



THE MONTANA SIERRAN

SUMMER EDITION, 2007

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A mountain goat hoofs it up sheer
rock faces where no man
has gone before.
Photo by Kris Prinzing



Help Protect Roadless Areas - Take Action Today!

On May 24th, 2007 more than 140 House Democrats and Republicans introduced a bill that would help protect 58.5 million acres of National Forests in the United States. The Roadless Area Conservation Act was introduced in both the House and the Senate—HR 2516 and SB 1478 respectively.

The land that this legislation would help protect includes 6.3 million acres of Montana's National Forest lands. Places such as the Great Burn, Rocky Mountain Front, Scotchman Peaks, Gallatin Range and Lolo Peak would receive increased protection from unnecessary roadbuilding. These are some of our last best



North Fork of Beaver Creek & Leavitt Creek in the Rocky Mountain Front.
Photo by Cameron Nafancy

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Sierra Club Demands Protection for Yellowstone Grizzly Bears

Sierra Club is challenging the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's decision to eliminate Endangered Species Act protections for the Yellowstone area's iconic grizzly bear population.

On June 4, Sierra Club, NRDC, Advocates for the West and others asked an Idaho federal district court to restore the threatened status of the Yellowstone grizzly



Photo: Grizzly Discovery Center

population because of ongoing habitat destruction caused by global warming, insufficient bear numbers, and inadequate legal protections.

More than 230 scientists urged Fish and Wildlife Service not to delist the Yellowstone grizzly bear population because it is too small and isolated for long-term viability. The Fish and Wildlife Service proposes to truck bears from northwest Montana

[HTTP://MONTANA.SIERRACLUB.ORG/](http://MONTANA.SIERRACLUB.ORG/)

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Mario Locatelli on Mt McKinley!
(Miscorrectly identified in Spring issue of Montana Sierran.)

Great Event In Missoula!

On March 15th at the University of Montana, and on May 17th at the Lolo Community Center, a total of 180 people joined the Bitterroot-Mission Group for slides and stories with Bitterroot Valley Mountaineer, Mario Locatelli. In 2004 at the age of 71, Mario became the world's record holder as the oldest person to climb Alaska's Mt McKinley (Denali) – North America's highest peak.

Mario took the audience through the high-country of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, backpacking, ridge-running, alpine skiing,

and spying on mountain goats. Mario spoke passionately about the need to protect Lolo Peak and Carlton Ridge from proposed ski resort development.

Each event also included a presentation by Missoula staffer, Bob Clark on Lolo Peak and Sierra Club's campaign to prevent ski resort development there.

Special thanks to Mario and all the volunteers who made these great outreach events possible!

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“Save a grizzly. Build a mine.”

By Jim Costello

That was the opening line of a June 7 Missoulian newspaper story on the agreement reached between Revett Minerals and the U.S. Forest Service. The agreement calls for Revett to pay an average of \$1 million annually for grizzly bear and bull trout mitigation during its mining operations.

As counter-intuitive as it seems, Revett's leadership wants you to believe that if we allow a giant mine to be built under the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness in northwest Montana, we'll be improving things for wildlife and wild places.

Federal officials seem to agree. The article reports that some are praising the mitigation package, saying that “grizzly bears and bull trout will be better protected with the mine in place than with the wilderness left wild.”

An industrial mine site is better for wildlife than the actual wild?

Maybe these unnamed federal officials haven't actually seen what Revett is planning to do or the country they are planning to do it in. The company's plan begins with tunneling under the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness and removing a mountain of rock; in other words, blasting and digging and hauling under a federally designated wilderness where you and I aren't even permitted to ride a bicycle.

The operation, if permitted, will pump 3 million gallons of wastewater into clear, clean surface and ground water every day, forever. It will stack waste rock from the underground mine 300 feet high on an unlined

“pad” along the Clark Fork River. It will likely cause subsidence, acid mine drainage and - if we should happen to experience a 10-year rain event sometime in the next three decades, send untreated mine effluent into the Clark Fork River and Lake Pend Oreille.

Where federal officials see the



Native trout populations will be under threat if mining activity occurs. Photo by Joel Webster.

salvation of grizzly bears and bull trout, independent biologists and mining engineers see an unproven scheme that threatens to drain wilderness lakes, devastate Rock Creek (which is a significant bull trout spawning tributary), dump metals and contaminants into the Clark Fork River, and bring Sandpoint's flourishing recreation economy to its knees.

Equally suspect are the individuals pushing the plan. Revett's leadership includes the co-founder of Pegasus Gold, which has left taxpayers holding the bag on over \$200 million in cleanup, remedia-

tion and other costs across Montana, including the costs associated with the Zortman Landusky mines near Malta.

In 1996, following one of the worst water-quality violations in Montana history, the state of Montana reached a settlement with Pegasus Gold for \$37 million to upgrade and expand the operation's water-treatment facilities. Two years later, Pegasus declared bankruptcy, leaving the state responsible for the cleanup costs.

In the Missoulian article, Revett CEO Bill Orchow said that mitigation is, “something we've agreed to do.” And, “While others talk about [grizzly bear] recovery efforts, Revett is stepping up to the plate.” If history is any predictor of the future, Mr. Orchow's words

mean about as much as Rock Creek will to bull trout if this mine is permitted.

While funding is critical to the recovery of bull trout and grizzlies, we the public shouldn't be forced to barter our wild lands to get it. The message from the wildlife agency appears to be: “Permit the mine or there will be minimal effort in the future to protect these species.”

We should not put into jeopardy the clean water we fish, the beautiful lands we hike or the diverse economy we've built. Entrusting our treasured public wild lands to peo-

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Delisting the Griz—continued

(Continued from page 1)

to Yellowstone to maintain genetic diversity in the population.

While the Fish and Wildlife Service counts grizzlies throughout the Yellowstone area in assessing recovery, its delisting proposal contains no habitat protections for more than 40 percent of currently occupied grizzly bear habitat in the Yellowstone ecosystem. Clearcutting, roadbuilding, and oil and gas development remain a threat on federal land surrounding Yellowstone National Park.

Doug Honnold, an Earthjustice attorney representing the conservation groups, said, “Yellowstone’s grizzlies face a double threat: much of their current habitat is not protected and even in the heart of the ecosystem warming temperatures are decimating the bears’ most essential food.”

Yellowstone grizzlies rely on high-fat seeds of whitebark pine as a key food source in critical months before hibernation. Warming temperatures have enabled mountain pine beetles to kill high-altitude whitebark pine trees at alarming rates. When whitebark pine seed cone crops fail, Yellowstone grizzly bear mortalities skyrocket and the number of grizzly cubs the following spring plummets. “Recently the US Fish and Wildlife Service has recognized that over 20,000



Photo by Timothy Treadwell

polar bears are threatened by global warming, and we just want that same consideration for the Yellowstone grizzlies. The unknown effects that climate change will have on grizzly habitat is a realistic threat to their continued recovery.” stated Sierra Club Associate Regional Representative, Monica Fella, in Bozeman, MT.

The government’s decision to delist will also subject the bears to limited hunting in Idaho, Wyoming and Montana. Conservation groups say leaving the bears

federally unprotected now would be premature.

“The modest recovery of the Yellowstone grizzly bear shows how effective the Endangered Species Act can be. But Yellowstone’s bears now face their biggest challenge ever in the form of global warming,” said Fella.

“Removing protections for the grizzly now is like declaring victory at mile three of a marathon. When we’ve solved the global warming problem, we can talk about delisting the Yellowstone grizzly. Until then, we should do everything we can to safeguard these bears for future generations.”

Plaintiffs in the case are the Sierra Club, the Western Watersheds project, Natural Resources Defense Council, Alliance for the Wild Rockies, Center for Biological Diversity, Great Bear Foundation and the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance.

To sign up to be a grizzly guardian go to: www.sierraclub.org/grizzly/guardians/ or for more information please contact [Monica Fella at grizzly.bear@sierraclub.org](mailto:Monica.Fella@sierraclub.org).

4th Annual Yaak Wilderness Festival - Mark your calendars!

Whether it is your first time to the Yaak or one of many trips, it will surely be memorable.

The 4th Annual Yaak Wilderness Festival is **July 28, 2007** at the newly remodeled Dirty Shame Saloon. The focus of the festival this year is two-fold – building awareness for the value of wilderness and wildland protection for the Yaak and celebrating the wild Yaak. Not only is wilderness good for wildlife, human life, clean air and water but wilderness also benefits our communities economically and socially.

Advance tickets \$15.00 (\$20.00 at the door) Call Pam at the Yaak Valley Forest Council 406-295-9736

There will be great **music**, good **food**, dancing **puppets**, a bouncing **giraffe**, activities for the **kids**, **vendors**, **raffle**, **speakers**. Music includes **Live Wire Choir**, **Alan Lane**, and **Sol Jibe** just to mention a few.

When: Saturday, July 28th, '07
Where: The newly remodeled Dirty Shame Saloon

Why: Because who doesn't love to celebrate WILDERNESS IN THE YAAK with music, food, drinks and educational activities on natural resources?

For more information—check www.yaakvalley.org!

Bitterroot-Mission Group Summer Outings.

Join the local Sierra Club to Explore, Enjoy and Protect our wildlands.

Free and open to the public. No companion animals please.

Saturday & Sunday July 21 & 22, Allan Mountain Backpack - Service Outing.

Backpack the Allan Mountain Roadless Area in the Bitterroot Mountains while monitoring the area's trails for off-road vehicle impacts. This 160,000 acre national forest area straddles the MT / ID border providing vital linkage for flora and fauna of the region. The relatively open slopes of the Allan Mountain area contain a mix of old growth forests, meadows, grasslands, and riparian areas which include important tributaries for the West Fork of the Bitterroot and the North Fork of the Salmon Rivers. For this two day trip, expect about 14 miles of hiking and one night in the backcountry – pack accordingly. Monitoring & documentation materials will be provided. Contact Sierra Club's Missoula office at 549-1142 or bob.clark@sierraclub.org

Saturday July 21st thru Sunday July 29th - Backpack-Transverse thru the heart of the Frank Church Wilderness, Idaho.

As beautiful and wild as it gets right in our own backyard! This will be an 80 mile adventure through the expansive Chamberlain Basin in the Frank Church River Of No Return Wilderness, the largest wilderness area in the lower 48 states! We will start at the Whitewater Ranch on the Salmon River and ascend out of the canyon to Chamberlain Guard Station, pass by the historic Root Ranch and other old homesteads, on to the Cold Meadows Guard Station, and eventually descend to the confluence of Corn Creek and the Salmon River. Contact Ron Pier-son 370-5470

Friday thru Sunday July 27-29 - Great Burn Backpack Trip.

Backpack along the granite ridges and high meadows of

the Montana/Idaho border in the wildest reaches of the northern Bitterroot Mountains. Spectacular scenery, wild-life, and natural history abound in this 250,000 acre interstate roadless area. This 16 mile point-to-point backpack will be strenuous at times, thru one of the largest unprotected roadless areas in the northern Rockies. Our route will be just north of the Nez Perce/Lolo Trail and require



In June, day-hikers enjoyed the beauty and value of the Carlton Ridge Research Natural area on the shoulder of Lolo Peak and learn why these astounding public lands should be protected from ski resort development. Photo M. Tennyson

some off-trail travel. There will be opportunities to relax and to scramble to the summits of Granite, Rhodes, or Williams Peaks. This is extremely wild and rugged country. Space is limited. Contact Bob Clark, Sierra Club's Missoula office 549-1142, bob.clark@sierraclub.org

Saturday August 4th - Missoula Summit Day. See Missoula from another perspective! On Summit Day a variety of local outdoor and advocacy groups will engage

(Continued on page 6)

***Bitterroot-Mission Group Outings
Continued...***

with their fellow community members on ascents to some well known Missoula area peaks. Choose amongst hikes with levels of difficulty ranging from easy to strenuous. It will be a great opportunity to learn about local conservation efforts; quiet and responsible use recreation; local trails; and in the process, discover some great views. To join in contact John at 543-6696 or Tim at the Sports Exchange 721-6056.

Thursday thru Sunday September 13-16 - Missouri River Breaks Canoe Float/Camp.

We'll take another go at this peaceful float thru the inspiring "White Cliffs" section of this famous river. Sep-



Left: Photo taken during the 2006 Alan Mountain service outings. Pictured: a mountain meadow near Frog Pond Lake along the Bitterroot Divide. A user-created ORV route in foreground.

tember can be ideal with less heat, less wind, less folk, almost no mosquitos and tranquil riverside camping amongst the cottonwoods and coyote howls. Side hikes and fossil explorations will be on the agenda. Rent or BYOBoat/gear. Contact John Wolverton 543-6696

Saturday & Sunday September 29 & 30, Allan Mountain Backpack - Service Outing Part 2.

In conjunction with Public Lands Day (Sept. 29th) Backpack the Allan Mountain Roadless Area in the Bitterroot Mountains while monitoring the area's trails for off-road vehicle impacts (This outing will cover trails not covered on the July Trip.) This 160,000 acre national forest area straddles the MT / ID border providing vital linkage for flora and fauna of the region. The relatively open slopes of the Allan Mountain area contain a mix of old growth forests, meadows, grasslands, and riparian areas which include important tributaries for the West Fork of the Bitterroot and the North Fork of the Salmon Rivers. For this two day trip, expect about 12 miles of hiking and one night in the backcountry – pack accordingly. Monitoring & documentation materials will be provided.

Contact Sierra Club's Missoula office at 549-1142 or bob.clark@sierraclub.org.

CONTACTING YOUR LEGISLATORS

Federal Legislators

Senator **Max Baucus**, United States Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-2602
800-332-6106 (D.C.) or 406-329-3123 (Missoula)
<http://baucus.senate.gov/contact/emailForm.cfm?subj=issue>

Senator **Jon Tester**, United States Senate
Senate Dirksen Bldg., Room B40 E
Washington, D.C. 20510
202-224-2644 (D.C.) or 406-728-3003 (Missoula)
<http://tester.senate.gov/contact.cfm>

Rep. **Dennis Rehberg**,
US House of Representatives
516 Cannon House Office
Building, Washington, DC
20515-2601
PH: 202-225-3211 (D.C.) or
406-543-9550 (Missoula)
<http://www.house.gov/writerep/>

Photo by Scott Prinzing



State Legislators

(Yes! Constituents should keep in touch with their state legislators between sessions, too!)

If you want to find out who your legislator is follow this link:
<http://nris.mt.gov/gis/legislat/2007/>

PHONE: You can leave a message by calling 406.444.4800.

EMAIL: You can email legislators, one at a time, by using this quick and easy form:
<http://leg.mt.gov/css/sessions/60th/legwebmessage.asp>

FAX:
House FAX number: 406.444.4825
Senate FAX number: 406.444.4875.

For more information about the Bitterroot-Mission Group's outings program, contact John Wolverton at 543-6696, yodelingdog@hotmail.com

*Roadless Action—
continued from page one*

places to recreate and enjoy nature. Without full protection of these lands, they are at extreme risk of being destroyed by roads that could potentially be built.

The roads inside the National Forests already span over 380,000 miles, not including 60,000 miles of unmapped logging roads. The maintenance backlog of these roads is estimated at \$10 billion, since only 21%



Red Conglomerate peaks in the Lima Peaks Roadless Area along the Continental Divide south of Dillon, MT. Photo by Bob Clark

of these expansive roads meet adequate road maintenance standards.

Only recently has this legislation to stop roadbuilding been possible, with the Bush administration repealing the Roadless Area conservation Rule in 2001, putting millions of acres of land into danger. In 2005, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals replaced the previous ruling with a state-by-state basis. The Bush administration and the timber industry have already filed an appeal to challenge this ruling. It is our job to tell the

administration to keep the Roadless Area Conservation Rule.

For many reasons, the Roadless Rule is one of the most popular and most important conservation acts in the United State's history. We must take action to protect our National Forests in order to protect our air and water quality, protect many species of plants, fish, and wildlife, and save these lands for future generations. Please contact your legislators today to encourage their support of HR 2516 and SB 1478. This only takes a minute, and you will be helping to save many National Forest lands from destruction by unessential roadbuilding.

There are many reasons to contact your senators about this issue, including:

- More than 60 million people rely on National Forests for their drinking water. Road construction can result in measurable reductions in water quality.
- According to independent scientists: Based on an objective study over 15 years, large wildfires are more likely to occur and burn greater areas on roaded lands.
 - The spread of both native and exotic pests and pathogens in many forest systems can be connected to travel over roads in these forests.
 - 95% of our original native forests have already been lost. Saving our roadless areas would effect only 0.25% of America's timber production.
 - Instead of heeding scientific analysis and the clear message sent by over 2 million public comments, the

Bush Administration has attempted to abolish the Roadless Rule and proposing a convoluted process that will leave America's last wild forests and grasslands open to destructive activities, potentially causing damage by logging, mining, and oil companies.


Contact your Congressional Representatives Today!
(See contact information in the pullout page, page 6.)
For more information, please visit:
www.sierraclub.org or call (406) 549-1142.

Rock Creek Mine and Grizzly Bears story—continued

ple with unproven schemes


and a history of unmet promises is dangerous and foolish. Our public officials owe us better.

Jim Costello writes for the Rock Creek Alliance, a nonprofit organization based in the panhandle of northern Idaho and western Montana. Established in 1996, the group works to protect the water quality of the Clark Fork-Pend Oreille watershed and the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness Area (www.rockcreekalliance.org).



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Cardholder Name _____
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A long dead tree stands like a sentinel over the Absoroka-Beartooth Wilderness. Photo by Kris Prinsing

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The Montana Sierran welcomes your letters!

Send letters c/o:
Editor, Montana Sierran
222 East Main Street
Bozeman, MT 59715

OR email to

mtsierraneditor@gmail.com.

Please include your phone number/email address so we may contact you.

Editor reserves the right to print letters based on space. All letters are subject to editing for length, clarity, usage, taste and libel.

Submissions must include first and last name with city/town (and state, if the letter is not from Montana).

The *Montana Sierran* encourages submissions of articles and photos for upcoming issues. The *Montana Sierran* reserves the right to edit or reject submissions at its discretion.

For more information contact the editor at mtsierraneditor@gmail.com or 255-0940.

**Fall issue deadline:
September 21, 2007**

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(406) 549-1142

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The Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club takes pride in seeking out and using the highest post-consumer recycled fiber content paper it can find for its newsletters. This is a priority: it reflects consistency with our belief that supporting sustainable products will help create the possibility, at least, for a more sustainable world.

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Full Page: \$200
1/2 page: \$125
1/4 page: \$55
1/8 page: \$30

Upcoming Meetings

Montana Chapter
Executive Committee
upcoming meetings:

Saturday,
October 20th
in
Missoula, MT!

For more information:
Contact Jeff Van Den Noort,
Montana Chapter Chair, at
406-582-1871 or
jeff@vduc.com.



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