



# Good Luck to Everyone Heading Back-to-School!



Montana 4x4 Association

September 2013

## 4XFORUM

### Helena NF Releases Decision Memo for Elkhorn Travel Plan Implementation Project

HELENA, MONT., August 20, 2013—The Acting Townsend District Ranger, Kathy Bushnell, recently announced her decision to implement road treatment and decommissioning activities outlined in the Elkhorn Travel Plan Implementation Project Decision Memo.

"The Elkhorn Travel Plan Implementation project would not generate any "extraordinary

circumstances" that would prevent the project from going forward as proposed under three separate Categorical Exclusions," Bushnell said. "This project will protect and restore watershed conditions within the Elkhorns, while improving big game security and wildlife habitat."

The Elkhorn Travel Plan Implementation Project decision includes 32.1 miles of road

decommissioning, 1.7 miles of road re-routing, and 5.9 miles of road closure through placement of barriers within the Elkhorns Mountains on the Townsend Ranger District. Based on the environmental review pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), there are no "extraordinary circumstances" related to these actions. This project meets these specific criteria for Categorical Exclusion:

- 36 CFR 220.6(d)(4) - Repair and maintenance of roads, trails and landline boundaries.

- 36 CFR 220.6(e)(5) - Regeneration of an area to native tree species, including site preparation which does not involve the use of herbicides or result in vegetation type conversion.

- 36 CFR 220.6(e)(7) - Modification or maintenance of

*Continued on page 7*

**Next Delegates Meeting, Saturday, October 12, 10 am. in Bozeman, location to be announced**

### Be Aware of Fire Activity Before Heading out!

There are even more wildfires in Montana than reported in the August 4XForum. Before heading out on the trails, keep informed on what is going on in your area.

There are several trail closures because of these fires, check current information before heading out to these areas. To keep track of wildfires, visit the [www.inciweb.org/state/27/](http://www.inciweb.org/state/27/) website for complete information.

### Custer and Gallatin NF Enact Fire Restrictions

Persistent hot, dry weather, large fires and the lack of fire suppression resources across the nation has triggered the entire Gallatin National Forest into Stage I Fire Restrictions beginning Saturday.

The Absaroka-Beartooth and Lee Metcalf wilderness areas within the Gallatin National Forest are also in Stage I Fire Restrictions.

The Beartooth Ranger District of the Custer National Forest remains in Stage I Fire Restrictions everywhere except

its portion of the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness.

Stage I Fire Restrictions require that forest visitors only have campfires and charcoal fires at designated recreation sites or campgrounds in an agency provided metal fire ring. All other fires, even those within rock fire rings and in wood-burning stoves in canvas wall tents are prohibited. Fires fueled solely by liquid petroleum or LPG fuels, that can be turned off and on, may be used. Smoking is allowed only within

an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site, or while stopped in an area at least 3 feet in diameter that is cleared of all flammable materials.

Recreationists should pay attention to road closures because of the Miner Paradise Complex fire in Gallatin National Forest, which include roads in the Gardiner area and East Fork Hyalite area. For further information, go to: <http://www.inciweb.org>

### Montana Counties, Forests in Stage 1 Restrictions

The following National Forests have issued Stage 1 Restrictions until rescinded

- Gallatin National Forest
- Custer National Forest
- Lolo National Forest
- Bitterroot National Forest

Stage 1 Fire Restrictions: Big Horn, Carbon, Deer Lodge, Gallatin, Granite, Lake, Madison, Meagher, Mineral, Missoula, Park, Powell, Ravalli, Rosebud, Sanders, Silverbow, Stillwater, Sweetgrass, Yellowstone

tions, no fires are allowed, unless specific exemptions are posted. No smoking is allowed, unless within an enclosed vehicle, building, developed recreation site or area 3 ft. in diameter cleared of all flammable materials.

Montana Counties under Under Stage 1 Fire Restriction

# BLM Announces RAC Meeting Dates

**Eastern Montana RAC**  
Sept. 5, 2013, in Billings, MT

**Central Montana RAC**  
Sept. 18-19, 2013, in Lewistown, MT.

**Dakotas RAC**  
Sept. 25, 2013, in Bowman, ND

Western Montana RAC held their meeting August 21.

management programs and issues. Each RAC consists of local residents who represent three broad interest categories: commodity interests, non-commodity interests, and government/academic interests. RAC members are chosen by the Secretary of the Interior in consul-

tation with the governor of the state in which they serve. The Western, Central and Eastern Montana RACs consider issues that affect BLM lands in Montana. The Dakotas RAC covers public lands in both North and South Dakota.

## Club Contact Info

### Region 1 - RVP Vern Ball

#### Magic City 4x4

PO Box 21241, Billings, MT 59104, mc4w.com — Meet first Monday of each month, 6:30 pm., at El Corral Restaurant, 4907 Southgate Drive, Billings

#### Rimrock 4x4

PO Box 361, Billings, MT 59103  
Meet third Wednesday of each month, 7:30 pm., at the Rod and Gun Club, on Saddleback Trail, Billings

### Region 4 - RVP

### Region 5 - RVP Alex Tyhurst

#### Frontier 4-Wheelers

PO Box 7011  
Helena, MT 59604  
www.m4x4a.org/frontier  
Meet first Wednesday of each month, 7 pm., in the meeting room at The Staggering Ox Restaurant, 400 Euclid Ave., in Helena

### Region 7 - RVP Jim Young

#### Continental 4 Wheel

#### Drive Association

Meets last Monday of each month, 7 pm., at Legion Oasis Recreation Hall, 2400 Hill Ave., Butte.

### Region 6 - RVP

#### Mountaineers

PO Box 951,  
Bozeman, MT 59718,  
bozemanmountaineers.org  
Meet second Wednesday of each month, 7:30 pm.,  
Korner Klub in 4-Corners,  
8191 Huffine Ln., Bozeman

### Region 8 - RVP Dick Riebe

### Region 9 - RVP Nancy Hines

#### Big Sky 4-Wheelers

Meet first Monday of each month, 7 pm., at the old Lasalle School, on the corner of Pioneer Road and Helena Flats, Kalispell

#### Skyliners 4 Wheel Drive Club

PO Box 1416, Polson, MT 59860, skyliners4x4.com  
Meets first Tuesday of each month, 7 pm., at the VFW in Polson, at 423 Main St.

Resource advisory councils (RACs) were created in 1995 to advise the BLM on land

## 2013 M4x4A Event Dates

***Please include contact information and phone numbers for any event added. All dates and times subject to change. Contact the hosting organization if you have questions.***

Sept. 7 — Continental 4-Wheel Drive Association will be participating in a show at the Pro Build store in Butte

Sept. 7 — Magic City 4-Wheeler members planning a trail ride to Independence, meet at Box Canyon, 11 am.

Sept. 7 — Bozeman Mountaineer club run weekend, leave Four Corners Exxon, 8 am., run North Meadow Creek, or meet at Norris about 9 am. Some members may be camping Sat. night

Sept. 8 — Continental 4-Wheel Drive Association Trail Ride

October 12 — M4x4A Delegates Meeting, 10 am., Bozeman, location TBA, trail ride follows

### Non-M4x4A Club Event Dates (all dates are subject to change)

September 21 — Montana Off Road Extreme Racing event, Mud Bog, racing starts 12 noon, on Story Road (take I-90 exit 443, turn south to South Frontage Road, east to Wise Lane, then east to Story Road), Billings, MT, for more information contact Jeff MacGill 850-8028 or 252-7317 (non M4x4A club event)

September 28 — Yellowstone Off Road Racing Baja, Wild West, Columbus, MT, Call Don 406-670-4647

September 28 — Fall Crawl at Big Boy Motorsports Park, entry \$25, spectators \$8 (12 and under free), benefits Choteau County Cancer Support Group, Vaughn, MT, 406-660-0760

October 5 — Montana Off Road Extreme Racing event, short course race, racing starts 12 noon, on Story Road (take I-90 MT, for more information contact Jeff MacGill 850-8028 or 252-7317 (non M4x4A club event)

## Conservation Projects Need To Be Advertised

Clubs must give thirty days advance notice for conservation projects to earn a patch! Send your project information to the M4x4A Secretary - email spidycats@q.com, with 30 days advance notice so she can get information about your project sent to members, and so it will qualify as a State or Regional conservation project! Regional Conservation projects are those done by one club. State Conservation Projects are those done by two or more clubs.

Following your conservation projects, you must send a report to the M4X4A Secretary. It should include: When and Where, who participated (please state what club the member belongs to). Include what was done during the project. You can send photos too! Some projects will not qualify as a conservation project, such as, highway cleanup projects or other civic duty projects, such as park cleanups.

### Montana 4x4 Association Board of Directors Contact Information

**President, Destry Walker**  
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406-240-0401

**Vice President, Richard Hiltz**  
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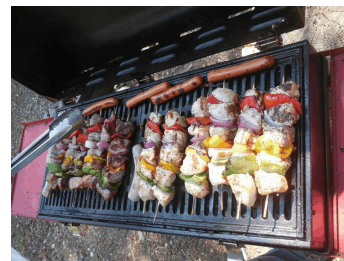


## Frontier 4x4 Club PO Box 7011 Helena MT 59604

At Frontier 4x4 we have had a great month. Again we have done two official club runs this month. The first was on the 17<sup>th</sup> when we went to Rock Creek (Leadville). We consider this to be our “home” trail and will generally go there a number of times each year. We tried to get the Forest Service Recreation Manager to join us but some other commitments got in the way. It was not a big run with only three rigs but we had a good time.



Our second run was our summer picnic on the 25<sup>th</sup>. For this we decided to go to Gypsy Lake via Duck Creek behind Old Baldy Mountain. We had a good turnout for this trip with 8 rigs filled with a number of families. The kids had a great time catching frogs while the rest of us setup our cooking gear. Chicken and Beef Kabobs, potato salad, shrimp cocktail, baked beans, donuts (yes donuts), a rubarb pie and meat and



cheese snacks and much more was had. We spent a good amount of time trading wheeling and other stories and just managed to expand our friendships. After lunch we would head over to Fort Logan and then back to Helena via Confederate Gulch. Not a tough ride but that was not the point this time. It was all about our friendships.




There was also a number of less official runs with club members. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of August I and Brian B. joined the Beaverhead Backcountry Pioneers 4x4 club out of Dillon. Brian is a member of both our club and the BBP4x4. We camped at Van Housen Lake Campground just outside of Jackson Montana in a beautiful spot. On Saturday and Sunday we would hit some interesting and beautiful trails. We went to Cow Bone and Dark Horse Lake as well as to some great mines. Willy Worthy would join us on Saturday and all would have a good time.



On that same weekend a few other members would find some new and interesting way to get up to the top of Hogback Mountain. I hear it got REAL interesting in a few spots where the shale made the road like marbles and the angles made the marbles a spot they do not want to go back to that particular spot. Luckily there is another way which they promise to share soon..

Our next club meeting is on September 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm. We meet at the meeting room of the Red Atlas at the back of the Staggering Ox Restaurant.

Like seeing your club in this newsletter? Send in reports, photos, events by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month for next months newsletter. I encourage clubs to appoint a club member to be your “club reporter.” Also - if you know of something happening in your National Forest that members should know about, please share! Send them to Stacey Osborne, Secretary, [spidycats@q.com](mailto:spidycats@q.com)

 When posting on Facebook, for everyone to see it and share it, it must be made public. You’ll find an audience selector tool where you share status updates, photos, and more.

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406-549-3842



# Mountaineers Keep Busy Racing, Riding

## Hi from the Mountaineers!

We had our meeting last night and decided to make our

monthly club run our Trail Truck Challenge on Aug. 24. Classes were Under 37" tires

## Magic City Meeting Date Change

Magic City members are reminded that the Sept. meeting will be on Tuesday, Sept. 3, instead of Monday because of Labor Day! 6:30 pm. as usual.

A couple members are plan-

ning a run to Independence (south of Big Timber), on Sept. 7. They'll meet at Box Canyon at 11 am., to give anyone coming up that morning time to get to the trail head.

*Magic City 4-Wheelers announce the passing of one of their life-time members, Jack Hall. Jack was instrumental in getting Magic City's adopt-a-trail agreement for the Benbow Jeep Trail made with the Forest Service.*

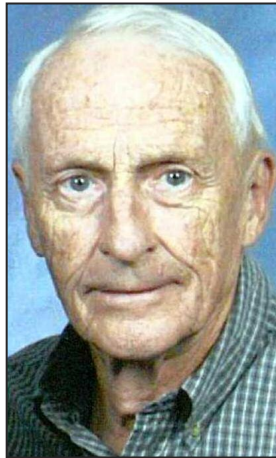
## Jack Hall

GOLD CANYON, Ariz. — With his family at his side, Jack Conrad Hall, 84, passed away on July 24, 2013, at his home in Gold Canyon, Ariz. Funeral Mass at St. George Roman Catholic Church will be Saturday, Aug. 10, at 11 a.m. Interment services will be in Helena in Resurrection Cemetery on Aug. 31, at 3 p.m.

Jack was born on May 23, 1929, in Helena, to Milton and Evelyn (Conrad) Hall. He graduated from Helena High School in 1948. He was employed by the Montana Liquor Control Board at the time of his marriage to Mary Carol Wirth on Sept. 23, 1950, at St. Helena Cathedral in Helena. From 1951-1953, Jack served in the United States Army. Upon his honorable discharge, he went to work for Sacony-Mobil Oil Company in Billings. He was the field accountant in Casper, Wyo., prior to being transferred to Billings to head up the machine accounting section. He remained with Mobil Oil until they closed the Billings offices in 1959. Jack joined administration at Eastern Montana College as the computer center director. During his years with Eastern Montana College, Jack oversaw the initial electronic computer installation at this unit of the Montana University System. Eastern Montana College was the first unit to have fully computerized student registration. He also taught the first classes in computing and system analysis at Eastern Montana College. Jack was one of the founding members of the Montana Data Processing Association in the early 1960's. He actively supported the U.S. Forest Service civilian programs such as Leave No Trace. Jack was a lifetime member of the Magic City 4-Wheelers and took part in their trail preservation and forest cleanup activities.

He is survived by his wife, Mary Carol Hall; and children, Robert C. Hall and his wife, Penny Oliver, of Bozeman, Jeanne Hall Hallock and husband, Dan, of Apache Junction, Ariz., and Bearcreek, Mont., Richard C. Hall and wife, Cheryl, of Vernal, Utah, and Gold Canyon, Ariz., Rory C. Hall and wife, Connie, of Las Vegas, Nev.; and a son-in-law, Douglas P. Vetsch, of Dalton Gardens, Idaho. Jack is grandfather to 16 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his daughter, Susan Hall Vetsch.



and 37" and over. We had turnouts on all the obstacles for the small tire class where appropriate. There was a Frame twister (crossed logs in a shallow pit), rock crawl, mud pit and obstacle course. Participants needed to bring your typical extraction gear you would use on a trail ride (winch, come along, hi lift jack, straps, safety gear, etc.)

The Mud Bog went pretty well this year. We had a little miscommunication on the pit length and it ended up being 160' instead of 120', so our cable was a little short which slowed down the whole event a little. However, we had several comments that the longer pit was preferable so we decided to do that again next year only with 2 cables that are long enough.

We had 125 entries total through 6 tire classes. Our slowest full run was 3+ minutes. That old Ford just wouldn't go down and kept making progress. Our fast run was by a

gentleman from Wyoming with a Ranger body on a fs Bronco frame with a nasty big block Ford engine. Right at 6 seconds and it could have been faster if he didn't have to lift because he couldn't see. Very impressive run. Many thanks to all who came and ran and/or helped!

We were happy to host the State quarterly meeting here and a new prospective member based out of Yellowstone Park came up and ran Flathead pass with us after the meeting. Stephen is a really nice fellow and should be a great addition to our wheeling ranks.

Our September club run will be the weekend of the 7th and 8th. We will leave the Four Corners Exxon at 8am to run North Meadow Creek. You can meet us there or at Norris about 9am. We will have some members camping Sat. night apparently. Please come and enjoy this remarkable trail with us!

That's it from Bozeman.

Respectfully submitted,  
Blair Howze Region 6 RVP

## Continental Club Plans to Be At Pro Build Show

The Continental 4-Wheel Drive Association have been invited to participate in a show at the Pro Build Store in Butte on Sept. 7. They will have their

RTI ramp at the show. Anyone in the area are encouraged to show up and support the club. They are also planning a trail ride on the 8th.

## Blacktail Wild Bill Trail Gets Magazine Endorsement

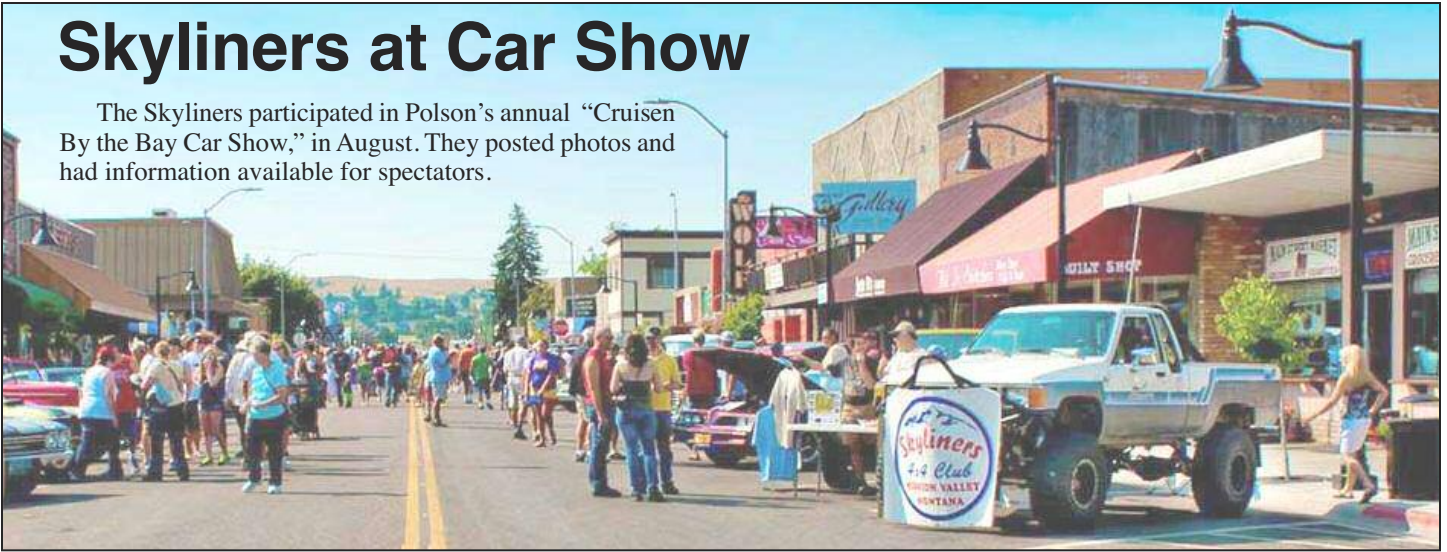
Laurie Happ, with Big Sky Four Wheelers, shared that the Blacktail Wild Bill Trail System made the list of great routes for riding ATV's in Cabin Life magazine. The other five trails on the list were Hatfield & McCoy Trails (WV), Little O'-Trail (MI), Oregon Dunes (OR), Paiute Trail (UT), and Ride Royal Blue Resort (TN).



**Members: Share Your Club News, Trail Rides, Rig Builds, Helpful Hints, Techniques,**

## Skyliners at Car Show

The Skyliners participated in Polson's annual "Cruisen By the Bay Car Show," in August. They posted photos and had information available for spectators.



*Photos courtesy of Skyliners Facebook page*

## Flathead NF Updating Forest Plan Field Trips

MONTANA: The Flathead National Forest is embarking on a multi-year process to update its Forest Plan, the document that guides how the forest manages your public lands. The Forest Plan provides direction for managing resources and activities such as recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, historic and sacred sites, vegetation, mineral exploration and development, and timber.

The Forest Service is holding 4 public field trips which will each focus on subject matter important to the Forest Plan. During these field trips the public is asked to share their values and the benefits they derive

from the Flathead National Forest as well as provide input to help the forest staff accurately capture the current conditions on the forest.

Trips will run from 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM (except for August 29 which includes a stop at the Spotted Bear Ranger District with a 5:00 PM return). The trips will begin and end at the Flathead County Fairgrounds with transportation provided.

- The first trip was held August 8 – Forest vegetation and disturbances including fire, timber harvest, and forest products (Tally Lake Ranger District)
- **August 29** - Recreation settings, opportunities and access,

native knowledge, existing wilderness and scenic character (Hungry Horse/Spotted Bear Ranger Districts)

- **September 12** - Terrestrial and aquatic habitats, threatened and endangered species, species of conservation concern, and invasive species (Swan Lake Ranger District)
- **September 26** - Inventoried roadless areas, recommended wilderness, and wild and scenic rivers (Glacier View Ranger District)
- Social science, economics, and the role and contributions of the Flathead National Forest will be a component of each of the field trips.

The information shared, and the feedback received, will be used to develop and finalize the assessment, determine needs for change, and to draft a proposed plan.

RSVP to Wade Muehlhof (ewmuehlhof@fs.fed.us or 406-758-5252) at least one week before the field trip(s) you plan to attend. Visit the Flathead National Forest Plan Revision page to learn more. [www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/flathead/landmanagement/planning/?cid=stelprdb5422786&wdth=full](http://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/flathead/landmanagement/planning/?cid=stelprdb5422786&wdth=full)

## Flathead National Forest RAC Accepting Project Proposals

KALISPELL, MT - The Flathead National Forest Flathead County Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) is currently requesting project proposals for possible funding from federal grant dollars through title II of the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program in anticipation of renewed funding for 2013. **Proposals are due by August 30th, 2013.** Funds may be used for projects on federal and non-federal lands that benefit National Forest System lands. Approximately half of the funding will be granted to road, trail, and water-

shed projects.

Project forms are available from the Flathead County RAC Web site: [https://fsplaces.fs.fed.us/fsfiles/unit/wo/secure\\_rural\\_schools.nsf/RAC/Flathead+County](https://fsplaces.fs.fed.us/fsfiles/unit/wo/secure_rural_schools.nsf/RAC/Flathead+County). Completed applications can be submitted directly to this site. Questions and assistance with submitting forms can be obtained from Louise Larimore at 406-758-5251 or you can email your request to [llarimore@fs.fed.us](mailto:llarimore@fs.fed.us). Applicants are encouraged to propose projects that provide economic benefit to the community, create partnerships,

have public visibility and contribute to overall forest health, visitor enjoyment and educational value of public lands.

Previous RAC projects include:

- Forest thinning, tree planting and forest health activities;
- Road improvements and dust abatement;
- Noxious weed control activities;
- Trail improvements;
- Recreation and maintenance projects; and
- Enhancement of wildlife and fish habitat.

Flathead County Resource Advisory Committee was chartered in 2001 by the US Department of Agriculture under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The local committee is comprised of fifteen community members, representing outdoor recreation, commercial timber industry, environmental organizations, school officials and local elected officials.

For more information contact Wade Muehlhof, the Designated Federal Officer with the Flathead National Forest, at 406-758-5252.

*Release Date: Aug 12, 2013*



# Custer and Gallatin NF Accepting Project Proposals

Bozeman and Billings, MT—The Custer and Gallatin National Forests Resource Advisory Committees, which include Gallatin County and the Southern Montana Resource Advisory Committees (RAC's) are currently requesting project proposals through September 9 at midnight. Project proposals are being accepted for possible funding from federal dollars through Title II of the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program, in anticipation of renewed funding and the reauthorization or extension of the act through 2013/2014.

Acceptable project proposals aim to enhance forest ecosystems and restore and improve land health or water quality on the Custer and Gallatin National Forests and/or adjacent nearby lands. Past projects have included Hyalite Snowplowing, OHV and trail enhancements, and road improvements leading to on National Forest System lands, along with trail and watershed projects.

In September 2012 Gallatin

and Southern MT RAC's approved 18 projects, many of which continue to be carried out across the Custer and Gallatin National Forests or adjacent land benefiting the National Forest System corridors and communities including weed treatment, road improvements and trail maintenance.

"The Resource Advisory Committees offer a great opportunity for people to bring work ideas forward for potential funding. RAC project proposals are submitted by community members and organizations and represent the interests and needs of specific communities," said Custer and Gallatin Forest Supervisor Mary Erickson. **"We encourage folks to submit proposals for consideration by September 9."**

If the Secure Rural Schools Program is reauthorized the Gallatin County and Southern Montana RAC's, working closely with the Forest Service will meet and recommend projects that will benefit forest health, fish, wildlife, soils, wa-

tersheds, and other resources; maintain roads, trails, and other infrastructure; and/or control noxious weeds on National Forest System lands or adjacent lands.

RAC projects must be located on National Forest System (NFS) lands within the respective counties on the Custer and Gallatin National Forests. Participating counties include Gallatin County for Gallatin County RAC and Park, Sweet Grass, Stillwater and Powder River Counties for the Southern Montana RAC respectively. Projects can be completed through partnership agreements, by open-bid contracting with individuals and corporations, or by Forest Service personnel. Organizations, government entities, or individuals may submit proposals and are urged to work with the local ranger district on project submissions and feasibility.

Project Submission Forms are available on the Custer and Gallatin National Forest websites at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/custer>

or [www.fs.usda.gov/gallatin](http://www.fs.usda.gov/gallatin) and clicking on the Resource Advisory Committee link to the right. Forms must be submitted by September 9 to the address noted on the application, electronic submissions are preferred. To learn more about the National RAC program visit: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/pts>. Each RAC will begin reviewing project proposals for possible funding at the September meetings (location, date and time is still to be determined and will be posted on Custer and Gallatin websites). When RAC meetings are held project proponents are welcome and asked to attend, but usually only have a brief moment to discuss their project or provide clarifying questions before the RAC makes its final decisions. The public is welcome to attend any and all RAC meetings. For additional information on the RAC or to learn more about proposing projects, please contact Mariah Leuschen, 406-255-1411.

# Custer and Gallatin Forests Combine Operations

At a recent Magic City meeting, a member noticed that in a Billings Gazette story about trail conditions, it mentioned Custer National Forest consolidating with Gallatin National Forest by October of 2014.

I had also noticed when gathering news from the Forest Service websites for the 4XForum that many of the Gallatin and Custer National forest's news releases began with "Custer and Gallatin National Forests." I contacted Mountaineer, Blair Howze, who keeps tabs on the Gallatin, and he hadn't heard anything about the consolidation. So next I let my fingers to the dancing, and went to google, and found an article from December 2008 announcing that the two forests would be combining operations.

The article reported that with Custer National Forest combining its management with the

Gallatin National Forest, it would be a cost-saving measure. In 2008, it was temporary to see how it would work, and could then become a long-term relationship. Quietly, it seems, the merge has happened!

The Gallatin and Custer are part of the Northern Region. The Gallatin, headquartered in Bozeman, is a 1.8 million-acre forest that abuts Yellowstone National Park and in 2008 employed about 175 people. It is the most-visited forest in the Northern Region.

The Custer, headquartered in Billings, is a 1.3 million-acre forest that employed 80 people and ranges from near Cooke City and the Beartooth Mountains in southern Montana to northwestern South Dakota's Sioux Ranger District. Bozeman is about 500 miles from the district office in Camp Crook, S.D.

Under reorganization, the combined forests could see 30 to 35 fewer positions over time, many of them lost to retirement and through job transfers.

In 2007, Mary Erickson, Gallatin National Forest supervisor assumed supervisory duties for both forests, and Custer National Forest's Chris Worth, became deputy supervisor, out of Billings.

Most of the focus in cost reduction was on higher-level leadership positions.

The article reported that when the Beaverhead and Deerlodge forests combined under a different plan, the Deerlodge forest got "fleeced." When the Forest Service announced its plans to roll the Helena National Forest into the Lewis and Clark, based in Great Falls, Helena's mayor, community organizations and the Montana Wilderness Association

protested and the agency backed off.

The Gallatin was also exploring consolidating the Big Timber and Livingston ranger districts, keeping a district ranger in Big Timber and having an acting district ranger in Livingston. Both districts employ about 15 people. It's unknown what became of that part of the plan.

The changes came because the Forest Service struggled with increasing firefighting costs that consume as much as 50 percent of the agency's entire budget.

Keep in mind the Forest supervisors mentioned and plans mentioned were from 2008. No public protests on the consolidation were found online, but I'm sure this is "news" to a lot of people.

— Stacey Osborne

# Butte Ranger District Receives Donation for Trails

Triple Ring Productions, sponsor of the Butte 100, recently donated a portion of the 2013 Butte 100 proceeds to the Butte Ranger District to assist with trail management activities

on trails in the Butte and Jefferson Ranger District area. Bob and Gwen Waggoner, owners, and Gina Evans, event coordinator, presented the \$1,500 check to Butte District Ranger

Dave Sabo. "This wonderful donation will help us to improve trails and information in the area so that all trail users can enjoy all that these trails have to offer," said Dave Sabo. The

Forest Service has received donations in the past from other groups including P & M Runners to assist with improvements to local trails.

## Three More Field Trips Planned for Forest Plan Revision

**FLATHEAD NATIONAL FOREST** – The second of four field trips to kick off the collaborative effort for forest plan revision will be held August 29, 2013. The trip will focus on recreation opportunities, access, existing wilderness and scenic character and will take people around the Hungry Horse Reservoir on the Hungry Horse and Spotted Bear Ranger Districts. The public field trips each focus on subject matter important to the forest plan. On these field trips we ask people to share their values and the

benefits they derive from the Flathead National Forest as well as provide input to help us accurately assess the current conditions we have on the forest as they pertain to the topic of the field trip. The trips will also be an opportunity to experience the distinct geographical areas that make up our ranger districts.

The Flathead National Forest is embarking on a multi-year process to update its forest plan, the document that guides how we manage your public lands. The forest plan provides

direction for managing resources and activities such as recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, historic and sacred sites, vegetation and timber production. Forest plan revision is achieved in a three-phase process: assessment, revision, and monitoring. The 2012 National Forest System land management planning rule calls for an enhanced commitment to collaboration and public engagement across all three phases, including outreach to groups such as youth.

Due to the distance we will need to travel on the August 29th field trip we will start at 7:45 AM at the Flathead County Fairgrounds, with second a pick-up at the Hungry Horse Ranger District at 8:30 AM. We plan to return people to Hungry Horse by 5:15 PM and the fairgrounds by 6:00 PM. The last two trips are planned to run from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM. Those trips will begin and end at the Flathead County Fairgrounds with transportation provided for all the field trips.

• **August 29** - Recreation settings, opportunities and access, existing wilderness and scenic character (Hungry Horse/Spotted Bear Ranger

Districts)?

• **September 12** - Terrestrial and aquatic habitats, threatened and endangered species, species of conservation concern, and invasive species (Swan Lake Ranger District)?

• **September 26** – Inventoried roadless areas, recommended wilderness, and wild and scenic rivers (Glacier View Ranger District)

Social science, economics, and the role and contributions of the Flathead National Forest will be a component of each of the field trips.

The information shared and the feedback received will be used to develop and finalize the assessment, determine needs for change, and to draft a proposed plan. There will be additional opportunities to engage in the collaborative process as the plan is developed over the next few years.

Please RSVP to Wade Muehlhof (ewmuehlhof@fs.fed.us or 406-758-5252) at least one week before the field trip(s) you plan to attend. Please let us know if you have any special accommodation needs. For additional details please visit the Flathead National Forest Plan Revision page on our website.

## Temporary Closure in Helena National Forest Thru Oct. 15

For the purpose of this order it is prohibited to operate any type of motor vehicle from July 15, 2013 through October 15, 2013 excluding Saturdays and Sundays, and Holidays on Rimini

Banner Creek Road 1876 south of the Town of Rimini in Section 9 until its junction with the east entrance road of the former Basin Creek mine site in Section 30, T8N, R5W.

## Magruder Corridor Road Closed Due to Gold Pan Fire

**BITTERROOT NATIONAL FOREST** — The Magruder Corridor Road # 468 is currently closed from the Little West Fork Road to Sabe Saddle

due to the Gold Pan Complex Fire. Be advised that there is nowhere to turn a vehicle around between Dry Saddle and Sabe Saddle.

## Elkhorns

### From page 1

stream or lake aquatic habitat improvement structures using native materials or normal practices.

These implementation activities will help maintain and improve watershed condition and wildlife habitat in keeping with the goals and objectives of the Helena National Forest Plan. The project is designed to im-

prove hydraulic function and restore soil productivity, increase effectiveness of wildlife habitat and improve big-game security, clarify road closures to aid in public compliance with the Elkhorn Travel Plan, re-route roads to bypass private inholdings without right-of-way while maintaining public access on designated open roads, and repair and maintain roads with erosion problems to protect soil and water resources.

As outlined in the Decision Memo, treatments used to achieve objectives would generally include: decommissioning roads through ripping or recontouring, seeding, and slashing; allowing roads to revegetate naturally; constructing barriers to reduce unauthorized travel; restoring stream crossings; reshaping roads to reduce erosion; and re-routing roads to maintain access.

This decision is subject to

appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215. More detailed information, included in the Decision Memo is online website at [www.fs.usda.gov/helena/](http://www.fs.usda.gov/helena/).

"We're excited to implement these Travel Plan activities and help improve the watershed and ecological condition of this local treasure for future generations" said Bushnell.

Release Date: Aug 20, 2013

# Billings BLM to Vandals: It's Not Recreation

Billings, Mont. — The Bureau of Land Management's Billings Field Office maintains a number of recreation sites near Billings that are designed to provide the public with near-by opportunities to hike, bike ride, view wildlife, picnic, or learn more about this region's rich cultural and paleontological resources. The BLM makes it a priority to enhance the public's recreation experience with upgraded facilities and better amenities when resources allow, but BLM staff has seen an increase in newly installed improvements being riddled with bullet holes, ripped out, or burned. Vandalizing BLM sites and resources is not considered a form of recreation.

"On-the-ground improvements like new signs, fenced parking areas, fire grates and picnic tables are made whenever we have the funding to do so," said Jim Sparks, field manager for the Billings Field Office. "But as our budgets shrink and we're forced to choose priority projects, as field manager I've got to think long and hard

before I invest any more taxpayer dollars into improving these recreation sites. It's not okay to vandalize, it's not okay to dump trash on public lands, and it's not okay that it's costing all of us with these senseless acts."

Sparks estimates about \$100,000 has been invested the past several years in improving multiple recreation sites throughout the field office. About \$30,000, which is most of this year's available funding for the BLM's Recreation Program, has been spent on repairing damage resulting from vandalism.

And it's not just been one time and they're done. At the Acton Recreation Area 18 miles north of Billings, BLM crews recently repaired damage incurred at the hands of vandals, only to go out the next day and find the repaired facility again destroyed. Not long after conducting repairs for a second time, the vandals hit again. About 20 minutes northeast of Billings, the BLM manages the popular Shepherd Ah Nei

Recreation Area, which provides both motorized and non-motorized recreational opportunities. That site too has been hit three times, now forcing the BLM to cancel any further plans in the foreseeable future for repair or replacement of the vandalized property. The Sundance Lodge Recreation Area near Laurel has been struck three times and the 17-mile Recreation Area hit twice in recent months. Amenities provided in the areas of Castle Butte, Elk Basin, and the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range have also been vandalized.

The BLM has increased law enforcement patrols with some success in catching the culprits, but when there are 434,000 acres to cover, the BLM Ranger can't always be in the right place at the right time.

"That's why the BLM is asking for the public's help as our eyes and ears in stopping the vandalism and inane waste of taxpayer money," added Sparks. "The public should not expose themselves to dangerous situations, but note vehicle de-

scriptions, take photos, and contact us with any other valuable information that might help solve these crimes."

The public may contact BLM Law Enforcement at (406) 698-9854, the Billings Field Office at (406) 896-5013, or the Yellowstone County Sheriff's Office for non-emergency events at (406) 657-8200, to report a crime or share information. Callers may remain anonymous. The public should always dial 911 for emergencies.

Under 18 U.S.C. 1361, individuals convicted of vandalizing natural and cultural resources or facilities managed by the BLM are subject to fines up to \$1,000 and/or imprisonment.

For more information, contact Jim Sparks at (406) 896-5241 or Craig Drake at (406) 896-5349. For the latest BLM news and updates visit us on the web at [www.blm.gov/mt](http://www.blm.gov/mt), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/BLMMontana](https://www.facebook.com/BLMMontana), or follow us on Twitter @BLM\_MTDKs.

## Impacts Travel to Mollman Lakes on the Swan Lake Ranger District in Flathead National Forest

KALISPELL, MT — A road project to replace a bridge crossing Cold Creek on the Flathead National Forest will impact traffic headed to trail

#301 towards Mollman Pass. The road closure is at mile-post 3.436 on National Forest System Road (NFSR) #903 in the Cold Creek drainage approxi-

mately four miles to the west of the Condon work center on Montana Highway 83. All work is located on the Swan Lake Ranger District of the Flathead

National Forest.

NFSR #903 is currently closed to motorized use at milepost 3.436 through August 31st. The site is located one-half mile south of the junction of NFSR #903 with the Jim Lakes Road, NFSR #9568. This closure will not affect access to the trailhead for trail #121. Continued access to Cold Lakes and Jim Lakes remains the same and open on the Flathead National Forest.

Please contact the Swan Lake District office at 837-7500 for further information regarding this closure notice. We appreciate your patience with regard to this matter.

For more information on the Flathead National Forest please visit <http://www.fs.usda.gov/flathead>.

## Hazard Tree Removal to Begin on Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway

The Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF is advising travelers that there will be heavy truck traffic and logging machinery along the Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway south of Wise River beginning Sept. 15. Work will be taking place between Sheep Creek Trailhead and the Lupine Shelter area.

Travelers are advised to drive with extra caution and to expect up to 15 minute delays as heavy machinery will be operating

within close proximity to the paved road. Travelers are also advised that they may not be seen by the heavy machine operators and to drive slow and expect debris on the paved road. Favorite campsites may not be available as logging work progresses.

The trees being removed are considered hazardous as they have been affected by the mountain pine beetle. The hazard tree removal project is being

conducted to improve public safety. Logging truck traffic will increase and travelers can expect to see significant traffic starting early morning and continuing throughout daylight hours. Work along the Byway will continue through the middle of Dec. For additional information contact the Wise River Ranger District at (406) 832-3178.



# Bighorn National Forest Plans Meetings

**WYOMING:** The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Cody and Worland field offices announce that supplemental analysis to the Bighorn Basin Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is available for a 90-day comment period. The supplement addresses priority sage-grouse habitat on public lands within Big Horn, Hot Springs, Park and Washakie counties.

In 2011, the BLM released the Bighorn Basin Draft RMP/EIS for public review and comment. As part of the BLM's National Greater Sage-Grouse

Planning Strategy, the public was invited to recommend areas on public lands that could be managed as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) because of their importance to sage-grouse and sage-grouse habitat. The supplement is available for review analyzes the proposed designation of two ACECs and other management actions applicable to sage-grouse and ACECs.

To provide the public with opportunities to ask questions and comment, the BLM will host meetings during the 90-day comment period.

- September 4, 5-7 p.m.,

Powell: Park County Fairgrounds, Bicentennial Hall, 655 East 5th Street

- September 5, 5-7 p.m., Cody: Holiday Inn, Main Ballroom, 1701 Sheridan Avenue

- September 9, 5-7 p.m., Lovell: Community Center, 1925 U.S. Highway 310

- September 10, 5-7 p.m., Greybull: Big Horn County Weed and Pest Office, 4782 U.S. Highway 310

- September 11, 5-7 p.m., Thermopolis: Days Inn, Indian Room, 115 East Park Street

- September 12, 5-7 p.m., Worland: Community Center, 1200 Culbertson Avenue

The comment period is July 12-Oct. 9, 2013. Comments will be considered before the BLM issues the Bighorn Basin Proposed RMP and Final EIS in 2014. Submit comments using the following methods:

Website:

[www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/programs/Planning/rmps/bighorn.html](http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/programs/Planning/rmps/bighorn.html)

Email:

BBRMP\_WYMail@blm.gov  
Mail: Worland Field Office, Attn: RMP Project Manager, 101 South 23rd Street, Worland, WY 82401

## Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks OHV Ethics

Montana has many miles of developed trails for great riding adventures. Responsible riders know that riding on public lands is a privilege. The best way to protect your riding privilege is to stay on designated trails and act respectfully toward other users, wildlife, and the environment.

### Travel responsibly

- Stay on designated roads and trails or in permitted areas.
- Avoid sensitive areas such as meadows, lakeshores, wetlands, and streams, unless on designated routes.
- Ride in the middle of the trail to avoid widening it. Trail widening is unsightly and expensive to repair.
- Avoid riding over small trees and shrubs. Trampled vegetation not only looks bad, but also damages wildlife habitat and contributes to soil erosion.
- Honor seasonal and permanent trail closures.
- Avoid riding on steep and erodible slopes.

### Respect the rights of others

- Always yield the right of way to nonmotorized trail users. When encountering hikers or horses on the trail, pull over and shut off your engine. Remove your helmet and let them pass

out of sight before restarting.

- Do not alter the manufacturer's muffler system. Loud exhaust systems are annoying to others.
- When overtaking others, follow at a safe distance until they signal you to pass. Be courteous while passing. A little bump of the throttle can leave a shower of gravel or a cloud of dust and an angry rider behind you.
- Care for the environment

### Leave the area as good as or better than you found it.

- Never harass wildlife or domestic animals that you may encounter while riding. Always view wildlife from a respectful distance.
- Properly dispose of waste. Never litter. Always carry out what you carry in. Carry a trash bag with you to pack out other people's trash.
- Leave gates the way you

find them, either open or closed.

- Minimize the use of fire.
- Educate yourself

### Plan your trip.

- Obtain travel maps and regulations from public agencies.
- Take recreation skills classes.
- Know how to use and operate your equipment safely.
- Avoid the spread of invasive species.

## Closure Impacts Travel Across Whitefish Range

**KALISPELL, MT** – A project to replace a bridge on the Kootenai National Forest will impact thru-traffic crossing the Whitefish Range between the Grave Creek drainage to the west and the North Fork Road on the Flathead National Forest to the east.

The Grave Creek/Trail Creek Road, NFSR #114, will be closed to motorized use at milepost 14.1 from August 20th through September 6th. The Kootenai National Forest will be replacing a bridge at this lo-

cation on the Fortine Ranger District. The site is located 150 feet east of the junction of NFSR #114 with the Therriault Lakes Road, NFSR #319, and approximately 2.2 miles west of the Flathead National Forest boundary.

This closure will not affect access to the campgrounds at Big and Little Therriault Lake using the Grave Creek Road access off of U.S. Highway 93 south of Eureka. However, it will prevent thru-traffic on The Grave Creek/Trail Creek Road

between the Grave Creek drainage and the North Fork Road, NFSR #486 on the Flathead National Forest.

Please contact Matt Richmond at (406) 296-7158 for further information regarding this closure notice. We appreciate your patience with regard to this matter.

For more information on the Kootenai National Forest visit [www.fs.usda.gov/kootenai](http://www.fs.usda.gov/kootenai) and <http://www.fs.usda.gov/flathead> for information on the Flathead National Forest.



## Before You Hit the Road

Check out Montana Road Reports for Conditions and Construction Information or call 1-800-226-7623 or visit [www.mdt511.com](http://www.mdt511.com)

# East Fork of Mill Creek Now Open

LIVINGSTON, MT – The East Fork of Mill Creek is now open for recreational use. The first week in August, Trail #51 near Crystal Caves and Agate Springs vicinity had been closed for public safety concerns due to anticipated bear activity associated with a horse accident and carcass remains.

The emergency closure has been rescinded and the area is open for use. The Yellowstone Ranger District would like to thank recreationists for continued help in keeping the area clear and utilizing other recreational trail opportunities on the District.

The rescinded closure area

includes Forest trail #51 known as the East Fork of Mill Creek and extended north on forest trail #251 heading to Mill Creek Pass and south of Agate Springs, on forest trail #54 known as Anderson Ridge Trail. The vicinity is known as Crystal Caves and is located in the Absaroka and Beartooth

Wilderness. With public health and safety concerns alleviated this entire area is now open.

For questions or additional information please contact the Yellowstone Ranger District at 406-222-1892. For general information on the Gallatin National Forest visit online at [www.fs.usda.gov/gallatin](http://www.fs.usda.gov/gallatin).

## WEBSITE DIRECTORY

Montana 4x4 Association (M4x4A) — [www.m4x4a.org](http://www.m4x4a.org)  
 Divide Ride — [www.montanadivideride.com](http://www.montanadivideride.com)  
 Blue Ribbon Coalition — [www.sharetrails.org](http://www.sharetrails.org)  
 Bureau of Land Management (BLM) — [www.blm.gov/mt](http://www.blm.gov/mt) [www.facebook.com/BLMMontana](https://www.facebook.com/BLMMontana)  
 Citizens for Balanced Use (CFBU) — [www.balanceduse.org](http://www.balanceduse.org)  
 Families for Outdoor Recreation (FFOR) — [www.ffor.org](http://www.ffor.org)  
 Leave No Trace — <http://lnt.org>  
 Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks — [fwp.mt.gov](http://fwp.mt.gov)  
 Montanas for Multiple Use — [www.mtmultipleuse.org](http://www.mtmultipleuse.org)  
 Montana National Forests — [www.fs.fed.us/recreation/map/state\\_list.shtml#Montana](http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/map/state_list.shtml#Montana)  
 Montana Off Road Extreme Racing (MORE) — [www.montanaoffroadextreme.com](http://www.montanaoffroadextreme.com)  
 Montana Trail Vehicle Riders Association — [www.mtvra.com](http://www.mtvra.com)  
 National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC) — [www.nohvcc.org](http://www.nohvcc.org)  
 Ravalli County Off Road User Association — <http://www.rcorua.org>  
 Recreational Trails Program — <http://stateparks.mt.gov/recreation/recTrailsProgram.html>  
 Trails in Trouble — [www.trailsintrouble.org](http://www.trailsintrouble.org)  
 Tread Lightly — [treadlightly.org](http://treadlightly.org)  
 Treasure State ATV Association — <http://www.tsatv.org>  
 Treasure State Resource Industry Association (formerly WETA) — [www.tsria.org](http://www.tsria.org)  
 United Four Wheel Drive Associations (UFWDA) — [www.ufwda.org](http://www.ufwda.org)  
 Yellowstone Off Road Racing (YORR) — [www.yorracing.com](http://www.yorracing.com)

**Be Aware of this anti-ORV website!**  
**[www.wildlandscpr.org](http://www.wildlandscpr.org)**  
**THIS should alarm you!**

## Montana 4x4 Association Clubs

Big Sky 4 Wheelers (Kalispell) — [www.facebook.com/pages/Big-Sky-4-Wheelers/165148236890316/](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Big-Sky-4-Wheelers/165148236890316/)  
 Continental 4 Wheel Drive Association (Butte) — [www.facebook.com/pages/Continental-4-Wheel-Drive-Association/114850405209799](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Continental-4-Wheel-Drive-Association/114850405209799)  
 Frontier 4-Wheelers (Helena) — [www.facebook.com/Frontier4Wheelers](https://www.facebook.com/Frontier4Wheelers)  
 Magic City 4x4 (Billings) — [www.mc4w.com](http://www.mc4w.com)  
 Magic City 4x4 (Billings) — [www.facebook.com/groups/102015127323](https://www.facebook.com/groups/102015127323)  
 Mountaineers (Bozeman) — <http://bozemanmountaineers.org>  
 Mountaineers (Bozeman) — [www.facebook.com/Mountaineers](https://www.facebook.com/Mountaineers)  
 Rimrock 4x4 (Billings) — [www.facebook.com/groups/252774264811991](https://www.facebook.com/groups/252774264811991)  
 Skyliner 4x4 Club (Polson) — [www.skyliners4x4.com](http://www.skyliners4x4.com)  
 Skyliner 4x4 Club (Polson) — <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Skyliners-4-Wheel-Drive-Club/127378030787187>

## Other 4x4 Clubs

Beaverhead Backcountry Pioneers (Dillon) — <https://www.facebook.com/BeaverheadBackcountryPioneers>  
 Cascade County 4-Wheelers (Great Falls) — [www.facebook.com/groups/180129495357107](https://www.facebook.com/groups/180129495357107)  
 Five Valley Off Roaders (Missoula) — [www.facebook.com/fivevalleyoffroaders?group\\_id=0](https://www.facebook.com/fivevalleyoffroaders?group_id=0)  
 Montana Back Roads 4x4 (Missoula) — [www.montanabackroads.org](http://www.montanabackroads.org)  
 Montana Back Roads 4x4 (Missoula) — [www.facebook.com/pages/Montana-Back-Roads-4x4-Club/170805969642153](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Montana-Back-Roads-4x4-Club/170805969642153)  
 Powell Valley 4-Wheelers — (Powell, WY) [powellvalley4wheelers.com](http://powellvalley4wheelers.com) [www.facebook.com/pv4wheelers?ref=ts&fref=ts](https://www.facebook.com/pv4wheelers?ref=ts&fref=ts)

## How to contact your Congressman

- **Senator Max Baucus** (D-MT), 511 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-2651 or online [www.baucus.senate.gov/contact/emailForm.cfm?subj=issue](http://www.baucus.senate.gov/contact/emailForm.cfm?subj=issue)
- **Senator Jon Tester** (D-MT), 706 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-2644 or online [www.testersenate.gov/Contact/index.cfm](http://www.testersenate.gov/Contact/index.cfm)
- **Congressman Steve Daines**, (R-MT), 206 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 225-3211 or online <http://daines.house.gov>

**M4x4A Decals \$1 ea.**  
**M4x4A Patches \$3 ea.**  
**M4x4A Directories \$1 ea.**

Contact Stacey Osborne,  
 M4x4A Sec., see page 1