

Holwick, Peg

From: Clarice Ryan [clardon@aboutmontana.net]
Sent: Thursday, February 17, 2005 5:32 PM
To: Holwick, Peg
Subject: Testimony given for SB417, 2-16 (for the record)

SENATE NATURAL RESOURCES
 SUBMIT NO. 2
 DATE 2/16/05
 BILL NO. SB417

February 17, 2005

Regarding: Senate Bill 417, Roadless Bill submitted by Senator Aubyn Curtiss at a hearing Wednesday, Feb. 16, Room 405

TESTIMONY presented by Clarice Ryan, Bigfork, Montana

The current Roadless rule being applied, with onslaught, decommissioning and closures of our forest roads, was a top-down edict coming from the Clinton Roadless initiative. It is being administered on an on-going basis through the U.S. Forest Service nationwide.

This edict without public input or approval is against the principles of good government, against the public good, and is jeopardizing the health of our forests and the safety of wildlife contained therein.

Without roads it is impossible to perform, good stewardship, therefore impossible to maintain adequate forest health. We cannot reduce the heavy fuel loads that threaten our overgrown forests. Disastrous wild fires are increasing each year. These fires precipitate needless waste of a renewable natural resource, torturous death as well of loss of endangered species including the treasured grizzly bear. It renders our beautiful mountain sides a mass of ugly burned sticks with watersheds turning into mudslides along with repeat fires of dead and down timber.

Removal of roads eliminates the chance of effective fire fighting and forces us into unwanted "let burn" policy, now erroneously renamed to portray them as "thinning by burning". No, they do not thin . . . they simply incinerate everything in sight. This is desecration and total destruction of the environment and everything in it. Renaming it does not change what we know it is all about.

True selective thinning and harvest to accomplish forest balance of species, age and tree size is not possible without roads. We are being forced into the alternative approach of helicopter harvest. To be economically feasible it is then necessary to take the biggest and best trees, contrary to the claimed intent. Trash/slash, brush and small diameter tree removal cannot feasibly or economically be removed by helicopter. These constitute true, effective thinning.

Citizens knowledgeable of good forest management must again have a voice and be able to have meaningful input into correcting the sad state of our forests of today.

We must speak through our county commissioners and our elected legislators to give direction to our state's governor, who is the official liaison with our Congressmen at the federal level. Congress alone must approve Wilderness areas.

Road removal is primarily a devious back door way to gaining undeclared and unapproved wilderness, which in turn feeds into the massive, little known or understood Wildlands Project threateningly

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underway.

We must utilize official means as provided by our state and national Constitutions to work through our elected officials to reverse this trend and activity of road removal and closures. I ask that we give Senator Aubyn Curtiss our support in laying the groundwork to regain proper management of our forests and end the destruction of access roads. This is in the interests of citizens, wildlife, the environment and the forests themselves.

Please vote "yes" on SB 417. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Clarice Ryan