



Letter: Speak up on Pryors travel plan by Nov. 19

Posted: Friday, November 2, 2007 11:00 pm

I first wandered into the Pryors in 1966 and was hooked. Since then I've toured many miles of four-wheel-drive roads, showing friends and Montana visitors the spectacular country. We've hiked, mountain hiked, ski toured, backpacked and explored caves.

I've visited the Pryors with experts in geology, archeology and several flavors of biology - and with folk having a laymen's appreciation of the landscape. We've seen, and stopped to smell, bountiful displays of wildflowers, and camped with stunning views, listening to hermit thrushes punctuate the quiet solitude. I've not yet seen it all.

During this time the Pryors have changed. Or more correctly people's impact has changed the Pryors. The number of us visiting the Pryors has increased dramatically. Motorized use has increased even more drastically - and often not responsibly.

We can't return to the Pryors I knew 40 years ago. We can't continue the uncontrolled use and abuse of today and still pass this treasure on to the future. The Pryors need visionary and balanced management like that proposed by the Pryors Coalition.

Then when I'm limited by age to the abundant motorized routes, I'll know, with pleasure, that younger people are still having the same experiences I had decades earlier - away from the noise, commotion and impacts of motorized visitors.

We will lose this opportunity if people do not tell Custer National Forest - before Nov. 19 - that motorizing two thirds of the Pryors is unacceptable. Visit the Pryors Coalition at www.pryormontains.org.

Dick Walton

Billings