



## **NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT**

### **DPT Productions Proposed Endurance Race**

A group of local land management agencies have received an application for a special use permit for a commercial recreation event from DPT Productions, of Richmond Virginia, to conduct a one-time, multi-day, non-motorized multi-sport adventure endurance race event that would take place between June 21 - July 2, 2008. The proponents, or a group associated with the proponents, may also apply for a commercial filming permit to document this event. The proposal includes race legs in the Tobacco Root, Madison, Gallatin, Bridger and Crazy Mountain Ranges and on the Madison, Gallatin and Yellowstone Rivers. The proposed course does not affect Wilderness or other specially designated areas where this use would be incompatible. Authorization for this proposed recreation event is required by the following Federal and Montana State agencies:

Gallatin National Forest  
Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest  
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
Montana Department of Natural Resources - State Trust Land  
Bureau of Land Management - Dillon Field Office  
Bureau of Land Management - Butte Field Office.

The Gallatin National Forest is taking the lead for coordinating this request for public comments since the largest portions of the race course would be on lands that it manages. However, since each agency involved has different requirements for public involvement and environmental analysis as well as different permitting processes, each agency will be responsible for those elements. For that reason, this request for public comments is organized by agency and the corresponding sections of the race course for which that agency would be responsible. Comments on specific components of the proposed race should be directed to the appropriate management agency as identified later in this notice.

#### **Description of the Proposal**

This race would involve up to 90 teams of 4 people. It is estimated that it would take the winning team approximately 5 days to finish and the slowest finishing team approximately 10 days. The proposed race requires that all team members finish together or not at all. The race course would be comprised of legs, each leg requiring a different

mode of transportation. The modes of transportation that would be used are: foot; mountain bike; 2-person inflatable boats; swim boards and hard kayaks. Racers would change from one mode of transportation to another at Transition Areas (TAs) where there would be a medical tent, a race official tent, porta-potties and trash facilities. Teams would travel day and night, except for the stretch on the Gallatin River which would be day travel only. Terms and conditions will be included with the authorizations for resource protection, public safety, and to prevent conflicts with other uses of recreation sites and facilities. The event will also be consistent with agency travel management restrictions and other regulations and policies such as the Food Storage Order.

For filming and for medical emergencies, race officials propose to stage a helicopter at either the Big Sky Resort or the Bozeman airport (Gallatin Field). Helicopter landings in any other locations would not be made except in the case of medical emergencies. A medical evacuation plan will be agreed upon in advance. It will identify evacuation methods that are consistent with the agencies travel management restrictions and/or special management area policies. Filming would only be done sporadically between 8AM and 8pm. Low level flight zones will be determined in advance and approved by the agencies. No low level flights will be allowed over special management areas. Filming would also be done from the ground at various points along the course.

In addition to the agency land that the race course would cross, the race would also cross private land. All of the initial checking-in, pre-race sessions, as well as the close-out processing, and award ceremonies would take place at the Big Sky Resort. All volunteers would be stationed at Big Sky Resort as well. The segments of the race course that would take place on private land are neither addressed nor listed in this document, since the race proposal proponents are working directly with those private land owners.

<b>GALLATIN AND BEAVERHEAD-DEERLODGE NATIONAL FORESTS</b>
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Gallatin National Forest Race Segments:

- Travel on foot from the Gallatin National Forest boundary in T7S, R3E, section 28 near Big Sky roughly following Trails 162, 6, 33 and 223 south to the Taylor Fork Road #134 and then along this road east to the Sage Creek Trailhead along Hwy. 191 (T9S, R4E, Section 11).
- Travel on mountain bike from Shenango in T4S, R4E, Section 33 roughly following the Storm Castle Road #132 then Trails 421, 414, 169, 133, and Road #682 into the Hyalite Canyon. Then proceed on Road #436, Trail 462, 50, and 53 to the Trail Creek Cabin and then along Road #437 to the Trail Creek Road (T3S, R7E, Section 18). *Note that none of the race route falls within the Hyalite/Porcupine-Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area.*
- Travel on foot from the eastern Gallatin National Forest boundary at Big Timber Canyon, T3N, R12E, Section 12 (Crazy Mountains) roughly following the Big Timber Canyon Road #197 east, then along Trails 119, 122, 123, 268, 197, and 271 to a location near the National Forest boundary in the southwest corner of the Crazy Mountains (T3N, R10E, Section 13).

- Travel on mountain bike from the eastern Gallatin National Forest boundary at the Middle Fork of Willow Creek in the Bangtail Mountains (T1S, R8E, Section 11) roughly following the Middle Fork of Willow Creek Road #6600 west, then Road #977 and #1760 to Trail 504, then northwest along Trail 504 to the Bridger Canyon Road at Battle Ridge Campground (T2N, R7E, Section 32). This bike leg then continues on county road to the National Forest boundary along the South Fork of Flathead Pass Road, then proceeds to Flathead Pass in T3N, R6E, Section 29 (Bridger Mountains).
- Travel on foot from Flathead Pass in T3N, R6E, Section 29 roughly following the Bridger Ridge to the “M” Trailhead in T1S, R6E, Section 34).
- Travel on mountain bike from the Gallatin National Forest boundary at the Little Bear Road #980 (T3S, R5E, Section 32) roughly following this road to the Wilson Creek Divide Road #3138. Then bike along this road to Road #6937. Proceed south along Road #6937, down Trail #419 to the Storm Castle Road #132. Then down the Storm Castle Road to Shenango (T4S, R4E, Section 33).
- Travel on foot west from Shenango across Hwy. 191, along Trails 444, 400 and 401 to the Gallatin National Forest boundary near Cowboys Heaven (T4S, R1E, Section 26).

In addition to the above Gallatin National Forest race segments, the proposal includes an orienteering course on Gallatin National Forest lands within the Swan Creek and Storm Castle Creek drainages (roughly T5S, R5E).

Beaverhead-Deerlodge Race Segments:

- Travel on foot from boundary with Gallatin National Forest in T4S, R1E, Section 23 follow Trail 315 west to private land boundary between Section 28 & 29, T4S, R1E.
- On mountain bike travel from the Forest boundary in T4S, R2W, Section 33 following Road #160 west to Road #9609, then south on Road #9609 to Road #6360, east on Road #6360, then south on #Road 1224, then south on Road #1224A, then east on Road #1221, then south on Road #1249 then south on Road #161 to the Forest boundary in T5S, R2W, Section 8.

Gallatin National Forest Transition Areas

- Sage Creek Trailhead (T9S, R4E, Section 11).
- Shenango Administrative Area (T4S, R4E, Section 33).
- Gallatin National Forest Boundary at Big Timber Canyon (T3N, R12E, Section 12) or at Half Moon Campground (T3N, R12E, Section 4).
- Off of Forest Road #198 in the southwest corner of the Crazy Mountains (T3N, R10E, Section 13).
- Flathead Pass in the Bridger Mountains (T3N, R6E, Section 29).

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Transition Areas

- None

**Environmental Review Process**

A preliminary review suggests that this project falls within a category of action listed in the Forest Service Environmental Policy and Procedures Handbook 1909.15, Chapter 30,

31.12-8, that may be excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). That category is described as:

“Approval, modification or continuation of minor, short-term (one year or less) special uses of National Forest System lands.”

Written comments on the National Forest race segments and transition areas identified above should be received by January 25, 2008 and addressed to:

**Gallatin National Forest Supervisor’s Office, attn: Jane Ruchman, Developed Recreation Program Manager, Gallatin National Forest, P.O. Box 130, Bozeman, MT 59771.** For more information, please contact Jane Ruchman, (406) 587-6966 or Steve Christiansen, (406) 587-6750.

Comments received will become part of the public record and may be made available to others upon request.

The Responsible Official for the decision on whether to authorize this race on the Gallatin and Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forests will be Mary Erickson, the Gallatin National Forest Supervisor.

## MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

### Race Segments:

- Yellowstone River – Carbella (BLM site) downstream to Big Timber (kayaks).
- Gallatin River – Porcupine downstream to Squaw Creek (rubber inflatables).
- Madison River – Varney Bridge Fishing Access Site (FAS) to Ennis Lake (Meadow Lake FAS) (kayaks).

### Transition Areas

- Meadow Lake Fishing Access Site on Ennis Lake

### **Environmental Review Process**

A preliminary review suggests that Madison River segment of this proposal may be covered under the Environmental Assessment conducted in 2007 for the implementation of a Special Recreation Permit for commercial, competitive, or organized groups on the Madison River. Additional environmental review may be necessary for the Madison River, Gallatin River and the Yellowstone River.

People who are interested in or affected by this proposal, specifically for the race segments within the jurisdiction of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks that are listed above, or for general fish, wildlife, river recreation, or FWP property concerns, are invited to send us comments. Due to the fact that each separate agency will be conducting environmental analysis and permitting for only those specific sections of the race that each manages, comments must be directed to specific sections, appropriate to each agency. This may require that comments be sent to more than one agency. Comments

received will become part of the public record and may be made available to others upon request.

Comments must be received, in writing, by January 25, 2008 and should be addressed to: **Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, attn: Jerry Walker, Region Parks Manager, 1400 S. 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Bozeman, MT 59718**

For more information, please contact Jerry Walker, (406) 994-3552 or at [gwalker@mt.gov](mailto:gwalker@mt.gov).

<b>MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES STATE TRUST LAND</b>
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Race Segments:

- From New World Gulch Trailhead to the Gallatin National Forest Boundry (mountain bike)

Transition Areas

- None

**Environmental Review Process**

This event will require an Environmental Analysis to be in compliance with the Montana Environmental Policy Act. By this letter DNRC is soliciting comments regarding the race in those areas that is crosses State of Montana School Trust Land.

People who are interested in or affected by this proposal, specifically for just the race segments within the State Trust Lands that are listed above, are invited to send us comments. Due to the fact that each separate agency will be conducting environmental analysis and permitting for only those specific sections of the race that each manages, comments must be directed to specific sections, appropriate to each agency. This may require that comments be sent to more than one agency. Comments received will become part of the public record and may be made available to others upon request.

Comments must be received, in writing, by January 25, 2008 and should be addressed to:

Craig Campbell, DNRC Bozeman Unit, 2273 Boothill CT., #110, Bozeman, MT 59715

For more information, please contact Craig Campbell, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Trust Lands, Bozeman Unit Manager, (406) 556-4507.

The Responsible Official for the decision will be Craig Campbell.

**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT – DILLON FIELD OFFICE**

Race Segments:

- This segment is a continuation of the segment on Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Route 315 also known as the Indian Trail. The route joins BLM at the private land boundary T4S, R1E, Section 30 and continues northwest along Trail 2502 to the Upper Bear Trap Canyon Road where it then joins with the Ennis Lake Road. (foot)
- This segment is a continuation of the segment on Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Road #161 located in T5S, R2W, section 8. The route travels along the Granite Creek Road to Highway 287 to Virginia City, then onto the Butcher Gulch road past the Axolotl Lakes Wilderness Study Area to xxx road and Varney Bridge. This route includes BLM administered public lands located in T5S, R2W, section 17; T5S, R3W, section 25; T6S, R3W, sections 4, 5, 26, and 35; T7S, R3W, section 1; T7S, R2W, sections 5 and 8. (mountain bike)

Transition Points

- None

**Environmental Review Process**

Preliminary review suggests that this proposal may be excluded from further documentation (Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impacts Statement) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In accordance with the Departmental Manual list of Categorical Exclusions, 516 DM 11.5 H (5) Issuance of special recreation permits to individuals or organized groups for search and rescue training, orienteering or similar activities and for dog trials, endurance horse races or similar minor events.

People who are interested in or affected by this proposal, specifically for the race segments within the Dillon Field Office listed above, are invited to send us comments. Comments received will become part of the public record and may be made available to others upon request.

Comments on the proposed race segments described above must be received, in writing, by January 25, 2008 and should be addressed to: **Bureau of Land Management, Ennis Field Station, attn: Susan James, Outdoor Recreation Planner, P.O. Box 765, Ennis, MT 59729.**

For more information, please contact Susan James, (406) 682-4082.

The Responsible Official for the decision will be Tim Bozorth, Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Dillon Field Office.

**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT – BUTTE FIELD OFFICE.**

Race Segments:

- none

Transition Points

- Carbella Recreation Site

**Description of affected Area**

The Carbella Recreation Site is located on the Yellowstone River about 35 miles south of Livingston, MT via Highway 89. Site amenities include an improved gravel entrance road, concrete boat ramp, CXT toilet, informational kiosk and camping units with tables and fire-rings. Carbella provides important river access for public floating and fishing.

**Environmental Review Process**

The proposed action described above is in conformance with the Headwaters Resource Management Plan. This plan states, “A broad range of outdoor recreation opportunities will continue to be provided for all segments of the public, commensurate will demand.”

A preliminary review of the proposed operations plan submitted by DPT Productions indicates that this competitive/commercial event qualifies as a Categorical Exclusion. Therefore preparation of an environmental assessment (EA) or environmental impact statement (EIS), is not envisioned since this action appears not to individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment within the Carbella site. The applicable Categorical Exclusion is listed in 516 DM 11.5.H - Recreation Management (1). This reference states, “Issuance of Special Recreation Permits for day use or overnight use up to 14 consecutive nights; that impacts no more than 3 staging area acres; and/or for recreational travel along roads, trails, or in areas authorized in a land use plan. This CX cannot be used for commercial boating permits along Wild and Scenic Rivers. This CX cannot be used for the establishment or issuance of Special Recreation Permits for “Special Area” management (43 CFR 2932.5).”

Comments on the proposed Carbella Transition Area must be received, in writing, by January 25, 2008 and should be addressed to: Bureau of Land Management, Butte Field Office, attn: Brad Rixford, Recreation-Wilderness Supervisor, 106 North Parkmont Street, Butte, MT 59701.

For more information, please contact Brad Rixford, (406) 533-7637.

The Responsible Official for the decision will be Rick Hotaling, Butte Field Office Manager, Bureau of Land Management.

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