

Board of Ravalli County Commissioners

Subject: Natural Resource Use Policy

I understand that you may be scheduling a time to consider the Natural Resources Policy developed by a group of citizens, as a response to the document that you are currently editing. I will be traveling for the next three weeks, and unable to attend any hearings on the draft Natural Resource Use Policy, but I'd like to register my comments in this letter.

As I pointed out at the first public meeting held by the Commissioners on this subject, the document developed by the BNRRC, and that you are working on, is not a policy document. It's a management plan for the Bitterroot National Forest and all other state and federal lands within Ravalli County. Changing the title page to read "Natural Resource Use Policy" instead of "Plan" doesn't make it any less a plan.

A true policy document would be much more concise, addressing the County's interest in natural resource development vis-à-vis the delivery of County services.

I helped to develop an alternative policy document, which was delivered to you two months ago. The response was, "thank you for your input," but no serious consideration of it.

I believe that the "plan" you are spending so much time on will end up costing county taxpayers a bundle, without ever accomplishing your goals. I also believe it is anti-democratic (with a small "d"), in that it presumes that the five Ravalli County Commissioners have equal standing with all the citizens of the fifty United States, on whose behalf these federal lands are managed.

The alternative policy is limited in scope, focusing on issues that are realistically within the purview of the County. Because of that narrow focus, it is fundamentally incompatible with the "plan" you have been working on. Because of that incompatibility, I do not wish to see any of it incorporated into the BNRRC document, and if you choose to do so, it is over my objection.

I hope for your thoughtful consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Russ Lawrence  
512 Blodgett Camp Road  
Hamilton MT 59840  
363-1279

**RECEIVED**

**OCT 16**

Ravalli County Commissioners

--	--	--	--	--