



Date: Sept. 19, 2006

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BILLINGS -- Volunteers are needed to help clean up the popular target shooting area known as the 17 Mile Recreation Area north of Billings.

A cleanup is scheduled for this Saturday and Sunday from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. each day.

The Bureau of Land Management temporarily closed the area to target shooting on September 16 but will re-open it on September 25 if it's completely clean. A cleanup planned for last weekend was washed out by the weekend rains.

The 17-Mile Recreation Area, just off Highway 87, 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 targets.

Livestock in the area have also been shot; and a \$4,000 reward is being 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.

Volunteers helping with the cleanup are asked to bring rakes and shovels, five-gallon buckets, gloves, and their lunch.

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