

SPECIMEN CREEK IRA

This IRA encompasses the area from Flesher Pass to Stemple Pass and provides a connection with Anaconda Hill to the north, Crater Mountain to the west, the Canyon Creek Wildlife Management Area to the east, and Nevada Mountain to the south.

The following is the Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society's 1984-2005 canvassing questionnaire regarding roadless values for possible Congressional consideration of wilderness for Specimen Creek.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment regarding recommendations for our valued Inventoried Roadless Areas. I commend the HLCNF for extending this opportunity and providing an informative and educational method to gather this information through the Interactive Mapping exercise offered at the Open House that was held at Jorgensen's Inn on March 7, 2016.

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Retired Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
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SUMMARY OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES & HABITAT VALUES FOR ROADLESS AREAS

ROADLESS AREA (name) Specimen 11,281 net acres (HNF Forest Plan 1986)
National Forest Helena NF
Direction and distance to nearest town Helena – 25 mi SE; Lincoln – 13 mi SW
Hunting Districts in which Roadless Area occurs: HD343
Individual providing this information: Gayle Joslin
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1) Please briefly explain the importance of the area to wildlife and fisheries. Consider wildlife use/habitat for as many of the following as pertinent: Elk, Mule deer, White-tailed deer, Moose, Mountain Goat, Bighorn Sheep, Other species of concern (important seasonal use, security, denning habitat, connectivity to other important habitats, spawning habitat, coldwater downstream fisheries, etc.) Elk, Mule Deer, White-tailed Deer, Black Bear, Grizzly Bear, Lynx, Wolverine occur. Likely bear denning. Important wildlife movement corridor along Continental Divide. Essential fall big game security. Lynx habitat. Portions of the RA are winter range for elk, mule deer and whitetails. No fisheries.

2) Is there hunter/angler access to the area? YES. From Flesher Pass or Stemple Pass, and from the Lincoln Highway (279) immediately across the highway from the MFWP Canyon Creek Wildlife Management Area in Section 34 T14N R6W. Hunters use the area heavily.

3) Are there adjoining parcels of land that could be added to this Roadless Area? YES. By adding approximately 700 acres to the upper west corner of Specimen RA, it would connect to the Crater Mountain RA (west of the Divide) to make these areas contiguous. In

addition, if the southern boundary of the Specimen RA is extended southward slightly to incorporate the Continental Divide trail, then wildlife habitat and security would be significantly improved by adding less than 400 acres. The connected areas and the CD trail addition would total approximately 21,000 acres.

4) Does this Roadless Area provide a buffer zone between Wilderness and developed public or private lands? NO

5) Are there areas in this Roadless Area that should be removed from Roadless status?
NO

6) Are there opportunities for reclamation within this area to improve its Roadless character? YES – unauthorized OHV trails could be reclaimed. In October 2002, the Lincoln Ranger District in conjunction with MFWP and citizens reclaimed a seriously eroded trail in the Specimen-Tarhead area (photos available). Other reclamation opportunities exist. Local citizens indicate that as of 2005, the area is not being regularly violated by ATV users as in the past, and big game are utilizing the area more consistently.

7) What are the threats to this Roadless Area? (motorized use/expansion; ski developments, etc.)

Illegal motorized use is a threat but is being curtailed. Road-building for commercial timber harvest was proposed in 2004, but logging companies indicate that roads are not necessary for logging if the area is within 2 miles of an established road.

8) Does this area contribute to wildlife movement through the landscape? YES. It straddles the Continental Divide, which is possibly the most important wildlife movement corridor in North America. Within 15 miles, the Continental Divide runs through (and thus connects) 4 other Roadless Areas.

9) Is there good/poor travel planning on surrounding public lands? POOR. Travel planning on this portion of the Helena National Forest has been deferred indefinitely until funding is available from the Regional Office.

10) Would the surrounding areas of non-Roadless public lands be capable of providing yearlong functional habitat and security? Not without implementation of wildlife friendly travel management with carefully designated routes and consistent monitoring and enforcement.