



# ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL

# RECEIVED

AUG 28 2013

PO BOX 201704  
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-1704  
(406) 444-3742

LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL  
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NADINE SPENCER, Secretary  
JOE KOLMAN, Legislative Environmental Analyst

## Granite

## SJ-15 SURVEY OF MONTANA COUNTY COMMISSIONS

This official state survey is required by the passage of Senate Joint Resolution No. 15 by the 2013 Legislature for a study evaluating the management of certain federal lands in Montana, assessing risks, and identifying solutions. Your county was selected for this survey because 15% or more of the land in your county is managed by a federal agency.

Surveys returned by Aug. 23 will be distributed to the EQC for the September meeting. If it is not possible to meet that deadline, please return the survey by Nov. 1. Attach any supplemental explanations, comments, suggestions, or other information your board finds pertinent.

### PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE: (Attach explanation for each response as needed)

1. Do current wildfire conditions on federal lands within your county pose a significant threat to:  
 Public Health and Safety       Public Property       Private Property

2. Do you believe fire hazard on federally managed lands should be reduced to protect public health and safety within your county?  
 Yes       No       Unsure

3. Regarding the water supply your citizens use, does current federal land management of watersheds:  
 Optimize water yield       Diminish water yield       Have no impact

4. How important is it for people of your county to have motorized access to public lands for sustenance activities such as gathering wood, picking berries, harvesting wild game, etc.?  
 Very Important       Not Important       Unsure

5. Is there an adequate supply of motorized roads on federal lands in your county to accommodate emergency ingress/egress, facility maintenance, public access, and resource management?  
 Yes       No       Unsure

6. Regarding multiple-use recreational access routes on federal lands, does your county desire:  
 Increased Multi-Use Access       Reduced Multi-Use Access       Keep

Access As Is

**ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY: (Attach explanation for each response as needed)**

7. Do you believe current fuel loads on any of the federal lands within your county could result in severe, uncontrollable, or catastrophic wildfires? (If so, provide geographic location in attachment)  
 Yes       No       Unsure      *All Forested Lands.*
8. Is a high intensity wildfire on federal lands likely to cause a loss of important fish & wildlife habitat or harm Threatened or Endangered Species in your county (e.g. grizzly bears, lynx, sage grouse, black-footed ferret, bull trout)?  
 Yes       No       Unsure
9. Are environmental threats such as noxious weeds and bark beetle adequately controlled on federal lands within your county?  
 Yes       No       Unsure
10. Does the air quality in your county fall below acceptable health standards due to smoke originating from fires on federally managed lands?  
 Yes       No       Unsure

**ECONOMIC PRODUCTIVITY AND SUSTAINABILITY: (Attach explanation for each response as needed)**

11. Is the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT revenues) your county derives from federally managed lands equivalent to the amount that actual land taxation of these lands would bring?  
 Yes       No      Please estimate PILT as a percentage of county budget.
12. Is the amount your county derives from the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) funds equivalent to the amount that your county could derive from responsible harvest or extraction of natural resources?  
 Yes       No      Please estimate SRS as a percentage of county budget.
13. Is the economic productivity and number of related private sector jobs commensurate with the resource production capacity of the federally managed lands within your county?  
 Yes       No       Unsure
14. Are federal policies for Threatened or Endangered Species adversely impacting private land owners, businesses, industries, or citizens within your county?  
 Yes       No       Unsure
15. Has federal land management resulted in adverse impacts to your county's economy?  
 Yes       No       Unsure

16. Do you believe changes in federal land management are necessary to increase your county's economy, employment opportunities, or tax base?  
 Yes       No       Unsure

**CONSISTENCY WITH STATE AND LOCAL OBJECTIVES: (Attach explanation for each response as needed)**

17. Are federal land management actions consistent with your county's objectives?  
 Yes       No       Unsure

18. Would your county like state assistance incorporating local government objectives into federal land management actions?  
 Yes       No       Unsure

**OWNERSHIP AND JURISDICTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

19. Has your county experienced conflicts with federal ownership or jurisdictional responsibilities?  
 Yes       No      (Please attach detailed description of conflicts)

20. How much influence do you believe special interests have on the ability of federal agencies to develop and implement effective land and resource management plans on federal lands in your county?  
 None       Moderate (please explain)       Significant (please explain)

21. On a separate sheet, please describe your county's most significant concerns with federal land management, including current and past relations and communications with federal agencies and other relevant factors you believe legislators should be aware of, and provide any ideas that may help reduce risks or resolve concerns.

Thank you for your assistance. Please return your County Commission's response to:

Environmental Quality Council  
ATTN: Joe Kolman, SJ15 Survey  
Room 171B, Capitol Building  
P.O. Box 201704  
Helena, MT 59620-1704

Submitted by: Granite County Commissioners

Date: 8-20-2013

Attested by:



Mike Kahoe, Administrative Assistant

If you have questions or would like more information please contact Joe Kolman, staff for the EQC, at (406) 444-3747 or jkolman@mt.gov or Sen. Jennifer Fielder, the sponsor of SJ15, at (406) 210-5944 or by email at Sen.JFielder@legmt.gov

COPY

**Office of  
The Board of County Commissioners  
Granite County**

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Scott C. Adler, Chairman  
750 Frontage Road West  
Drummond MT 59832

Clifford Nelson, Commissioner  
25 Nelson Lane  
Philipsburg MT 59858

Bart C. Bonney, Commissioner  
P O Box 701  
Philipsburg MT 59858

July 9, 2013

Department of Energy  
Bonneville Power Administration  
321 Fuller Avenue, Suite 201  
Helena MT 59601-5005

Ref: DKR-MSGL

Dear Bonneville Power Administration:

We are again writing to express our vital concern for Granite County residents and visitors caused by the locked gates on the BPA road between Princeton and Gold Creek. As fire danger becomes extreme this summer, these locked gates pose an unnecessary hazard for people trying to escape a wildfire.

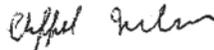
We wrote to you in July 2011 expressing this same concern and we note your response of August 23, 2011, which indicates potential impact on wildlife. We do not believe that wildlife would be impacted this time of year and we strongly feel that the safety of people during a fire event should be the utmost priority.

This road is the only escape route if the main road should be blocked by fire or other disastrous event. To try to get the gates unlocked during an emergency would waste precious time and jeopardize the lives of those people living and recreating in the area.

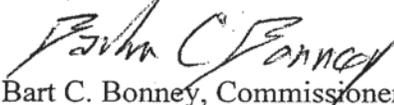
We make an urgent plea to have these gates removed for as much of year as possible, but certainly during forest fire season at a minimum.

Sincerely yours,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF GRANITE COUNTY



Clifford Nelson, Commissioner



Bart C. Bonney, Commissioner

cc: Montana Congressional Delegation by email  
County DES Coordinator Ryan Lee by email