

## **McCullough Peaks WSA Wyoming Public Lands Initiative Proposal 2017-09-21**

### **Context**

The McCullough Peaks Wilderness Study Area is a 25,210 acre parcel in the north west section of the larger area known as McCullough Peaks. The larger section of the McCullough Peaks encompasses 119,839 acres that underwent a Travel Management Plan completed in 2004. The McCullough Peaks Horse Management Area also overlaps the Wilderness Study Area and the Travel Management Area. This proposal addresses ONLY the 25,210 acre parcel designated a Wilderness Study Area (WSA), which the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) identified as having significant wilderness quality and has been managed by the BLM to protect those values since the early 1990s. Agency policy limits the current uses in the WSA, including motorized uses only on travel plan designated open routes, and prohibits new trail/road building and new oil and gas leasing.

### **Vision**

The landscape should be safeguarded for ecological, intrinsic, historic, and scientific value and managed primarily for the social, spiritual and health benefits the landscape provides for people through outdoor recreation, for the specific experiences made possible by this unique and special landscape.

### **Establish the McCullough Peaks Special Management Area**

The existing boundary for the Wilderness Study Area will become the boundary for the new congressionally designated Special Management Area consisting of 25,210 acres.

- The stranded State land section of 640 acres within the Special Management Area will be exchanged with BLM land outside of the Special Management area but within Park County using standard process including equivalency of value.
- Within the Special Management Area, a parcel of about 10,300 acres will be designated Wilderness and the BLM will manage it in accordance with the Wilderness Act of 1964.
  - The Wilderness area includes the exchanged state section land.
- Motorized vehicles permitted only on designated roads and trails, except as needed for administrative purposes and to respond to an emergency. Routes authorized as such by the *Final McCullough Peaks Travel Management Plan and Off-Road Vehicle Route Designations*; August 2004.
  - The BLM will authorize the construction of additional 2-3 miles of motorized trail to be constructed, ideally to create a loop, within the Special Management Area and outside of the designated Wilderness. The Travel Management Plan will be amended accordingly.
  - Within the Special Management Area and outside of the designated Wilderness portion, maintenance of designated roads and ways will be allowed to the degree

of making passable to maximum width of 65" vehicle, while ensuring primitive nature of route. Heavy machinery prohibited.

- Within the Special Management Area and outside of the designated Wilderness portion, BLM will allow design, construction, and maintenance to be completed by local volunteer organization(s) and independent contractors, while overseeing to ensure agency standards are met.
- Non-motorized mechanized vehicles permitted on existing routes and trails.
  - Within the Special Management Area and outside of the designated Wilderness portion, the BLM will approve the construction of a system of non-motorized single track trails within two years of the creation of the SMA.
  - Within the Special Management Area and outside of the designated Wilderness portion, BLM will allow design, construction, and maintenance to be completed by local volunteer organization(s) and independent contractors, while overseeing to ensure agency standards are met.
- Within the Special Management Area, including the Wilderness, these things are permitted to continue, consistent with the purposes and in accordance with existing laws:
  - Hoof and Foot travel
  - Existing grazing
  - Vegetation and fire management
- Within the Special Management Area, including the Wilderness, these things are prohibited:
  - Mineral and geothermal leasing
  - Mineral materials disposal
  - Renewable energy development
  - Commercial use
- The Special Management Area, including the Wilderness, will continue to be managed by the BLM:
  - To preserve the visual resource (VCM Class 1)
  - Will not issue any Rights of Way.