

January 31, 2009

Gene Terland	Mark Albers	Elaine Raper
State Director	Field Manager	Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management	Bureau of Land Management	Bureau of Land Management
5001 Southgate Dr	501 S 2nd Street East	111 Garryowen Rd
Billings, MT 59101	Malta, MT 59538-0047	Miles City MT 59301-0940

Dear Mr. Terland, Mr. Albers and Ms. Raper:

The undersigned sportsmen clubs and organizations request that public lands not yet leased for oil and gas exploration and neighboring the C.M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge (CMR NWR) and within the exterior boundaries drawn on the enclosed maps be identified in both the Malta and Miles City Resource Management Plans as areas not suitable for oil and gas leasing. Further, we request that the public lands within the boundaries drawn on the maps be designated a Recreational Area for which a management plan is prepared to include high quality hunting and fishing opportunities for the public as principal recreational goals. We also support the other traditional multiple uses, other than oil and gas leasing, currently enjoyed on the public lands in the area we identified. Enclosed are BLM 1:100,000 topographic maps for Fort Peck Lake East, Fort Peck Lake West, Glasgow, Jordan, Sand Springs, Winnett and Zortman.

This request is based on our collective assessment of these public lands as “bread and butter” hunting and fishing areas that our combined memberships absolutely depend on to continue our hunting and fishing traditions. This area has been identified as having the most important hunting lands in the state by 40 sportsmen clubs in 30 communities the Montana Sportsmen User Value Mapping Project conducted by the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership. A report on the Montana Sportsmen User Value Mapping Project is in the September-October 2008 issue of *Montana Outdoors* and a PowerPoint presentation was made to the BLM Miles City field staff on November 20, 2008. We have also identified many areas not critical to our hunting and fishing traditions that, from our perspective, can be included in oil and gas lease sales.

The area within the exterior boundaries shown on the maps includes lands of mixed private and public ownership that we have been able to access for high quality hunting experiences over many years. However, with recent declines in private land access, we are increasingly reliant on public lands managed by BLM for our future hunting activities. Once the condition of public lands is sacrificed to industrialized enterprises like oil and gas development, our hunting future is largely over. It doesn't take a change in land ownership from federal to private to make this happen; the changes in land use authorized in Resource Management Plans will do it.

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks reports the candidate area includes critical habitat for bighorn sheep, elk and pronghorn, as shown as cross-hatched patterns on an enclosed map. The candidate area also is adjacent to the CMR NWR where the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service would welcome public lands management compatible with the public hunting and fishing provisions on the refuge. It would buffer areas on the CMR NWR that are

designated historical sites of the Lewis & Clark Expedition. Finally, the area includes over 225,000 acres of public lands that energy companies chose not to lease on or since the July 31, 2007, auction for oil and gas exploration.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Lorry Thomas  
Anaconda Sportsman's Club

Nick Siebrasse  
Bear Paw Bowmen

Henry Mischel  
Dawson County Rod & Gun Club

Leah Elwell  
Federation of Fly Fishers

Chuck Hunt  
Flathead Wildlife, Inc.

Glenn Hockett  
Gallatin Wildlife Association

Stan Frasier  
Helena Hunters & Anglers Association

Don Clark  
Libby Rod & Gun Club

Joseph J. Gutkoski  
Montana River Action Network

James Posewitz  
Orion – The Hunters Institute

Matt Bishop  
Polson Outdoors

Roy Clifton  
Rosebud/Treasure Wildlife Association

John Borgreen  
Russell Country Sportsmen

William H. Geer  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership