



Date: September 6, 2006  
Contact: Jim Sparks, 406-896-5241

### **Volunteers Asked to Help in 17-Mile Cleanup**

The Bureau of Land Management is asking for volunteers to help clean up the 17-Mile Recreation Area north of Billings on Highway 87. The clean-up days will be September 16 and 17 from 9:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. The BLM will temporarily close the 17-Mile area to target shooting beginning September 16 and will re-open it when it's completely clean.

The 17-Mile Recreation Area has been used for casual target shooting for years and is the only suitable area for target shooting on public lands in Yellowstone County. Unfortunately, some shooters use inappropriate targets, such as appliances, paint cans, and glass, and don't properly dispose of their shattered targets. Livestock in the area have also been shot; a \$4,000 reward is offered for information about those shootings. According to Jim Sparks, Billings Field Office assistant manager, "The 17-Mile area is becoming a safety and environmental hazard. We're going to have to change the way the area is managed to avoid this happening in the future." Possible management changes include specifying appropriate targets and having the area open only during daylight hours.

Clean-up volunteers are asked to bring rakes and shovels, five-gallon buckets, gloves, and their lunch. Depending on the success of the first clean-up weekend, more clean-up days may be scheduled for later in September.

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