

University of Montana

## ScholarWorks at University of Montana

---

Mike Mansfield Speeches, Statements and Interviews

Mike Mansfield Papers

---

6-10-1971

### Forest Service letter - Stillwater Mining

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mansfield\\_speeches](https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mansfield_speeches)

**Let us know how access to this document benefits you.**

---

#### Recommended Citation

Mansfield, Mike 1903-2001, "Forest Service letter - Stillwater Mining" (1971). *Mike Mansfield Speeches, Statements and Interviews*. 986.

[https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mansfield\\_speeches/986](https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mansfield_speeches/986)

This Speech is brought to you for free and open access by the Mike Mansfield Papers at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mike Mansfield Speeches, Statements and Interviews by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOREST SERVICE

Federal Building  
Missoula, Montana 59801

2150

JUN 14 1971



Honorable Mike Mansfield  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Mansfield:

Please refer to my letter dated May 14, Stillwater Complex area studies and the Environmental Management Report prepared by personnel of the Custer and Gallatin National Forests. My staff has now reviewed the report. The following thoughts may help to clarify certain parts of the report in conformance with proper management of the National Forests within the Complex.

There has been some public involvement in the preparation of the report which included public information meetings in the communities surrounding the area and personal contacts with outfitters and ranchers. The staffs of Montana State University and Eastern Montana College have also reviewed the proposed management aspects of the report, and the principal mining interests in the area were consulted and informed of the report's progress. The names and addresses are available at your request.

The following are my comments on the report:

The Stillwater Complex has a long history of mining development and mineral production as well as other uses, including the sale of timber, grazing, game refuges, fisheries, private ownerships, and recreational uses.

The area is recognized as containing the largest known chrome ore deposit in the Western Hemisphere. Total measured, indicated, and inferred reserve of chrome ores in the United States has been estimated to be about 3.5 million long tons of chromium trioxide as of 1956. Of this total, more than 80 percent is estimated to be within the Stillwater Complex deposits in Montana. Mining in past years produced a

JUN 1

substantial tonnage of chromite ores from the deposits. The mineralized area of interest is illustrated in figure 5 of the report furnished you with my May 14 letter (hatched, colored area on the map).

I am concerned with the magnitude of the present disturbance and that it be placed in its proper perspective. The records show that there were, as of the fall of 1970, 833 patented and unpatented claims located within the Complex (reference the colored area on figure 5 of the report). There are approximately 54 patented claims in the Berbow-Mouat groups situated on the east end of the Complex and an additional 14 patented claims in the west end of the Complex, known as the Gish properties. There are other patented lands within the Complex. By overlaying figure 5 with the enclosed transparent overlays the location of the patented lands in the Custer National Forest may be seen. Similar overlays for that portion of the Complex on the Gallatin National Forest have not been prepared.

The patented ground is not under the jurisdiction of the Forest Service. At the present time, within the Custer National Forest, approximately 54 acres of patented land have been disturbed by mining activity and approximately 67 acres of National Forest land located as unpatented claims have also been disturbed. The 67 acres represents about 1/2 of 1 percent of the total 15,300 acres of unpatented claims now under location on National Forest lands. This indicates the environmental problems involve regulation of both Federal and private lands if they are to be resolved.

Through their excellent cooperation, arrangements have been made with the mining companies to bring their operations in line with National Forest management policies. Some of these controls are voluntary and, in some instances, beyond what is required by regulation or law and could be arbitrarily changed if the companies saw fit. Mineral resource exploration guidelines have been worked out with the companies to coordinate land protection practices for the construction of temporary camps, exploratory or temporary road construction, restoration of discovery pit sites, and restoration of drill sites. Arrangements have been agreed to whereby the permittees will notify the Forest Service in writing of the time and place that uses are contemplated.

Direction has been given for the maintenance of roads and plans are presently underway, as staffing and financing become available, for our management of the 13 ecological areas within the Complex where mining development is planned.

All temporary and permanent type roads, whether for mining or other uses, proposed for construction within the Complex will be reviewed by the Forest Service to ensure they have a minimum impact on the ecological systems during their construction, maintenance, and use. Road construction will be kept to standards consistent with needs.

The study of the ecosystems within the Stillwater Complex area is a continuing project. As more information becomes available the ecosystems will be refined. Additional information is needed to go from the identification (informational) stage, as presented, to the management (operational) stage. This will include the integration of various resources and uses, including forage, timber, water, minerals, recreation, and wildlife, and the developments associated with these uses to minimize the impact on the ecosystems.

The present exploration operations have had no measurable effect on the air quality of the area. Mining development plans have not progressed to a point where it is known if the future operations will have adverse effects on the air quality.

A full evaluation of the timber productivity potential in the area has not been possible. Under intensive management productivity could be increased. There could be a combined use of the road system for both timber and mining, which would result in some presently inoperable timber resources becoming operable.

The report is primarily informational and is aimed at describing the situation as it now exists on the ground. It identifies areas where additional work is needed and points out areas of responsibility to get the needed work done. A listing of the various disciplines which have gone into the study is shown in the fly sheet of the report. Similar studies should be underway at a number of other areas, such as the Spar Lake operation on the Kootenai National Forest and the Heddleston project on the Helena National Forest, where large surface disturbances may result from future exploration and mining operations.

The Forest Service must have the capabilities of long-range multiple-use planning which will anticipate resource management problems such as the report has pointed out. This study was necessary to gather the basic information.

You may be interested in the general cost of this study. This report represents an estimated investment of \$30,000. Complete studies for similar projects of about the same size would cost half again this amount where no previous study has been made and personnel trained in doing such investigation are not available.

Your patience in waiting for the final completion of this report is appreciated. Your further assistance in clarifying the report will be helpful. Please call on us at any time.

Sincerely,

James L. Wenban

for STEVE YURICH  
Regional Forester

Enclosure:

Overlay to figure 5, land status

cc: Senator Lee Metcalf w/enclosure  
Representative John Melcher w/enclosure

# REGION ONE LAND STATUS MAP

CUSTER (BEARTOOTH) & GALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST BEARTOOTH & BIG TIMBER RANGER DISTRICT

SWEET GRASS COUNTY STATE OF MONTANA

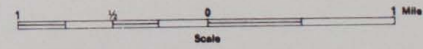
T 5 S R 14 E P.M.M. MERIDIAN

### TITLE AND ENCUMBRANCE MAP SYMBOLS

Forest Boundary	
Boundary of Detached Tract Admin. by F.S.	
County Line	
Ranger District Boundary	
Tract or Reservation Boundary	
Method of Acquisition:	
Reserved Public Domain (includes land exchanged for P. D. land or Timber)	R
Acquired Lands (all acquisitions not taking P. D. status)	A
Reservations, Exceptions, Outstanding Rights	-X
Easements:	
Vested in Government	G3
Vested in Private	P3
(Use standard symbols)	
National-Forest Land	
Other Ownership	
Other Federal	
Other Federal (Admin. by F.S.)	
Line Number (Tabular Record)	-3

### USE-RESTRICTION OVERLAY SYMBOLS

Withdrawals	
Classified or Dedicated Areas	
Mineral Leases on Operating Fields	
Municipal Watershed	
Term Special-Use Permits	① ② ③ (use standard symbols)
Unpatented Mineral Claims:	
Stipulated Use	
Old Mining Law	
Line Number (Tabular Record)	①



SWEET GRASS CO  
STILLWATER CO

























# REGION ONE ROAD RIGHT OF WAY STATUS MAP

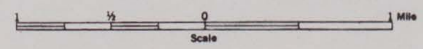
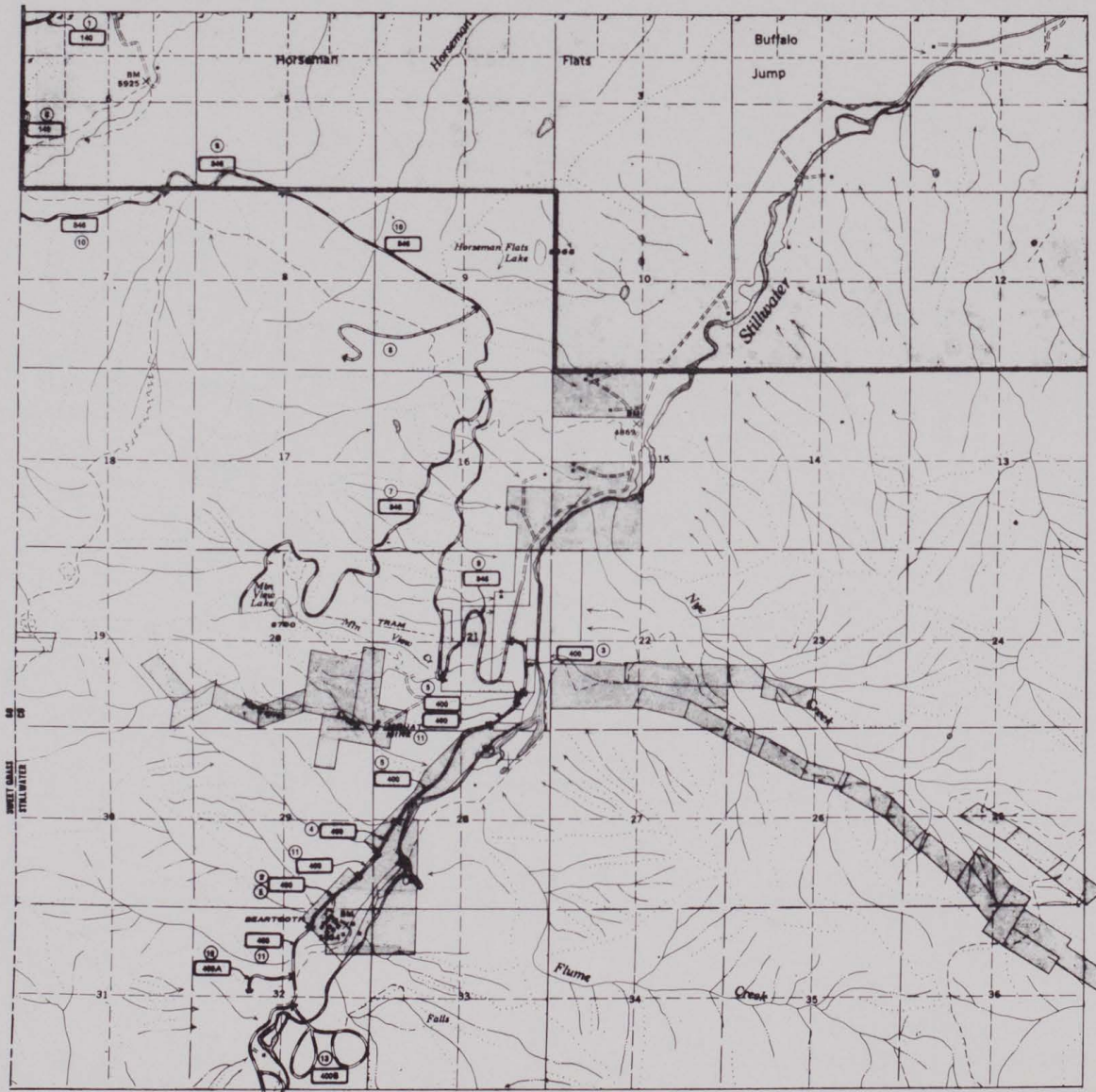
CUSTER (BEARTOOTH) NATIONAL FOREST BEARTOOTH RANGER DISTRICT

STILLWATER COUNTY STATE OF MONTANA

T 5S R 15E PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN

## MAP LEGEND

-  Land administered by Forest Service
-  Land NOT administered by Forest Service
-  Interstate Highway
-  U. S. Highway
-  State, County, or Municipality Road
-  Forest Highway
-  Forest Development System Road under jurisdiction of the State, County, or Municipality
-  Forest Development System Road
-  Right-of-way for Forest Development Road for which title has been approved by Attorney in Charge or Attorney General.
-  Right-of-way on nonsystem road for which title has been approved by Attorney in Charge or Attorney General.
-  Nonsystem road for which an easement, special-use permit, or stipulation of ingress or egress has been granted.
-  Right-of-way for Forest Development Road (deed recorded or unrecorded) for which title has NOT been approved. May NOT spend appropriated funds, except for maintenance.
-  Also indicates roads under temporary easement, license, or permit to the Government.
-  Right-of-way for nonsystem road for which title has NOT been approved. May NOT spend appropriated funds.
-  Forest Development Road for which the Government has no right-of-way conveyance. May NOT spend appropriated funds, except for maintenance.
-  Miscellaneous roads on which the status is not shown in this record
-  Special Service Road
-  Rawland Easement
-  Map Reference Number
-  Road Section Termini
-  Forest boundary
-  County Line
-  Ranger District Boundary
-  Tract Boundary



# REGION ONE LAND STATUS MAP

CUSTER (BEARTOOTH) NATIONAL FOREST BEARTOOTH RANGER DISTRICT  
 STILLWATER COUNTY STATE OF MONTANA  
 T 5S R 15E P.M.M. MERIDIAN



### TITLE AND ENCUMBRANCE MAP SYMBOLS

Forest Boundary	=====
Boundary of Detached Tract Admin. by F.S.	=====
County Line	-----
Ranger District Boundary	-----
Tract or Reservation Boundary	-----
Method of Acquisition:	
Reserved Public Domain (includes land exchanged for P.D. land or Timber)	R
Acquired Lands (all acquisitions not taking P.D. status)	A
Reservations, Exceptions, Outstanding Rights	-X
Easements:	
Vested in Government	G3
Vested in Private	P3
(Use standard symbols)	-----
National-Forest Land	=====
Other Ownership	=====
Other Federal	O.F.
Other Federal (Admin. by F.S.)	O.F.
Line Number (Tabular Record)	-3

### USE-RESTRICTION OVERLAY SYMBOLS

Withdrawals	①
Classified or Dedicated Areas	②
Mineral Leases on Operating Fields	③
Municipal Watersheds	④
Term Special-Use Permits	⑤
(use standard symbols)	-----
Unpatented Mineral Claims:	
Stipulated Use	⑩ MX
Old Mining Law	⑪ M
Line Number (Tabular Record)	⑫

