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Missouri River Breaks Monument Designation

Max S. Baucus
Senator * or Department*:  BAUCUS

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Record Type*:  Speeches & Remarks

March-1998

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(select subject from controlled vocabulary, if your office has one)

04/01/1998
Statement of Senator Max Baucus
Missouri River Breaks Monument Designation

Today President Clinton signed an order designating the Missouri River Breaks area a national monument. I believe this final order takes into account the recommendations of the Central Montana Resource Advisory Council (RAC) and follows the five Montana principles I outlined to Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt in April.

The Missouri River Breaks is one of Montana’s most treasured places. The historic value of the Breaks is transcended only by its natural beauty. All of us want to pass the Breaks on to our kids and grandchildren so that they can enjoy the area just as we do today.

I stated from the beginning of this discussion that a designation should ensure that the RAC’s recommendations are followed and my five principles are adhered to. With this designation, the traditional existing uses of the area will not be hindered in any way; private property and access to private property will remain as is; and the public will continue to have open and free access to the area, including motorized access on the river.

In addition, I’ll consider introducing legislation with Senator Burns and Congressman Rehberg to protect the traditional uses of the area, including agriculture. While the final rule allows for existing grazing permits to continue, I’ll work to ensure that grazing rights are not only continued, but allowed to be renewed and additional permits issued in the future.

I will also recommend to the new administration that the Resource Advisory Council be continued. The folks on this council have worked hard and their input has been invaluable to the Bureau of Land Management.

Monument designation for Pompey’s Pillar is great news. The Montana congressional delegation, former Governor Racicot, Yellowstone County commissioners, the community and a large majority of Montanans supported the protection of this national treasure that is the only surviving physical evidence of the Lewis and Clark expedition. Many Montanans have worked long and hard to preserve Pompey’s Pillar, and they deserve our gratitude and thanks.

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