



City & State

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Commission supports protection of Divide

By **LARRY KLINE**
Independent Record

Lewis and Clark County commissioners on Thursday passed a symbolic resolution supporting the protection of the Continental Divide and MacDonalld Pass from development.

The Helena National Forest is considering a proposal to develop the MacDonalld Pass as a permanent biathlon course, and officials said a decision is expected next

week.

Several dozen supporters packed into the chambers Thursday morning with tags reading "Take Pride in a Wild Divide," and speaker after speaker implorred commissioners to help protect what they call a sensitive, tenuous link in Montana's wildlife migration routes.

"Where the tapestry of wild country has been worn and frayed to mere threads, those threads become crucial, serving as fragile links

Wildlife corridor

Lewis and Clark County commissioners on Thursday approved a resolution supporting protection of the Continental Divide:

diminished habitat for wildlife. And Montana itself becomes diminished."

The Divide is used by grizzly bears, wolves, wolverine, lynx, moose, elk, deer and other species to move north and south through the region.

"We have a treasure in our backyard, and it's important to support wildlife corridors wherever they're threatened," Commissioner Andy Hunthausen said.

The resolution was for-

warded by the Helena Hunters and Anglers Association and supported by the Montana Wildlife Federation, the Montana Wilderness Association, and the Defenders of Wildlife, along with a number of hunters, hikers, cross-country skiers and other residents who said they didn't want Helena's special piece of the Divide disturbed.

"This biathlon project is really a boondoggle," Stan Fraser told commissioners.

A half-dozen people may use the course for three months a year, he said, at the expense of taxpayers and wildlife.

Joslin said the biathlon course is actually several hundred feet higher in elevation than such courses are supposed to be, and she doesn't believe the area will get enough consistent snowfall to actually support biathletes.

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