



## Fairy Lake Field Trip

Hosts: Jodie Canfield, Wildlife Program manager, Custer Gallatin National Forest and Clay DeMastus, Custer Gallatin national Forest

Organizers: Kirk and Beth Horn

Meet in the U.S. Forest Service Bozeman Research Lab parking lot at 8:30 AM. There is NO bus for this field trip so we will rely on your vehicles. At the USFS parking lot, we will decide

which vehicles will be used to transport participants. We will return by mid- afternoon.

The field trip will highlight whitebark (*Pinus albicaulis*) regeneration in the Bridger Mountains north of Bozeman. We will drive about an hour north of Bozeman within a mile of a spectacular alpine ridge reached by the Shafthouse Trail (Trail # 540) which gains about 700 feet in elevation.

The drive from Bozeman takes about an hour to the trail head. The last 4 miles are gravel and a bit rough in places, but very passable with a standard vehicle. This short but steep hike offers

spectacular views of the Bridger Range. The ridge contains a mix of limber (*Pinus flexillis*) and whitebark pine. Plots were set up in 2009 to test the effects of direct seeding of treated whitebark pine seeds with monitoring for three years. This was a part of a larger study that

included six sites in the northern Rockies in Montana and Idaho. Seed caches of three were also planted directly next to outplanted nursery grown seedlings and corresponding survival rates were compared.

Direct seeding would make it possible to collect seed, apply treatments, and plant the seed in the field, all within a month. This would be especially useful for remote sites. Successful completion of these tests will help management decisions on the future of this method of restoration. The effects of a nearby prescribed fire that went up the ridge in 2004 and the presence of whitebark pine “plus” trees will also be

topics of discussion. The burn objectives were to mimic light to moderate ground fire, minimize mature whitebark pine mortality, create niche habitat, and reduce competition from subalpine fir, spruce, and Douglas fir. The effects of fire were outweighed by the effects of blister rust.

