

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

LINCOLN COUNTY

STATE OF MONTANA

MARK L. PECK, COMMISSIONER
DISTRICT NO. 1, LIBBY

GREGORY L. LARSON, COMMISSIONER
DISTRICT NO. 2, TROY

MIKE COLE, COMMISSIONER
DISTRICT NO. 3, EUREKA

ROBIN A. BENSON
CLERK OF THE BOARD AND COUNTY RECORDER

May 18, 2015

Objection Reviewing Officer
USDA Forest Service
Northern Region
PO Box 7669
Missoula, MT 59807

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners is strongly supportive of the Montanore Mine Project and appreciates the exhaustive efforts to protect our environment, watersheds and wildlife habitat through the cumbersome permitting process. We do have three areas of objection that we feel can be addressed if given the opportunity to consult and present our concerns as a cooperating agency and legal jurisdiction mandated to protect the economic and cultural welfare of the citizens of Lincoln County. While supportive of the overall goal of the endangered species act and the recovery of the Grizzly Bear, we feel that the permitting requirements of the Montanore Project, coupled with the permitting requirements of the Rock Creek project, regarding bear mitigation are inconsistent with the needs of Lincoln County.

Road Closure Plan: We recognize security needs of the Grizzly Bear but we feel that there are alternatives to the current closure plan particularly the closure of the Upper Bear Creek Rd #4784. This access point has historical and cultural significance to the citizens of south Lincoln County. It is the one point where people can drive into the base of the Cabinets and get a spectacular, up-close view of the interior Cabinets, particularly those who can no longer walk or bicycle 3 miles. The county has similar access roads that we would be willing to trade in order to maintain access to the Upper Bear Creek.

Over the Snow Travel: We find the over the snow travel restrictions far too restrictive, especially lacking conclusive data that snowmobiles adversely impact bears during the hibernation cycle. The snowmobile industry is critical to our culture, quality of life and a key factor in our transition economy looking into the future. We request references to scientific data, research establishing negative impacts of snowmobiles on bear vitality. Absent sound research, we strongly oppose the closure of this activity on the eastern front of the Cabinets. We see no correlation between the impacts of the mine project and over the snow travel, please advise and share supporting data.

Habitat Transfer: We understand the habit transfer of private lands to adjust for bear habit

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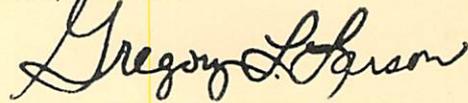
displacement due to mining activities, but we object to losing county tax base in the exchange. Nearly 80% of Lincoln County is under some level of government ownership and unavailable for county revenue or development and you are requesting that 6185 acres more possibly be removed. Please re-evaluate and insure the displacement lands remain available for county taxation.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment and look forward to working in cooperation to permit the mine projects, meet the needs of endangered species and the socioeconomic conditions of the citizens in Lincoln County.

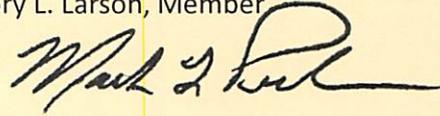
Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Mike Cole in black ink, featuring a stylized 'M' and 'C'.

Mike Cole, Chairman

Handwritten signature of Gregory L. Larson in black ink, written in a cursive style.

Gregory L. Larson, Member

Handwritten signature of Mark L. Peck in black ink, written in a cursive style.

Mark L. Peck, Member