

## IN SUPPORT OF SJR 21

WRITTEN TESTIMONY  
RHODA CARGILL, CHAIRMAN  
LINCOLN COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCE COUNCIL

My name is Rhoda Cargill, representing the LCNRC. We support SJR21 as submitted by Senator Curtiss.

I have attached to this written testimony a copy of a poll taken in 1991 as provided me by Lincoln County Election Office.

### OVERVIEW:

The area now known as Ten Lake Wilderness Study Area has in past decades provided recreation and natural resources extraction opportunities. The Ten Lake area has supported; mining activities, timber harvest, roads for viewing, and a plethora of recreational activities.

In 1964 the Regional Forester established the Ten Lakes Scenic Area.

In 1977 the Ten Lake Scenic Area was designated as the Ten Lakes Wilderness Study Area (WSA), and additional acreage added increased the area to five times its original size.

Congress stated that these WSA's were to be studied for inclusion into Wilderness, and Congress set a time limit for this to happen; five years. That limit has been exceeded by more than two decades.

The U.S.F.S. has created a de facto wilderness without Congressional approval by their management of this area. Lack of active management in this area has created a host of problems; diseases and beetle infestations have created extreme fuel loads, as documented by the Interim Fire Suppression Committee. Other interests have closed roads through out this actively traveled area, thus making it impossible for disabled citizens to enjoy the area, and making it very difficult to access and attack small wildfires prior to their evolving into catastrophic wildfires.

## THE GALTON PROJECT:

You have a map, titled "Crown of the Continent". It is a locator map for your convenience. It shows in red, the area boundary of the Galton Project and its proximity to Glacier National Park. It also gives perspective to the amount of private property in this area.

The second map you have displays many points. It was constructed in layers. The base layer is the Winton-Weydemeyer proposed Wilderness map as shown on the Montana Wilderness Association website.

I received from the U.S.F.S. GIS layer information that included the Galton Boundary, the Wilderness Study area (WSA) and the Inventoried Roadless areas (IRA's). I superimposed the GIS layers on top of the Winton-Weydemeyer map.

This composite map shows that the WSA and the IRA areas are identical to the proposed Winton-Weydemeyer Wilderness in Lincoln County.

The Galton Project boundary contains nearly 180,000 acres, including over 42,000 acres of private property. The U.S.F.S. was asked in coordination meetings why they included private property, no discernable reason was given. The U.S.F.S. has continued to deny that the Galton Project will enhance the opportunity for designation of its area for Wilderness in the revised Forest Plan that has not been signed yet.

Jim Rathbun, retired Kootenai National Forest Supervisor, is a good friend of mine. He has told me numerous times that the Ten Lakes Area never did have the wilderness qualities that the Wilderness Act required for lands to be designated as Wilderness.

The U.S.F.S. Draft Travel Analysis for the Galton Project recommends many roads for decommissioning because "they are in the Wilderness Study Area or they are in the Inventoried Roadless Area".

We questioned the U.S.F.S. about how the boundary was chosen and the answers we continue to receive has no bottom. "It was based on watersheds". This was proven in error. "It was based on planning units" and this was proven wrong. "The Planning units are based on watersheds, well some are". We have never received a succinct, verifiable statement that explained the parameters used to define this boundary.

The Galton Project contains the entire watershed that Glen Lake Irrigation District (GLID) receives its water from. In fact, it contains all the private lands that GLID supplies water to for irrigation.

The Tobacco Valley is an arid portion of Lincoln County. GLID's water rights date back to 1896. It has been said that GLID is the life blood of the Tobacco Valley. If this area becomes Wilderness, it will make it nearly impossible for GLID to continue.

Why are we so interested in the boundary of this project?

1. It mirrors the Winton-Weydemeyer proposed wilderness
2. It mirrors the Crown of the Continent to be found in Lincoln County.
3. It defines the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem for the grizzly bear in Lincoln County.
4. The WSA and the IRA are the grizzly bear core habitat.

When the U.S.F.S. was asked at a public meeting if they would consider designating the area as a Recreational Area, the response was a resounding NO.

#### WILDERNESS:

In 1991 Lincoln County supported a poll of its citizens in regards to additional wilderness. The results showed that 86% of the voters did not support additional wilderness.

It specifically asked the question about their support for continued snowmobiling activity in the Ten Lakes Wilderness Study Area. The results showed that 84% were in favor of maintaining snowmobiling in that area.

#### SUMMARY:

The Galton Project analysis will be used as data to support this area as proposed wilderness in the revised Forest Plan for the Kootenai National Forest.

One only needs to look at the maps to understand the social and economic impact this will have to the County and the citizens of the area.

The National Environmental Protection Act (N.E.P.A.) main objective is to  
“protect the human environment”. We are asking for your support of SJR21.

Sincerely,

Rhoda Cargill, Chairman  
Lincoln County Natural Resource Council