

Glenda Wiles

From: Taylor Orr <taylororr8@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 1, 2018 1:55 PM
To: Glenda Wiles; Ray Hawk; Greg Chilcott; jriman@rc.mt.gov; Jeff Burrows; Doug Schallenberger
Subject: S. 2206 and Sapphire and Blue Joint Wilderness Study Areas

Ravalli County Commissioners,

Thank you for scheduling a public hearing and accepting comments on the management of the Bitterroot National Forest wilderness study areas.

I have packed and ridden in both the Sapphire and Blue Joint wilderness study areas and believe they are both worthy of Wilderness consideration.

Senator Daines proposed S. 2206 is a top down government overreach effort to circumvent public input on the fate of these lands. While we can agree that it is high time to address the future of Montana's Wilderness Study Areas this bill is not the way to get it done. Instead, a citizen participation collaborative process is a more successful approach to resolving differences and reaching compromise. The Rocky Mountain Front and the Blackfoot-Clearwater area are two recent examples of where a diverse group of stakeholders got together and produced management recommendations.

Also, we should not lose sight of the fact that National Forest lands belong to all Americans not just the local population and they have a stake in how their lands are managed.

Forest management science does not support the notion that aggressive forest management, logging and road building, alleviates catastrophic wildfires. That is a myth.

I'm told the Bitterroot National Forest has 2000 miles of roads and that there is over 370,000 miles in the National Forest system. That is a lot roads and they provide ample opportunity for motorized and mechanized recreation. On the flip side, roadless lands are a rarity nationally. While we are privileged to live in an area with a good chunk of wild, public land much of the nation is not so fortunate. We should capitalize on this resource, not turn our beautiful Bitterroot homeland into something less.

I urge you to rescind your support of S. 2206 and promote a more inclusive approach to resolving the destiny of Montana's Wilderness Study Areas.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Taylor Orr
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