



Date: April 17, 2007

To: Montana Congressional Delegation
c/o Tina Bernd-Cohen
Blackfoot Stewardship Work Group
729 Power Street
Helena, MT 59601

The state governing council and members of Montana Wilderness Association fully supports the proposed Blackfoot Landscape Stewardship Pilot Project.

Wildland tracts to be included in the Bob Marshall, Scapegoat and Mission Mountains Wilderness are outstanding areas with high wilderness values. The project will also expand stewardship funding to restore watersheds, trout and wildlife habitat, treat forests, control weeds, maintain trails and develop a co-generating plant to utilize small fuels.

Montana Wilderness Association members worked with the Montana Logging Association in 1994 to draft the first bill authorizing "Stewardship" Contracts. Montana mills, loggers and conservationists have been in the forefront of this new paradigm that holds great potential for management of Montana's national forest lands.

Wilderness boundaries are based on recreation agreements between conservationists, skiers and snowmobilers in Seeley Lake and the Blackfoot Valley.

Monture-North Fork Blackfoot is the source of pristine tributaries of the Blackfoot River that flow from a series of rugged mountain basins bordering the Bob Marshall-Scapegoat Wilderness. The area is dotted with waterfalls, streams and glacial lakes. Mountain goats traverse sheer limestone cliffs above Dunham Creek. Monture Creek is a majestic 12-mile valley. The entire area provides unsurpassed elk, mule deer, lynx and bear habitats.

Montana Wilderness Association members have led wilderness walks in this area for the past 25 years. Monture Creek is true western wilderness, traversed by packstrings, wranglers, hikers and hunters. Monture trails connect through mountain passes with the pack trails of "the Bob." It remains a favorite wild haunt of Montana families, horseback riders, hunters, anglers, hikers and campers. Monture Creek trails and quiet backcountry are accessible year-round, enjoyed by families on snowshoe and skis as well as backcountry skiers and snowboarders.

Grizzly Basin is a remote and rugged area, terrific wildlife habitat and adjoins the Bob Marshall Wilderness Country.

The Upper West Fork of the Clearwater River is the largest roadless watershed bordering the Mission Mountains Wilderness. It provides great wilderness hunting for elk and mule deer as well as rare old-growth forest habitats for lynx, fisher, wolverine, pine marten and grizzlies. The proposal secures a vital wildlife link between the Mission Mountains and Bob Marshall Country.

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We hope Montana's congressional delegation will cooperate to pass this as a model of landscape-level cooperation in conservation and stewardship of Montana's public lands.

For Montana wilderness,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph Scalia III". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Joseph Scalia III, President