

April 27 2005

Senator Max Baucus
Attn: David W. Cobb, Field Director
32 East Babcock Suite 114
Bozeman MT 59715
406-586-6104
406-587-9177 fax

Dear Senator Max Baucus,

We are writing you to request your assistance in disclosing public records held by the Gallatin National Forest on the \$13,000,000 Royal Teton Ranch land conservation agreement in Yellowstone.

In late February Darrell Geist met with your Field Director David Cobb to discuss the difficulties he was encountering getting access to public records held by the Gallatin National Forest.

We provided you a copy of our March 25 letter to Gallatin Forest Supervisor Rebecca Heath, recounting the agency's poor treatment of citizen's exercising our right to inspect records under the Freedom of Information Act.

The situation has worsened. On March 30 the Gallatin National Forest informed us that the agency has removed, and possibly destroyed, public records that we have sought since June 2004 on the Royal Teton Ranch land agreement.

We are requesting your help in disclosing what is rightfully the public's business: how the Royal Teton Ranch land conservation agreement is being implemented with \$13,000,000 in taxpayer provided funds.

We are including signed copies of your privacy release form to enlist your office's assistance in resolving this matter on the side of public disclosure. Specifically, we ask you help us:

- 1) Recover public records removed from the Bozeman and Gardiner offices of the Gallatin National Forest.
- 2) Gain the release of, and fully disclose, public records withheld by the Gallatin National Forest.

Sen Baucus you have demonstrated your leadership in funding this land conservation agreement that is of great importance to Montanans who value native wildlife in and around Yellowstone, and we respectfully ask for your help. We have enclosed documentation for your office to assist us in protecting the public 's right to know.

We hope that you will take another look at how this agreement is being implemented, and to resolve this growing dispute over public records access and shed light on how the Royal Teton Ranch land agreement is being implemented by the Gallatin National Forest.

Dan Brister and Darrell Geist are available to work with anyone in your office who is available to help. We will follow-up this letter with a phone call to you. Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Darrell Geist
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(406) 531-9284

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Buffalo Field Campaign
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Enclosures:

- 1) March 25, 2005 letter to Becki Heath, Gallatin National Forest Supervisor (plus attached emails, notes, etc.)
- 2) Freedom of Information Act Request June 24, 2004
- 3) Freedom of Information Act Appeal October 28 2004 (plus attachments)
- 4) Freedom of Information Act Request September 23, 2004
- 5) Freedom of Information Act Appeal April 12 2005 (plus attachments)
- 6) April 5, 2005 letter to Becki Heath, Gallatin National Forest Supervisor Request for Clarification Regarding the Removal and Possible Destruction of Federal Records at the Gallatin National Forest