

Please accept this testimony from:
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February 21, 2018

To whom,

I am the last surviving conservationists who labored for years to achieve passage of the Wilderness Act of 1964, and as such I implore you to honor the original intent of that Act.

The Wilderness Act sought to retain in their natural state the last remnants of relatively-intact ecosystems that still existed on public lands in 1964. These lands included wilderness areas given immediate and permanent protection as well as what later became known as Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs). WSAs were given the same status of protection as designated wilderness areas in 1977 with the passage of the Montana Wilderness Study Act (S. 393), sponsored by the late Senator Lee Metcalf of Stevensville. These lands were to be managed by our federal agencies as wilderness until such time as an Act of Congress either included them into the permanent wilderness system (the original intent of the 1964 Wilderness Act) or deemed them fit for other uses.

Acts of Congress, by definition and common usage, are understood to be the result of Congress diligently ascertaining the will of the People and then acting on that will. Senator Daines, with his anti-democratic S 2206, and the Ravalli County Commissioners with their letter-in-support of that bill, are apparently unfamiliar with this democratic process. Senator Daines submitted S 2206 with almost no public input and the Ravalli County Commissioners, in the face of 70% opposition during the only adequately-noticed public meeting they held on the issue of their letter-in-support, defiantly followed Daines' suit. This is not democracy to say the least. It is, as you must suspect, something else, and these last remnants of once-vast landscapes that I spent my whole life fighting for deserve – and are legally-mandated to have – much more respect than this kind of backhanded, back-door approach.

The Sapphire, Blue Joint and West Pioneer WSAs contain the headwaters of much of our clean waters that not only support a multi-million-dollar-a-year sport fishing industry but are worthy of protection in their own right. Every acre of them deserves your considered respect as well as their full protection.

Thank you,

Stewart M. Brandborg