

# NEWSRELEASE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Timber harvest project planned on land near prison**

Montana Correctional Enterprises (MCE) has teamed with a Deer Lodge lumber company to protect the forest health on land near Montana State Prison.

MCE, a division of the Montana Department of Corrections, and Sun Mountain Lumber Inc. have entered into a contract to harvest lodgepole pine that is dead or dying of mountain pine beetle infestation on state land surrounding Montana State Prison.

Approximately 4.5 million board-feet of timber will be removed from about 700 acres on the MCE ranchland located on the west side of the Deer Lodge Valley. That's enough to fill 900 logging trucks.

Most of the thinning will occur in the Taylor Creek, Robinson Gulch, Tin Cup Joe Creek, Morrison Gulch, and Powell Creek drainages, all within 10 miles of Deer Lodge.

About 90 percent of the lodgepole in these areas are determined to be dying or dead due to insect infestation. The primary purpose of the salvage harvest is to reduce fuel levels in the urban wildfire interface area near Deer Lodge.

Two miles of new roads will be built and three miles of existing road will be reconstructed. All road construction and logging techniques will comply with Montana best management practices guidelines.

"This is a great partnership between a local lumber mill and the state of Montana to provide a healthier forest for future generations," said Gayle Lambert, MCE administrator.

Sun Mountain obtained a \$490,000 grant from the state Department of Natural Resources and Conservation under the Montana Jumpstart Forest Stewardship and Fuels Reduction Project. The company will use the money to cover some of the logging costs and to pay MCE for the timber.

The grant is from a federally funded program administered by the DNRC and intended to reduce wildland fuel and the related potential for forest fires near populated areas. It's also meant to assist Montana lumber mills in the current economic downturn.

Logging is scheduled to begin in early July and must be concluded by September 30.

In addition to selling the timber, MCE will receive about 2,000 tons of logging waste to use in a biomass burner being developed to provide steam and heat to some MCE buildings.

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