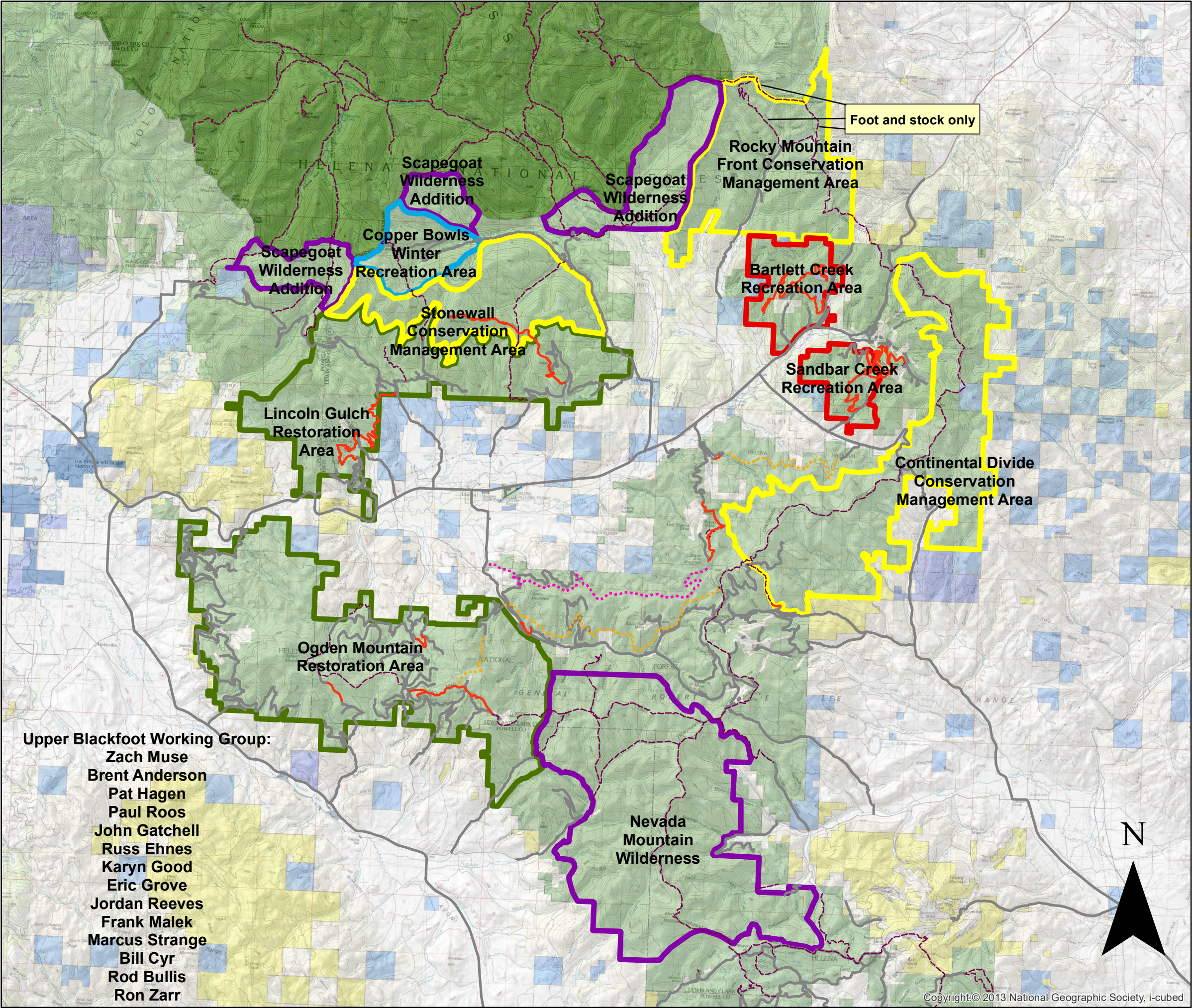


# Lincoln Valley Proposal





## **Lincoln Valley Recreation, Economic Development, and Conservation Proposal Summary, May 2019**

For the past four years, residents of Lincoln, along with other stakeholders, have worked together to identify ways to improve management of public lands in the Lincoln Valley for the benefit of local residents and all public land users. This proposal is the result of that collaborative work. It addresses issues that Lincoln community members and user groups would like resolved, provides a positive vision for the future of the Lincoln Valley, and describes a path forward. We hope this proposal can be implemented in a manner that unites the community and its many partners while building a better future for the valley.

### **FOREST RESTORATION**

We can provide jobs in the woods, protect our communities from wildfire, improve forest conditions, and improve fisheries by working together to increase the pace and scale of forest restoration, aquatic recovery, and fuel reduction projects on public and private land. This proposal would establish the Lincoln Gulch and Ogden Mountain Restoration Areas, spanning 69,000 acres, to reduce fuel loads while attempting to reestablish historical fire regimes. Forest restoration will be emphasized within these areas, consistent with protections for grizzly bear, lynx, and wolverine, to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire effects and restore aquatic and wildlife habitat.

### **RECREATION**

The Lincoln Valley has the potential to be a highly sought-after recreational destination with outstanding opportunities for hiking, motorized vehicles, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, skiing, mountain biking, and camping. This proposal is consistent with and builds off agency plans and aims to provide quality recreational experiences that are well-managed, respectful of private property, and are effectively monitored and enforced. Portions of this proposal will be implemented through federal legislation. Other components will be implemented through administrative actions or other means, including collaboration between user groups, agency personnel and others to help plan, funding, build, maintain, and manage existing and new recreational opportunities. The details of those components are described below:

### **MOTORIZED RECREATION**

This proposal would enhance recreational opportunities for motorized recreation by:

- Establishing the Bartlett Creek and Sandbar Creek Recreation Areas, spanning 10,600 acres, where motorized recreation is permitted, and opportunities are enhanced.
- Developing approximately 70 miles of long-distance routes, including roughly 20 miles of new connector trails that link riding areas and create desirable distance rides, allowing riders to circumnavigate the Lincoln Valley.
- Designating the Copper Bowls Winter Recreation Area, spanning 5,200 acres, for snowmobiling.
- Ensuring that recreational use is well-managed and enforced and respects private property.

### **MOUNTAIN BIKING**

The Lincoln Valley provides some excellent mountain bike opportunities but there is much room for improvement in trails, education, signage and promotion. Mountain biking could play an important role in Lincoln's economy if properly promoted and managed. In 2009 the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) and the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce completed a master plan to improve mountain bike opportunities in and around Lincoln, but it has not been fully implemented. The proposal would prioritize full implementation of the IMBA-Chamber of Commerce master plan for mountain biking, including development of a new high quality 18-mile trail that would be a sought-after trail for bike enthusiasts.

### **CONSERVATION**

The Lincoln Valley contains sections of the Continental Divide Trail and some of the best elk habitat in Montana. The proposal would establish the Continental Divide, Rocky Mountain Front, and Stonewall Conservation Management Areas, totaling 63,000 acres, to maintain existing uses and conditions and prevent new development. The proposal would also add 16,000 acres to the Scapegoat Wilderness and establish the 40,000-acre Nevada Mountain Wilderness.

**Additional Agreements** as part of the Lincoln Valley proposal cover noxious weed eradication, private forest restoration, land exchanges, and education.

**THIS AGREEMENT IS SUPPORTED BY THE UPPER BLACKFOOT WORKING GROUP,  
WHICH INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS:**

Zach Muse- Lincoln Fire Chief, Upper Blackfoot Community Council

Paul Roos- Retired Outfitter and Educator

Brent Anderson- Conifer Logging Inc.

Pat Hagen- Ponderosa Snow Warriors

Karyn Good- Gehring Ranch

Bill Cyr- Lincoln Restoration Committee

Rod Bullis- Professional Forester

Frank Malek- Blackfoot Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Association

Russ Ehnes- Great Falls Trail Bike Riders Association

John Gatchell- Montana Wilderness Association

Eric Grove- Helena-based Mountain Bike Advocate

Jordan Reeves- The Wilderness Society

Marcus Strange- Montana Wildlife Federation

Ron Zarr- Ponderosa Snow Warriors