

NORTH FORK PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

77 Moose Creek Rd, Polebridge, MT 59928

June 5, 2019

To: Bureau of Land Management
Subject: Resource Management Plan for Eastern Montana

Dear Land Managers,

We are greatly dismayed that although an earlier version of the draft RMP from the Lewistown Field Office contained protection for many wild and scenic areas, the new plan out of the Interior Department proposes 99% of the land for oil and gas exploration and development. The new draft RMP is evidence of the Department of Interior's complete disdain for our public wildlands.

The Lewistown Field Office had identified over 200,000 acres with wilderness characteristics and recommended protection for these areas. In addition, it recognized the effects of climate change on the area, but this analysis has been completely disregarded by the Department of Interior. The new draft represents a disgraceful sell-out to the oil and gas industry and has stripped the plan of all science and public input.

The board of directors of the North Fork Preservation Association has authorized me to send the following recommendations:

- Protect all existing Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (including Collar Gulch, Square Butte, and the Judith Mountains) and prohibit oil and gas leasing in ACECs

- Manage wild high-quality habitat areas as Lands with Wilderness Characteristics and prohibit oil and gas leasing (including Fort Musselshell tack-ons, Chain Buttes, Dovetail, and Big Snowies tack-ons)
- Manage wild areas adjacent to the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument as Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (including Dog Creek South, Chimney Bend, Arnell's Creek, and Fargo Coulee), and prohibit oil and gas leasing
- Manage wild areas adjacent to the CMR Wildlife Refuge (like Carter Coulee, Carroll Coulee, the Chain Buttes, Dovetail, Dunn Ridge) and areas next to the Big Snowy Mountains specifically as Lands with Wilderness Characteristics, and prohibit all oil and gas activity
- Develop clear, legally enforceable standards for the management of Backcountry Conservation Areas, including Lands with Wilderness Characteristics within those complexes (including Arrow Creek, Cemetery Road, Crooked Creek, and Judith Mountains)
- Recognize climate change as a scientific fact, fully analyze the impacts climate change is having on natural processes, and meaningfully account for climate change in decisions about future management

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this input.

Sincerely,

Debo Powers,
NFPA President