of the September 2020. Due to the statewide COVID-19 pandemic, the deadline was extended to December 2020. MFAAC is asking for public input on the draft document between September 25, 2020 through October 23, 2020. Once the public comment period closes, the Council will deliberate public comment and send a final version to Governor Bullock in December 2020.

The Council welcomes feedback from partners and the public through October 23, 2020. Comments may be submitted by email to [montanaforestactionplan@mt.gov](mailto:montanaforestactionplan@mt.gov) or by visiting



[www.montanaforestactionplan.org](http://www.montanaforestactionplan.org) and using the “Submit Public Comment” option. All comments received will be made available for public review.

The draft Montana Forest Action Plan is available at the following link:

<https://www.montanaforestactionplan.org/theplan>

The draft statewide *Assessment of Forest Conditions* is available at the following link:

<https://www.montanaforestactionplan.org/datasets/1a91dd627c2d45e19c9d0b7c0bd298e5>

The draft *Priority Areas for Focused Attention* are available at the following link:

<https://www.montanaforestactionplan.org/pages/priority-areas>

###