



## USDA FOREST SERVICE

### BEAVERHEAD-DEERLODGE NATIONAL FOREST DILLON RANGER DISTRICT

#### Draft Environmental Impact Statement Grasshopper Fuels Management

Beaverhead County, Montana

March 2004

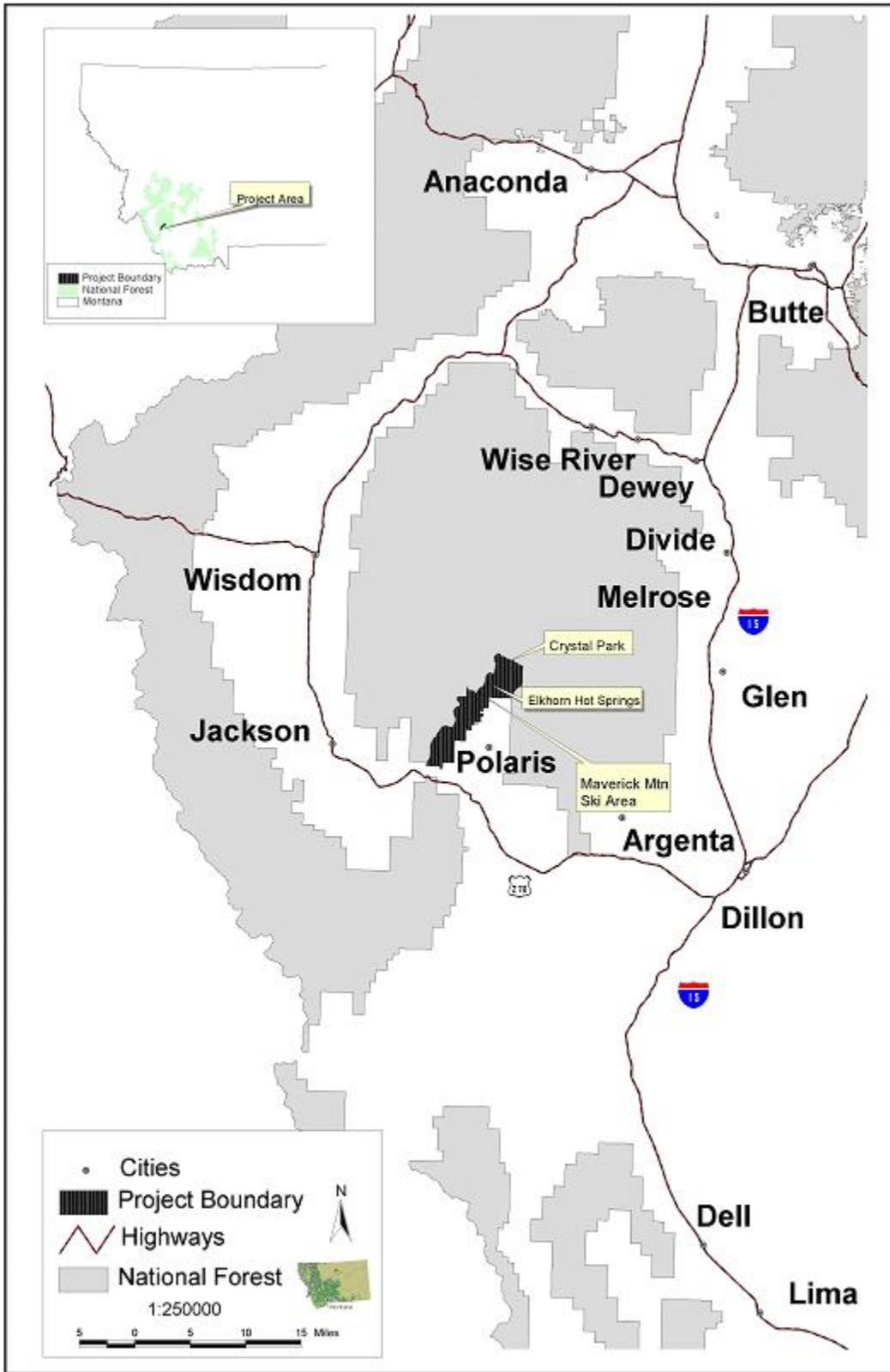


View North - Upper Grasshopper Valley, 2002



View East - Hidden Lake Fire, July 2003

Vicinity Map 1



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**Grasshopper Fuels Management  
Draft Environmental Impact Statement**

**Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest  
Dillon Ranger District  
Beaverhead County, Montana**

**March 2004**

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**Abstract**

This Draft Environmental Impact Statement considers the effects of no action, and the effects of three alternatives on the objective of breaking up fuel continuity and reducing hazardous fuels in strategic locations, along the FS/BLM boundary and in "values at risk" areas. The treatments proposed would lower the spread and intensity of future surface fires, decrease the probability of torching, crown fire and increase the probability of safely defending life and property from fire. The project is located in the Pioneer Mountains 35 miles northwest of Dillon, on the Dillon Ranger District of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest and on lands managed by the Dillon Area Resource Office, Bureau of Land management (BLM).

Treatment involves reducing existing ground fuels buildup and breaking up ground fuels continuity and arrangement, along with removing ladder fuels. Increasing tree crown spacing by thinning or stand crown cover separation by creating small openings and removing dead trees in some stands may further reduce

torching potential and limit crown fire spread. Treatments also include burning in sagebrush and grass communities that have been encroached by conifers.

Treatments would be accomplished using mechanized equipment (all action alternatives) outside inventoried roadless and chainsaw felling in the inventoried roadless areas.

**Alternative 1 – Proposed Action.** This alternative treats hazardous fuels on approximately 3814 acres including 1547 acres in inventoried roadless #1006-D. Commercial timber harvest would be used on approximately 1207 acres outside inventoried roadless to remove and utilize merchantable trees. This alternative requires construction of approximately 7 miles of temporary roads.

**Alternative 2 – No Action.** No new activities would be initiated at this time.

**Alternative 3.** Treatment is proposed on approximately 2267 acres, none of which occur in inventoried roadless. Commercial timber harvest would be used on approximately 1207 acres outside inventoried roadless to remove and utilize merchantable trees. This alternative requires construction of approximately 4 miles of temporary roads.

**Alternative 4.** This alternative treats hazardous fuels on approximately 3329 acres including 1547 acres in inventoried roadless #1006-D. Commercial timber harvest would not be used. Utilization of small diameter material would occur on 256 acres outside inventoried roadless. This alternative requires no construction of temporary roads.

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