

September 25, 2007

Tom Tidwell, Regional Forester
USDA Forest Service
Northern Region
PO Box 7669
Missoula, MT 59807-7669

Dear Regional Forester Tidwell:

Thank you for taking time to meet with participants in the collaboration known as *Montana High Divide Trails*. We are pleased to inform you we have now finalized this agreement, outlined in this letter, to which we add our pledge of cooperation with managers of three associated national forests located along Montana's High Divide.

With the goal of negotiating a vision for quiet trails and wildlands conservation along Montana's rugged Continental Divide between the Anaconda-Pintler and Scapegoat Wildernesses, this agreement reflects the culmination of collaborative work of the participants from June 2006 to the present. Participants include members of southwest Montana's Highlands Cycling Club, Mile-High Back Country Horsemen, Wild Divide Chapter-Montana Wilderness Association, Last Chance Back Country Horsemen, Helena Bicycle Club, Great Divide Cycling Team, Helena Trail Riders, Montana Wilderness Association, Prickly Pear Land Trust, and Helena Outdoor Club.

The Continental Divide Trail Alliance has also written a letter of support for the collaborative work of *Montana High Divide Trails*.

As more and more people move to Montana to enjoy our quality of life, traditional trail users have recognized a need to expand and protect quiet trail opportunities in our beautiful wild country so there will always be room to get away from it all -- whether on horse, by foot, or bicycle. We are united in the need to set responsible limits on off-highway vehicle (OHV) traffic and provide multiple opportunities to enjoy quiet mountain trails, wilderness and backcountry lands on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge, Helena, and Lewis and Clark National Forests. After all, the freedom to head for the mountains to enjoy an afternoon hike or quiet weekend ride is part of what makes living in Montana so special.

PLEDGE OF COOPERATION

Participating organizations offer our pledge of continuing cooperation for the trail and area goals of *Montana High Divide Trails*. This agreement commits participating organizations to wildland and trail recommendations outlined below and as reflected on the enclosed map. Amendments may be added by a consensus of participating organizations.

We pledge to work cooperatively to:

- Help national forest managers secure new funds and partnerships that help achieve goals of *Montana High Divide Trails*.
- Enlist volunteers from conservation, hiking, equestrian, bicycling and other communities to cooperate with national forest managers to maintain, restore and construct quiet mountain trails for public use and enjoyment.
- Support revised forest and travel plans consistent with the goals of *Montana High Divide Trails*.
- Support specific trail and stewardship projects that help achieve goals of *Montana High Divide Trails*.
- Support trail standards and education designed to minimize conflict and promote cooperation between quiet trail users, in keeping with goals of *Montana High Divide Trails*.
- Help national forest managers achieve national goals for completing, restoring and managing the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail between the Pintlers and Scapegoat Wilderness.
- Support congressional legislation that helps achieve the goals of *Montana High Divide Trails*.
- Cooperate with public land and wildlife managers to conserve, restore and enhance excellent habitats for fish and wildlife species along Montana's Continental Divide.
- Help expand public understanding and support for the goals and cooperative approach of *Montana High Divide Trails*.

VISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The *Montana High Divide Trails* Agreement proposes a carefully balanced package of recommendations for (1) Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, (2) Wilderness Areas, (3) Quiet Trail and Wildlife Conservation Areas, and (4) Specific Trail Projects to link communities and secure future public access to quiet mountain trails and natural splendors along Montana's High Divide.

TRAVEL RECOMMENDATIONS ALONG THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE **NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL: From the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness to the** **Scapegoat Wilderness:**

We fully respect the history, purpose and intent of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST) as America's longest quiet mountain trail. With this common understanding, we support certain portions of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail as traditional foot and pack trails, while other portions of the trail —such as those near Butte and Helena— we agree are well-suited for nonmotorized uses including bicycles, foot and pack stock.

