

Plum Creek: Committed to Protecting Public Resources & Production of Forest Products to Sustain Local Economies

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Plum Creek (www.plumcreek.com) is the largest private landowner in the Flathead Basin, managing thousands of acres for a sustainable supply of wood fiber for local mills, and public resources such as clean water, fish, and wildlife. Besides Flathead Lake, Plum Creek lands are source-waters for numerous other lakes in the basin, including Mary Ronan, Ashley, Little Bitterroot, Whitefish, Tally, and Swan. Our forests are open to the public for hunting, fishing, and other forms of recreation.

Plum Creek's Montana lands are managed under three programs that ensure protection of water resources. These include the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFITM), Montana Forestry Best Management Practices, and the Native Fish Habitat Conservation Plan. The Company's forest hydrologist and two wildlife biologists work with twenty field foresters to ensure that these programs are properly implemented on-the-ground. Third-party audits confirm each element of the program is being properly implemented.

The SFI program (www.aboutsfi.com) defines performance measures that must be met nationwide across Plum Creek ownership. These include requirements for



protection of water quality, soil conservation, biodiversity protection, forest health and reforestation after harvest. Plum Creek was the first landowner in the country to have all forestlands independently certified to the SFI standard in 1999. Every year, the company's adherence to the SFI standard is verified by third-party audits. Company manufacturing facilities in Montana are approved to use the SFI label (above), so look for this on products you purchase.

A second element of water resource protection is implementation of Montana's forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs). Forestry BMPs in Montana are coordinated by the Montana DNRC (www.dnrc.mt.gov/forestry/Assistance/Practices/bmp.asp), and include science-based practices such as erosion control and drainage on roads and skid trails, appropriate sizing for culverts and fish passage at stream crossings, and avoiding excessive soil disturbance. Montana BMPs are audited by inter-disciplinary teams every two years, and Plum Creek's scores are always among the highest in the state, averaging 98% over the past 15 years.

The third program to protect water quality on Plum Creek lands in Montana is the Native Fish Habitat Conservation Plan (NFHCP), which was approved by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in 2000 (www.plumcreek.com/environment). This comprehensive plan ensures that streams



on Plum Creek property are managed to maintain the four "Cs" for protection of native fish: Cold water, Clean water, Complex habitat, and Connected habitat. Under the NFHCP, Plum Creek has reduced sediment delivery to streams 36% by upgrading over 4,000 miles of old road to enhanced BMP standards and "putting to bed" nearly 200 miles of roads no longer necessary for management. Customized stream buffers exceeding state requirements have been placed on hundreds of miles of stream to keep them shaded and to ensure a steady supply of woody debris for stream channel diversity (deep pools, fish hiding cover, etc.). Nearly 100 stream crossings have been improved to ensure fish passage under roads, through installation of bridges or "fish-friendly" culverts. The NFHCP was designed with an adaptive management and monitoring program to improve the plan over time. A 2006 third party audit and a review by the US Fish and Wildlife Service confirmed that the NFHCP is meeting or exceeding its biological objectives.

Plum Creek's commitment to working forests in Montana includes both the protection of public resources and the production of forest products to sustain local economies. Programs like SFI, Forestry BMPs and the NFHCP provide the opportunity to apply watershed science toward that commitment in the Flathead Valley and throughout Montana.

Source: Plum Creek Timber Company, 2009



"Fish-Friendly" culverts are being installed at road crossings on Plum Creek land throughout Montana