



Letter: Too many roads causing harm to Pryor Mountains

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The popularity of the Pryor Mountains for recreation has grown immensely over the last two decades. This trend will continue as our population expands and more people discover this wonderful area. Apparently, some writers are not seeing the impact of motorized vehicles that I have.

The experts know how to reduce the impact of vehicles on the outdoors.

Most important is a well-maintained road system and vehicles operators who follow the rules. While good access to the public land is important, too many roads, vehicles and irresponsible motorized users will ruin an area for everyone.

One example is impact on elk. While the state has enjoyed a doubling of the elk population across the state in the last two decades, the elk in the Pryors have been virtually wiped out. A great deal of study has been done on the impact of motorized vehicles on elk. The conclusions are clear - elk and motorized vehicles don't mix. Elk need quiet areas for escape. The Pryors are no longer a place to find trophy bucks either.

Hunters understand that too many roads ruin a hunting experience. Also, poachers need roads.

The Pryors Coalition proposes to the U.S. Forest Service a road program that has plenty of access for motorized vehicles in the Pryors. Our vision is a road and trail system to take people to the most popular areas of the Pryors yet provides improved escape cover for wildlife and there are many other benefits (see www.pryormountains.org).

It is time for all of us who recreate in the Pryors to work together for realistic sustainable solutions to conserve this important piece of our outdoor heritage.

Mike Penfold

Billings