



# Insufficient Grizzly Barrier Report

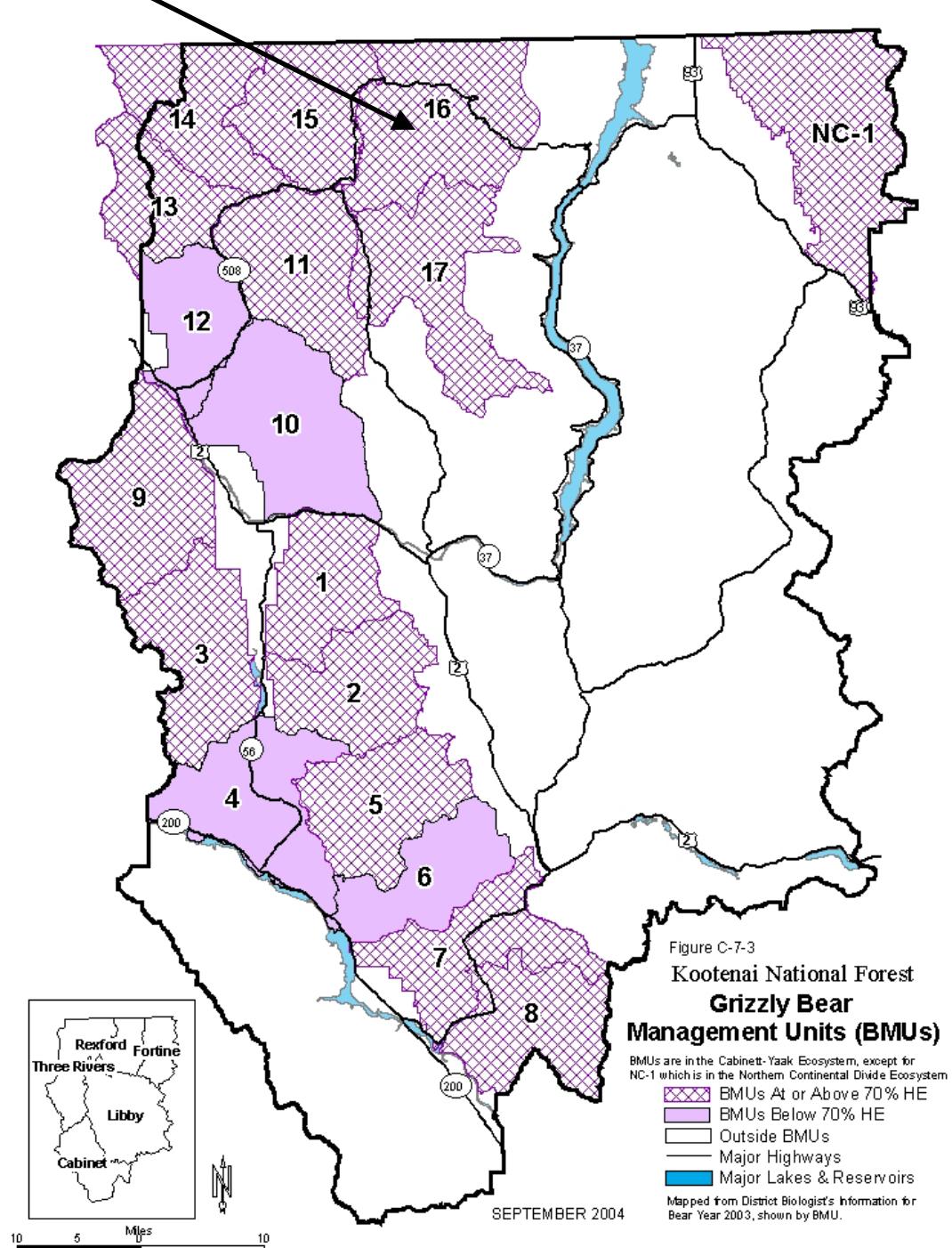
## 2022-2025

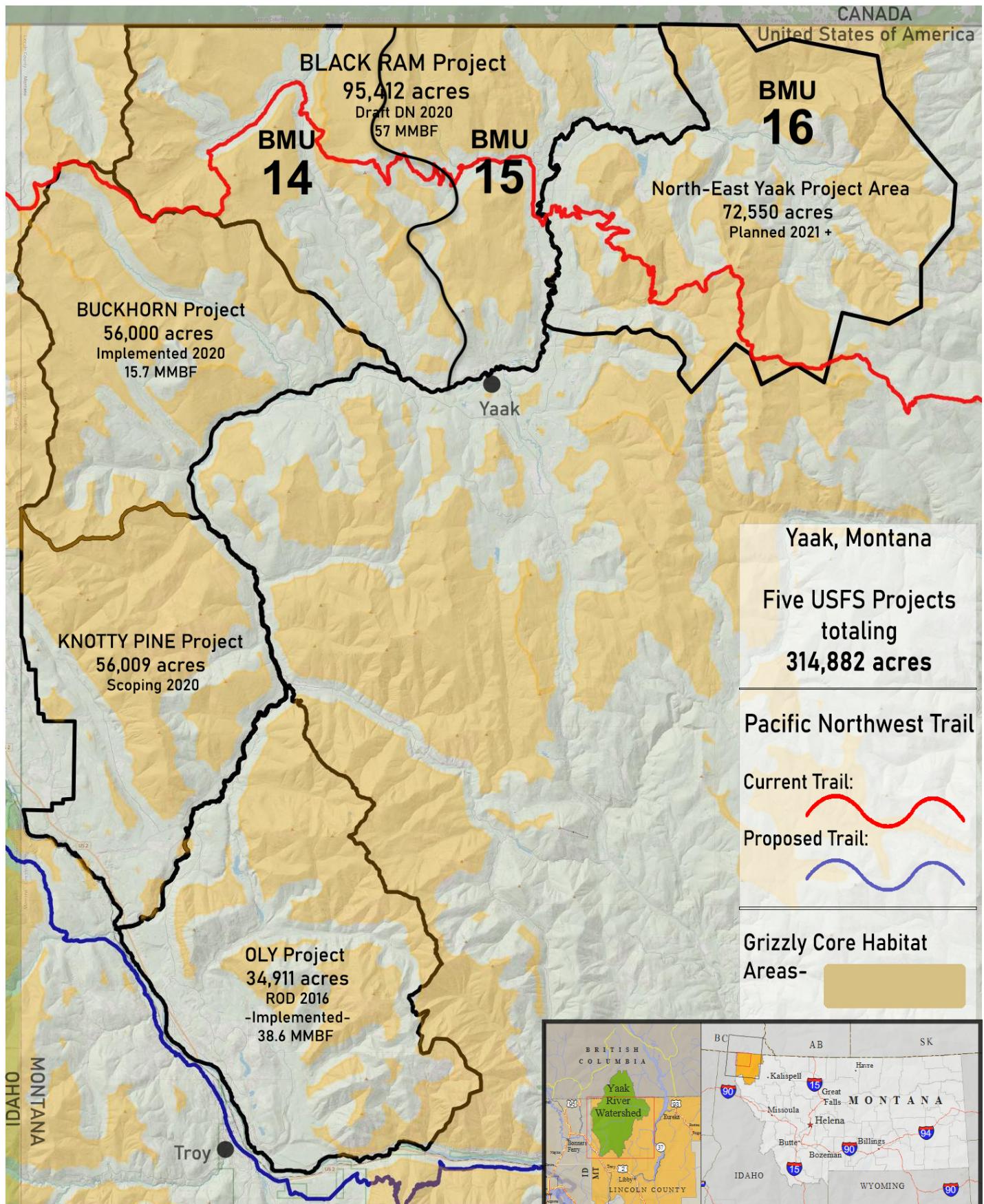
CYE BMU 16/NE Yaak Project Area



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Geographic area of report  
BMU 16





YVFC submits this report in a collaborative effort with the USFS to ensure secure habitat for Yaak grizzly bears. YVFC is documenting insufficient road barriers in the Kootenai National Forest to limit core habitat fragmentation, a primary threat to the Yaak's vulnerable grizzly bear population, due to the proliferation of access on unauthorized forest roads. With approximately 25 bears remaining in the Yaak portion of the Cabinet/Yaak Ecosystem, the USFS must protect key habitat from unauthorized road usage. YVFC documentation and reporting of insufficient road barriers aims to clearly and convincingly convey the imminent need for the USFS to prioritize installing barriers that will prevent unauthorized disturbance of sensitive habitats critical to grizzly bear recovery.

Roads fragment habitats and provide human access, which are proven key factors in grizzly bear mortality.

Preserving landscape connectivity by decreasing unauthorized access is vital to ensuring the survival of threatened species in the Yaak and beyond. The YVFC, like the Foundation, is committed to developing and implementing effective, reputable methods for protecting key habitats for threatened species from human disturbance, directly preserving these critical natural lands. This project will lay the foundation for YVFC to work with the USFS to effectively protect these habitats and ensure that wildlife in the Yaak, including the USFS-designated "most vulnerable" grizzly bear population, can thrive.



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Chris Bachman  
Conservation Director  
Yaak Valley Forest Council



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Date

## **BMU 16-NE Yaak Project Area**

BMU 16: Female with young documented 2012-2017, 2020-2023

2023

Credible grizzly bear detections: 1

Females with young detected: 0

Females with young detected, unduplicated: 0

Females with yearling cubs or two-year-olds detected: 0

Females with yearling cubs or two-year-olds detected, unduplicated: 0

Source:

Kasworm, W. F., Radandt, T. G., Teisberg, J. E., Vent, T., Proctor, M., Cooley, H., & Fortin-Noreus, J. K. (2024). CABINET-YAAK GRIZZLY BEAR RECOVERY AREA 2023 RESEARCH AND MONITORING PROGRESS REPORT. United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator's Office. University of Montana.

## **DATUM: WGS 84**

The Yaak Valley Forest Council traveled around the 72,550-acre NE Yaak project area to document the effectiveness of USFS Motor-Vehicle (MV) road closures/ barriers. XX roads were found to have insufficient barriers, and in some cases, there were no barriers at all.

Sites NE 1, NE 2, and NE 3 are located outside of the known NE Yaak Project Area, but are within the same Vinal Creek/Yaak River (subwatershed) HUC 12 boundary.

\* Mileage estimates behind barriers are approximations based on USFS 2016 topographic maps and aerial imagery.

## NE 1- Coordinates: 48.839490 (N), -115.901282 (W)

Date: 31 July 2025

The road is ineffectively blocked with highway guardrail, with road restrictions posted. The surrounding forest is open, offering several access points.

Redress: Place large boulders to block trespass along road accessing the guardrail.

The ineffective barrier allows motor vehicle access to approximately\* 1 mile of “closed” road.



Road restrictions are posted.

An open, thinned forest adjacent to the barrier allows access to the closed road behind it.



## NE 2 - Coordinates: 48.851620 (N), -115.648321 (W)

**Date: 31 July 2025**

The road is ineffectively blocked with an aging, degraded berm. No road restrictions posted.

The surrounding forest is open, offering several access points. The berm is bypassable on both sides and over the top by ATVs and motorcycles.

Redress: Reconstruct the berm with a tank trap. Place large boulders to block trespass on both sides of the reconstructed berm.

The ineffective barrier allows motor vehicle access to approximately\* 2 miles of “closed” road.





Berm can be traveled over or bypassed.

Bypass right.





Open forest to the left (east) of the berm allows for ATV and motorcycle access.

## NE 3 - Coordinates: 48.853671 (N), -115.640473 (W)

**Date: 31 July 2025**

The road is ineffectively blocked with a locked gate. No road restrictions posted.

The gate is bypassable on the right side by ATVs and motorcycles.

Redress: Place large boulders on both sides of the gate to prevent trespassing, blocking access on the right side, and reinforcing the single boulder on the left side of the gate.

The ineffective barrier allows motor vehicle access to approximately\* 1.5 miles of “closed” road.





The berm is bypassable on the right side by ATVs and motorcycles.



Open road behind gate.



ATV tracks are visible in the grass, leading around the gate.

## NE 4 - Coordinates: 48.862873 (N), -115.648492 (W)

**Date: 31 July 2025**

The road is ineffectively blocked with a locked gate. No road restrictions posted.

The gate is bypassable on the right side by ATVs and motorcycles.

Redress: Place large boulders on both sides of the gate to prevent trespassing, blocking access on the right side, and reinforcing the single boulder on the left side of the gate.

The ineffective barrier allows motor vehicle access to approximately\* 3 miles of “closed” road.





The gate is bypassable on the right side by ATVs and motorcycles.



**NE 5 - Coordinates: 48.910859 (N), -115.646859 (W)**

**Date: 31 July 2025**

The gated road is ineffective at blocking trespass. The gate is unlocked and bypassable on both sides. The road restrictions sign (laminated paper) is torn off the gate and lying on the ground.

Redress: #1 Lock the gate. Place large boulders to block trespass on both sides of the gate. Effective permanent Road Restrictions signage.

The ineffective barrier allows motor vehicle access to approximately\* 20 miles of “closed” road.



Gate is unlocked and partially open.



Road Restriction  
signage torn from gate  
and on the ground.



The gate is ATV and motorcycle bypassable on the left.

## NE 6 - Coordinates: 48.949055 (N), -115.510397 (W)

**Date: 01 August 2025**

The gated road accessing the Caribou Mountain trailhead is ineffective at blocking trespass. The gate is bypassable on both sides. The road restrictions signage is absent.

Redress: #1 Lock the gate. Place large boulders to block trespass on both sides of the gate. Effective permanent Road Restrictions signage.

The ineffective barrier allows motor vehicle access to approximately\* 20 miles of “closed” road.





Gate can be bypassed on left side by ATV or motorcycle.

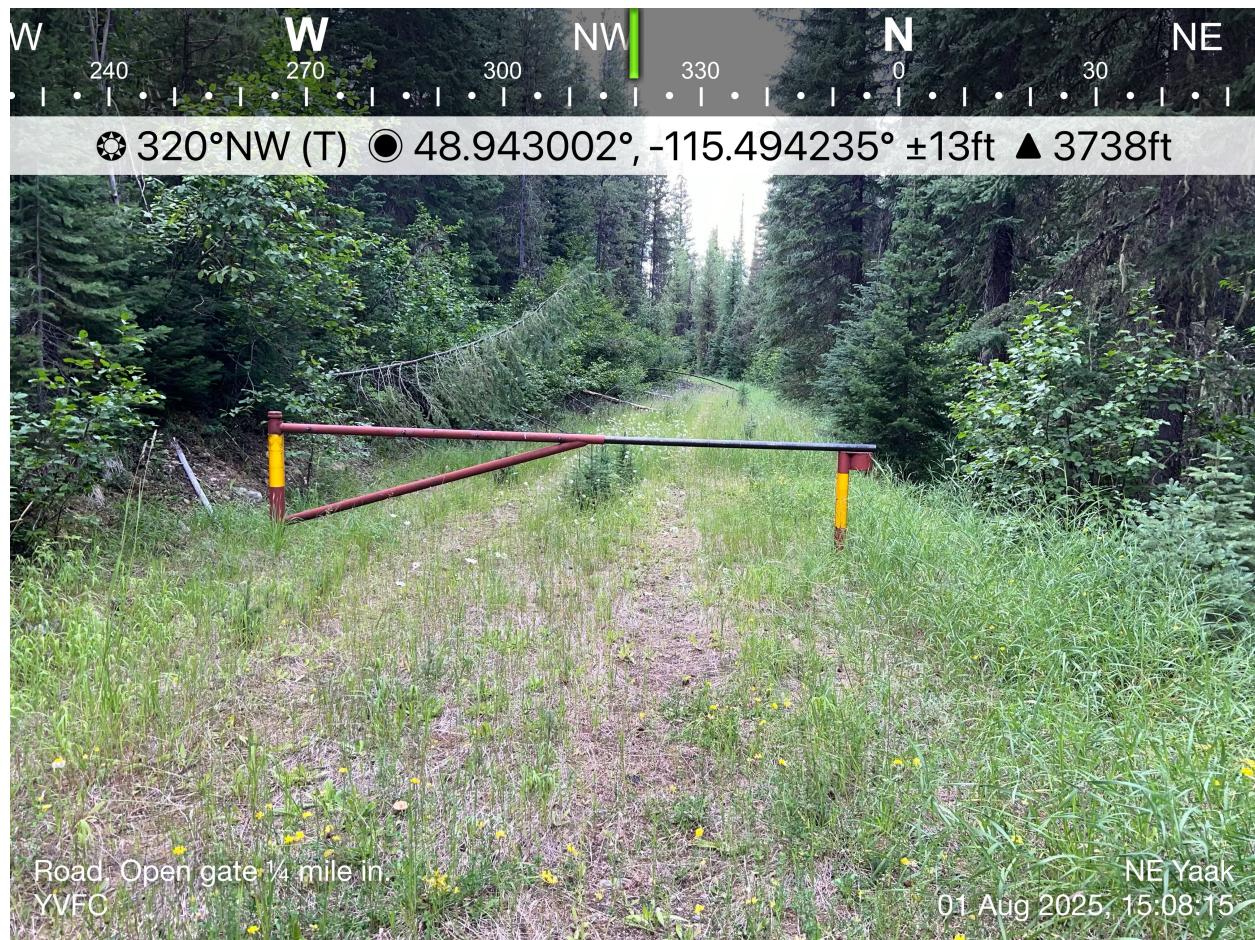
## NE 7 - Coordinates: 48.943002 (N), -115.494235 (W)

**Date: 01 August 2025**

The gate is on road 337A, approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile from the main 337 Road. The gate is bypassable on both sides. The road restrictions signage is absent.

Redress: Place large boulders to block trespass on both sides of the gate, add effective permanent Road Restrictions signage.

The ineffective barrier allows motor vehicle access to approximately\* 2.5 miles of “closed” road.





Gate bypassable on left.

## NE 8 - Coordinates: 48.934941 (N), -115.488272 (W)

**Date: 01 August 2025**

The gate is on road 337. The berm is old and worn down, bypassable on both sides. The Road Restrictions signage is absent.

Redress: Rebuild berm with tank trap. Place large boulders to block trespass on both sides of the berm, and add effective permanent Road Restrictions signage.

The ineffective barrier allows motor vehicle access to approximately\* 1.5 miles of “closed” road.





## NE 9 - Coordinates: 48.905044 (N), -115.531213 (W)

**Date: 01 August 2025**

The gate is on road 6035. The gate is bypassable on the right side. The Road Restrictions signage is absent.

Redress: Place large boulders to block trespass on right side of the gate, add effective permanent Road Restrictions signage.

The ineffective barrier allows motor vehicle access to approximately\* 30 miles of “closed” road.







## **Addendum**

**August 26, 2025**

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**From:** Osborn, Lisa - FS, MT lisa.osborn@usda.gov   
**Subject:** Request for Records for Administrative Access to Closed/Gated Roads  
**Date:** August 26, 2025 at 11:34 AM  
**To:** Chris Bachman cbachman@yaakvalley.org  
**Cc:** Hill, Sean - FS, MT sean.hill@usda.gov, Carlson, John - FS, MT john.carlson@usda.gov



Good afternoon, Chris,

We received your request for a list of the administrative access trips on national forest service system roads accessed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Border Patrol, and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks for the following locations in the Kootenai National Forest:

- Garver Mountain Lookout Gate, Road 5857 (48.93449, -115.78823)
- Black Ram Fire Road Gate, Road 5894 (48.97261, -115.84011,) , **This is the Jungle Rampike connection road**
- Beaver Browning Road 6061 48.79820, -115.63564)
- Yodkin Road 6062 (48.82602, -115.63416)
- Vinal, Road 746, Spur Road 6047 (48.91082, -115.64692)
- Teepee Mountain (48.676132, W -115.930002) off of Road 6121 Teepee Face Road
- Grubstake Road 5821 (48.95251, -115.54898)
- Caribou Mountain Rd. (48.94906, -115.51040) Yaak River Rd, Road 92

I have some follow-up questions for you. What is the date range for your request? At this time we only have information from the spring trips that have occurred in 2025.

The statutory time for response to your request will not begin until all procedural issues are resolved.

If you wish to further discuss your request you may contact myself or the Forest Service FOIA Public Liaison, Washington Office. You can reach them by phone at 202-205-1542, or by regular mail to Mail Stop 1143, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-1143. Additionally, you may contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration to inquire about the FOIA mediation services they offer. The contact information for OGIS is as follows: Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, Room 2510, 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, Maryland 20740-6001; e-mail at [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov); telephone at 202-741-5770; toll free at 1-877-684-6448; or facsimile at 202-741-5769.

Sincerely,

**Lisa G Osborn**

Kootenai National Forest  
Environmental Coordinator



U.S. Forest Service  
12858 US Highway 2, Troy, MT 59935  
p: (406) 295-7426 | c: (406) 405-1792

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**From:** Chris Bachman <[cbachman@yaakvalley.org](mailto:cbachman@yaakvalley.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 19, 2025 1:15 PM  
**To:** Hernandez, Nikia - FS, MT <[nikia.hernandez@usda.gov](mailto:nikia.hernandez@usda.gov)>  
**Cc:** Rick Bass <[rickbass27@gmail.com](mailto:rickbass27@gmail.com)>; Anthony South <[anthony@yaakvalley.org](mailto:anthony@yaakvalley.org)>; Chris Bachman <[cbachman@yaakvalley.org](mailto:cbachman@yaakvalley.org)>  
**Subject:** [External Email]Request for Records for Administrative Access to Closed/Gated Roads

[External Email]

If this message comes from an **unexpected sender** or references a **vague/unexpected topic**;

Use caution before clicking links or opening attachments.

Please send any concerns or suspicious messages to: [Spam.Abuse@usda.gov](mailto:Spam.Abuse@usda.gov)

Ranger Hernandez,

I am writing on behalf of the Yaak Valley Forest Council to request Records for Administrative Access to Closed/Gated Roads in the Kootenai National Forest. The Yaak Valley Forest Council, founded in 1997, is a non-profit focused on conserving critical wildlife habitats for threatened species in the Yaak Valley. Our mission is to protect the last roadless areas in the Yaak Valley and Kootenai National Forest, and to restore the region's ecological health by conserving and enhancing habitats for native and sensitive species.

We are requesting USFS Administrative Access Records, including administrative access to USFS-managed lands by U.S. Forest Service personnel and their representatives, access by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, access by the U.S. Border Patrol, and access by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks for the following locations in the Kootenai National Forest:

- Garver Mountain Lookout Gate, Road 5857 (48.93449, -115.78823)
- Black Ram Fire Road Gate, Road 5894 (48.97261, -115.84011)
- Beaver Browning Road 6061 48.79820, -115.63564)
- Yodkin Road 6062 (48.82602, -115.63416)
- Vinal, Road 746, Spur Road 6047 (48.91082, -115.64692)
- Teepee Mountain (48.676132, W -115.930002) off of Road 6121 Teepee Face Road
- Grubstake Road 5821 (48.95251, -115.54898)
- Caribou Mountain Rd. (48.94906, -115.51040) Yaak River Rd, Road 92

Please let me know if you require clarification for any of these locations.

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to public and

environmental health, we request that any fees associated with this request be waived. If there are any charges for searching or copying the records, please inform me before processing my request. If you deny any part of this request, please specify the exact reason for your refusal to release the information.

Additionally, we want to inform you about two unlocked gates on roads closed to motorized access and ask that they be secured. The gate mentioned above off Vinal Road (6047) is currently unsecured (photos attached). We request that it be secured to protect the core habitat for the Yaak's threatened grizzly bear population. We have also documented an unsecured gate, without a lock or chain present, at the end of the open portion of Road 902 (photo attached). We request that this gate also be secured to prevent access and protect core grizzly bear habitat.

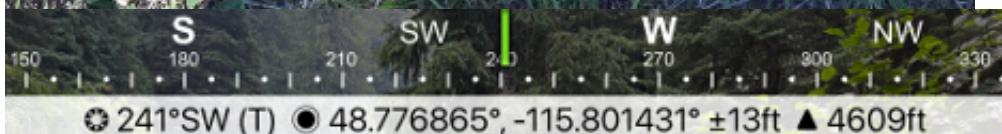
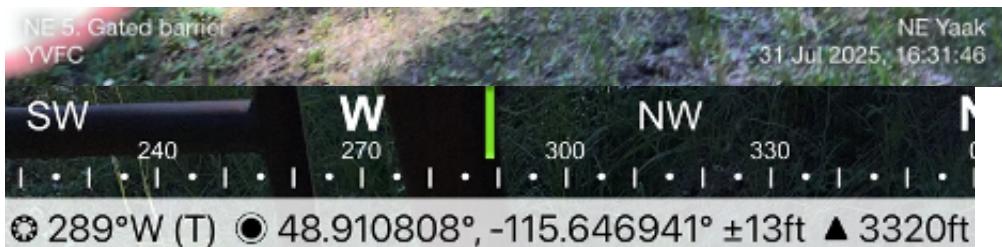
Respectfully submitted,

For a Wild Yaak,

Chris

Chris Bachman  
Conservation Director  
Yaak Valley Forest Council  
[www.yaakvalley.org](http://www.yaakvalley.org)  
[cbachman@yaakvalley.org](mailto:cbachman@yaakvalley.org)







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