



PRESS RELEASE – OCTOBER 23, 2008

Billings Motorcycle Club (“BMC”), an active organization in the Billings community since the early 1900’s, has long been an advocate of working with private and public land owners with the goal of maintaining the clean, healthy and family-oriented sport of off-road motorcycle riding. BMC has, since the mid-1980’s, worked with many groups to keep public lands open for safe, responsible off-road motorcycling. One of the relationships that has developed over the years has been with the Bureau of Land Management (“BLM”) for the South Hills and Ah Nei areas near Billings. The following was released by Ann Boucher, Bureau of Land Management on October 20, 2008. BMC is proud of its relationship with BLM and will continue working hard to further build and enhance the relationship.

----- Bureau of Land Management ----- October 20, 2008 ----- Ann Boucher -----

For off-road bikers, the South Hills Motorcycle Area is a rare treasure. It’s one of the few public land parcels set aside specifically for motorcycle use, and it’s within easy access of Billings. It offers about 700 acres for riding.

Unfortunately, the location that makes it so handy also makes it susceptible to misuse. According to Lynn Hardy, outdoor recreation planner for the Bureau of Land Management’s Billings Field Office, one of the biggest problems is the unauthorized use of four-wheeled all-terrain vehicles.

“We have only one legal access point,” said Hardy, “and it’s so steep that it’s a real safety hazard for four-wheelers. That keeps some riders out, but others trespass across private land to get in.”

Fortunately, one group of responsible riders continues to work with the BLM to find solutions for ongoing problems. The long-running Billings Motorcycle Club first partnered with the BLM in 1984 to address management issues in the South Hills. Club members valued having the open riding area adjacent to their own property, and recognized that their support would help keep it open. The club agreed to donate labor and materials to help protect resources and improve riding opportunities for its members as well as for the community.

“They do so much, often without being asked, and usually without compensation,” said Hardy. “When something needs to be done, they’re right there to lend a hand.”

Thanks to the club’s requirement that each member contributes 24 hours of service a year, there isn’t a shortage of able volunteers. Although most of those hours go toward hosting various club-sponsored events, a good share of them goes to the maintenance of club grounds – and to public land. This year alone, group members have contributed about 250 hours to BLM land in the South Hills.

“We like to do anything we can to help the BLM,” said Darrell Devitt, BMC treasurer and life member. “There aren’t a lot of public lands where we can ride anymore, and we want to keep those open.”

BMC members frequently monitor the area, reporting any problems to Hardy. They routinely remove trash; have rebuilt several miles of boundary fence; repainted barriers; installed signs; and even graded certain areas to improve drainage. Most recently, they coordinated with the adjacent private land owner for permission to construct a fence to thwart the trespass issues at the site’s entrance. As hoped, the BMC’s volunteer efforts through the years have helped keep resource damage to a minimum and maintain good relations with neighboring landowners. As a public land management agency, the BLM views these as signs of success. Call TIP-MONT (800-847-6668) to report resource crimes and vandalism on public land.