



PUBLIC LANDS STATEMENT OF POSITION

The National Wilderness Preservation System currently comprises 756 wilderness areas on 109,492,591 acres in 44 states. When combined with the many other land use allocations and designations that remove federal lands from multiple uses, such as National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Wilderness Study Areas, National Monuments and FS Roadless Areas, less than half of federal land is open to multiple-use activities that include natural resource development. Studies of potential resources indicate that large volumes of natural gas and oil remain to be discovered in the Rocky Mountain region.

MPA Position

It is the position of the Montana Petroleum Association that public lands that not part of a designated national park or wilderness and open for multiple uses must remain open for multiple uses including oil and gas, timber, mining, grazing, and recreational activities. State and local economies must not be further encumbered in favor of sweeping preservation measures because multiple uses on public lands are keys to economic development and sustainability in the local communities. The removal of any lands from multiple use status will disproportionately affect the counties and rural school districts surrounding the public land.

The domestic oil and gas industry generates above average wages and payments for services and materials, almost all of which stay in the U.S. Employment benefits are derived both directly from the drilling, producing and transporting of natural gas as well as indirectly from support of the industry. Further, taxes and fees paid by Montana's petroleum industry and other natural resource development, such as grazing, mining and timber, fund education and other critical government services at the local, state and federal levels.

MPA opposes reducing the availability of multiple use public lands for any reason and by any method. Similarly, MPA opposes restrictions on multiple use public lands that place onerous restrictions on the development of public minerals and other natural resources. All too often national park, wilderness, and monument rules are extended into buffer zones beyond the legal boundaries of such areas. MPA opposes any buffer zone that extends restrictions beyond national park and wilderness boundaries established by law.

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