

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

**Bitterroot National Forest  
Supervisor's Office**

1801 N. 1st Street  
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Phone: (406) 363-7100  
Hours: M-F, 8:00 AM-4:30 PM

**West Fork  
Ranger District**

6735 West Fork Road  
Darby, MT 59829  
Phone: (406) 821-3269  
Hours: M-F, 8:00 AM-4:30 PM

**Stevensville  
Ranger District**

88 Main Street  
Stevensville, MT 59870  
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**Darby/Sula  
Ranger District**

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# Scenic Driving Opportunities on the Bitterroot National Forest



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## West Fork Ranger District

**West Fork Road** –Head south from Darby, MT for 4.3 miles. Turn southwest (right) onto West Fork Rd. The West Fork of the Bitterroot River is a major focal point for fisherman in and out of the Bitterroot Valley. Approximately 23 miles on paved road is



Painted Rocks Lake, another focal point for recreation on the West Fork District. This 293 acre lake is the foreground for the colorful (painted – lichen covered rocks) rocks that line the north end of the lake. Wildlife abounds in the area around Painted Rocks. Elk, mule deer, white-tailed deer, black bear, and moose can be found here. Boulder Bay provides a small sand beach and concrete ramp with paved parking area for boats. The lake is popular with fisherman and water skiers and those wanting to cool off during hot summer months.

**Trapper Peak Vista Point** - To reach this vista head south from Darby, MT for 4.3 miles. Turn southwest (right) onto West Fork Rd and follow for 6.4 miles. Turn west (right) onto Trapper Main Road and follow for approximately 2.8 miles. Turn south (left) onto forest road #5627 and follow approximately 2 miles to the end of the road and the vista. From the Trapper Peak Vista Point one can look across the canyon and see Trapper Peak rise up over 6000 feet above Trapper Creek. At an elevation of 10,157 feet it is the highest point in the Bitterroot Valley and offers spectacular views.



## Stevensville Ranger District

### **St. Mary's Lookout Road** -

Take U.S. Highway 93 to the trailhead signs at Indian Prairie Loop, 3.6 miles south of the Stevensville turnoff. Follow the road west for 1.3 miles, then turn right on Saint Mary's Road and continue to the next road junction 0.5 mile beyond. Hang a left and follow the dirt road for 10.8 miles to the trailhead. The dirt road is bumpy, not recommended for very small cars. Saint Mary Peak rises from timbered foothills west of Stevensville. It is a moderately difficult climb of 6.4 miles roundtrip and is a very popular hike. There is a Forest Service fire lookout tower on top of the summit.



## Darby Ranger District

### **Lost Horse Observation**

**Point** – From Hamilton drive south for approximately 8 miles, turn right (west) on Lost Horse Rd. #429, travel about 2.0 miles, turn right (north) on Forest Road #496. Continue on road #496 for about 6.5 miles until you arrive at junction 496B, turn left (south) for .03 miles to Lost Horse Observation Point.



Lost Horse Observation Point is an undeveloped site. For a short walk of about 100 feet from Forest Service Road #496B you will be rewarded by outstanding views of the Bitterroot Mountains and the main Lost Horse Drainage. Be sure to have your camera for breathtaking photo opportunities. The road is narrow with switchbacks. It is also rocky and bumpy. Sedans are not recommended.

## Darby Ranger District

**Skalkaho Falls** - Skalkaho Falls is located along Skalkaho Highway (MT-38), in between Hamilton and Phillipsburg. 3 miles south of Hamilton, turn left on MT-38/Skalkaho Highway and continue another 22 miles. The falls will be located on your left. Skalkaho Falls is located in the Sapphire Mountains within Bitterroot National Forest. The water of Skalkaho Creek cascades down over 150 feet, providing impressive views and great photo opportunities. Most accessible during late spring through early autumn. Travel on Skalkaho Highway is slow due to narrow curves and limited pull-outs. During winter, only the first 10 miles of the road is plowed for automobiles.



## Darby/Sula Ranger District

**McCart Lookout** - From Sula, MT head northwest 0.2 miles on Highway 93. Turn northeast (right) onto East Fork Rd. (county road #472). Go approximately 15 miles and turn south (right) onto Forest Service Road #435 (Johnson Peak Trail). Travel 5.5 miles to the trailhead.



Hike about 1.5 miles to the lookout tower. The tower is situated east of the Bitterroot Valley, at an elevation of 7,115 feet. It was named for William McCart, who settled the area but failed to complete his homestead entry to patent. It is poised on the edge of the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness and offers beautiful views of the Pintler Mountains to the east and the Bitterroot Mountains to the west.

## Darby/Sula Ranger District

**Sula Peak Lookout** - This peak has an active fire lookout. It can be driven up on a good road starting from Forest Service Road 5727, just south of the Spring Gulch Campground on highway 93. The drive is 3.6 miles to the top. Visiting hours for the Lookout are from 9:30AM to 6:00PM during the fire season.



## West Fork Ranger District

**Baker Lake Vista Point**- From Darby, drive south on U.S. Highway 93 for 4.4 miles to the West Fork Road, Route 473. Turn right and drive seven miles west to the Baker Lake Road. Turn right on Baker Lake Road and drive one mile to a junction. Take the right fork. Drive another mile to a second junction. Take the right fork again, and drive to the end another 7.5 miles. This road gains considerable amount of elevation, climbing the mountain via switchbacks. The road is also very narrow in some places. Total driving time on the dirt road can be 30 minutes so plan ahead. About a half mile before the trailhead you will come to an overlook with a giant rock. Pull off to the right and walk out for a breathtaking view. About a half mile up the road is the trailhead. A short but vigorous hike through forest leads to Baker Point, a large rock outcropping with panoramic views. After this point the trail levels out a bit and continues on to Baker Lake, sitting in the Basin below Trapper Peak (the Bitterroot's tallest peak). One-way mileage to Baker Lake is 1 1/4 miles.

