

Coalition to Protect the Rocky Mountain Front
Front Travel Plan: Frequently Asked Questions

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Dear Friend:

The Forest Service has released the final Travel Plan for Montana's Rocky Mountain Front. This plan, developed over several years with numerous public meetings, keeps the Front largely the way it is now and protects wildlife by emphasizing traditional uses of the Front such as horse and foot travel.

What Does the Travel Plan Do? The Plan guides all travel, recreation, and other uses on the Front for the next two decades, specifying routes for hikers and horseback riders, snowmobiles and off-road vehicles (ORVs). In October the Lewis and Clark National Forest released a final proposed Travel Plan for the lower two-thirds of the Rocky Mountain Front covering roughly 390,000 acres, excluding the Badger-Two Medicine.

What Role Did the Public Play? Montanans repeatedly urged the Forest Service to support traditional recreation on the Front. During public comment periods in 2002 and 2005 an overwhelming majority of Montanans, more than 79 percent in both cases, wrote the Forest Service asking for the agency to develop a Travel Plan favoring quiet recreation such as horse and foot travel along the Front.

What Are the Benefits of the Travel Plan? The Front contains some of the best wildlife habitat and recreation in the United States. The Travel Plan keeps the Front the way it is now and helps protect critical wildlife habitat; an especially important issue to Montana's hunters and outdoorsmen. The Travel Plan also supports the needs of packing and outfitting businesses along the Front; protects private land from trespassing; and helps check the spread of noxious weeds. The Travel Plan balances some good opportunities for motorized use with an overall emphasis on traditional uses, as strongly supported by the public.

What Did Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Say? During the Travel Plan's development, the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks submitted formal comments that strongly supported a Travel Plan that would best protect wildlife, preserve the area's watershed, and represent the will of the people.

What's the Economic Impact? Protecting the Front is economically beneficial for Montana families and communities because it preserves existing, local jobs in ranching, outfitting, hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation. Keeping the traditional uses of the Front, as well as letting the new economy built around conserving special places develop, is the best way to encourage sustainable local economies.

What About Private Property? The Travel Plan covers Forest Service land along the lower two-thirds of the Front. But with clear signing of open travelways, and motorized cross-country travel limited to areas signed as open, people now are less likely to be confused and end up trespassing on adjacent private property.

What's the Coalition? The Coalition to Protect the Rocky Mountain Front is an organization of ranchers, hunters, anglers, outfitters, local business owners, Blackfeet Tribal members, public officials, conservationists, and other Montanans seeking to protect the Front for this and future generations.

Want More Information? See www.savethefront.org or call (406) 466-2600.