

Brad Wilson
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facebook.com/Crazy-Mountain-Trail-Reestablish

February 7, 2017

Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620-0801

Dear Governor Bullock:

I have been busy organizing a group to come up with ideas and an action plan to stop the slow erosion of public access to public lands. Right now, we are starting efforts to reestablish Lowline Trail in the Crazy Mountains. We are certain to get opposition from landowners.

Understand, our group is not trying to take anyone's private property. Lowline Trail was established in the early 1900's as a fire cache trail and for supplying logging camps. Apparently, an easement was never given to the U.S. Forest Service by the landowners, but a trail was established and maintained for years by the U.S. Forest Service. Lowline Trail gives critical access to the Crazy Mountains on the west side. It ties into Elk Creek Trail, providing access to many alpine lakes.

If Lowline Trail is lost, it will create more "landlocked" issues here in Park County causing many to lose their chance to hunt and recreate of said land. I am a fifth generation of family who have lived in this area. I have witnessed the slow disappearance of public access to our lands. Park County contains a large percentage of public lands, which gives us PILT money to help offset the cost of government to the local taxpayer. The sad part is the very landowners who want to shut it down benefit from it as well. Growing up, there were seldom any issues about accessing public lands—now it seems the almighty dollar dictates who gets to use them. Everything from hunting to recreation is becoming a rich person's sport. We must fight to maintain/regain our right to enjoy our beautiful public lands.

We would appreciate any ideas and/or support your office and position can offer. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Brad Wilson

cc: U.S. Senator Steve Daines
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

U.S. Senator Jon Tester
311 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Laurie Bishop
P.O. Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620-0400

JON TESTER
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COMMITTEES:

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United States Senate

March 14, 2017

Brad Wilson
PO Box 77
Wilsall, MT 59086-0077

Dear Brad,

Thank you for contacting me about proposals to transfer federal lands to the State of Montana. I believe that transferring our public lands will be harmful to our state's economy and our outdoor heritage.

Public lands are a cornerstone of Montana's way of life. Outdoor recreation alone contributes \$6 billion to our state's economy, and our ranchers and agriculture producers contribute billions more. These lands are critical to balancing Montana's budget.

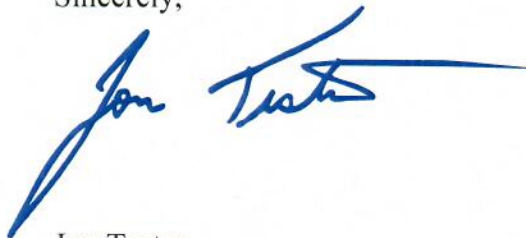
While Montana is in strong fiscal shape today, the state can't afford to manage an additional 30 million acres of land indefinitely. The federal government spends more than \$400 million a year managing this land. In addition these federal lands bring in \$50 million to Montana counties in the form of Payments in Lieu of Taxes and Secure Rural Schools. And federal wildfire fighting costs routinely top out in the hundreds of millions. Our state just doesn't have the resources to provide that level of support.

To fund that kind of management, Montana likely would have to sell off some public lands to pay to manage the rest. And those folks that could afford to buy those lands wouldn't be regular Montanans, they would be wealthy out-of-state interests who would quickly put up "No Trespassing" signs on these lands.

Federal management of these lands hasn't always been perfect, and there are plenty of areas for improvement. That's why I worked with Montanans from all walks of life for years to craft my Forest Jobs and Recreation Act. This bill protects critical wildlife habitat, requires the Forest Service to harvest 100,000 acres of pine-beetle infested timber, and guarantees access to public lands for recreation. And it is why I supported a new Farm Bill that allows for expedited timber harvest on Forest Service land where there is strong on-the-ground support.

As we look to improve forest management, we need to make sure all Montanans have a seat at the table. I will keep your views in mind as I continue fighting for public land management that works for Montanans. Please don't hesitate to contact me again if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Jon Tester
United States Senator

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