

## **Flathead County establishes dust-abatement fund; North Fork benefit uncertain**

**Posted Dec. 6, 2008**—Although Flathead County has set aside \$100,000 for countywide dust mitigation on unpaved roads, it doesn't seem likely that the North Fork Road will benefit very much from it, according to a story by Heidi Desch in the **Dec. 4 Hungry Horse News**.

At a Nov. 20 meeting with representatives of several government agencies, the North Fork Road Coalition for Health and Safety, and North Fork residents, Commissioner Gary Hall presented a draft agreement for a dust-control cost-share program.

“Under the draft proposal,” writes Desch, “the county would share 50 percent of the cost of applying a dust-control agent. The remaining cost would come from county residents in the area where the agent is applied. ... Roads would also be ranked with higher traffic counts receiving funding first.” North Fork residents comprise 0.5 percent of the total county population outside of city limits, reports Desch.

At the meeting, reports Desch, the NFRCHS dusted off three previously proposed options for raising matching funds: Charging an entry fee for vehicles using the Polebridge entrance to Glacier National Park, and charging rafting companies a fee for using the North Fork Road—both highly unlikely options because other agencies would be involved—and converting the North Fork Road into a toll road. Hall supports the toll-road idea, reports Desch, but said he was uncertain whether the county had the legal authority to establish one.