



Montana DNRC Forestry Division

FORESTRY ASSISTANCE

Biomass Utilization

Fish Habitat &
Road-Stream Crossings

Forest Pest Management

Forest Practices

Forest Stewardship

Montana Conservation
Seedling Nursery

Urban and Community
Forestry

Protecting Special Sites



*Helping Forest Landowners Manage
their Forests & Protect Special Sites*



Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
 Forestry Division
 Forestry Assistance Bureau
 and the Montana SFI
 Implementation
 Committee



Montana's forestlands have a rich heritage of special sites, which merit informed stewardship during forest management planning and management activities. These special areas may be geologically special – like natural hot springs, or culturally special – like an old ghost town cemetery, or ecologically special – like the rare spruce-skunk cabbage riparian areas.

As part of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) - <http://www.sfiprogram.org> – SFI Program Participants have made the commitment to protect special sites on their forestlands and to assist private forest landowners in protecting special sites as an integral part of their forest management activities.

» Goal »

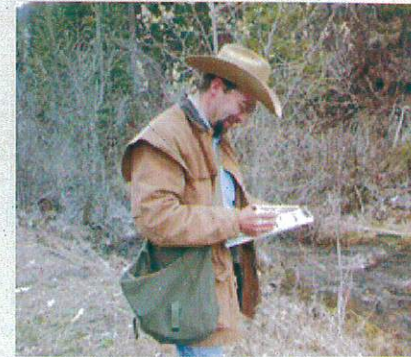
Encourage private landowners to protect special sites during forest management activities.



Geologic lands of special significance may include features like natural hot springs, caves, sensitive soil types, bogs, rock formations and other special physical sites. Special geologic sites may also include icons like Pompey's Pillar – the only remaining physical evidence of the Lewis and Clark expedition in Montana - where stunning geology and people have come together to create an unique cultural-physical historical site. Other examples could include Native American buffalo jumps, where the natural topography provided the opportunity for harvesting buffalo. Similarly, special geologic features tend to provide special, or rare habitats for wildlife. For example: many species of bats take advantage of caves and some raptors, like peregrine falcons, use steep rock cliffs for nesting sites and bogs are home to many plants growing nowhere else.



Ecological sites of significance include areas of special or rare habitats, which some species of animals and plants need to fulfill their life cycles. These may be unique riparian areas, migration routes, or geologically or climate-limited habitats for specialized creatures and plants. In particular, the SFI Standard requires the conservation of Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value and the rare wildlife and plant species associated with these special forests. These may include critically imperiled and imperiled 'G-1 and G-2' and threatened and endangered species and ecological communities. The Nature Serve section of the Montana Natural Heritage Program web site will help you identify these special sites and wildlife and plant species.



Montana welcomes private forestland owners in working to protect all types of special sites

Culturally-important sites may include sacred Native American places, as well as petroglyphs, teepee circles, buffalo jumps, isolated graves, old ghost town cemeteries and other areas of historical significance. Again, it is likely that such cultural sites are associated with special geologic features, lakes, rivers and streams, as well as being adjacent to ancient trails and areas of early human settlement. You may also find historic trail markers - usually blazed trees or cairns. Historical roads and trails abound, including the Mullan Road and the Lewis and Clark Trail.



Taking Action

The first step in protection is finding-out what special sites may be on your property.

For information about your forestland, a place to start is the Montana Natural Resource Information System <http://nr.is.mt.gov/gis/>. This portal allows you to explore your forestland through the Cadastral Data Mapping window, where you can find your property: <http://gis.mt.gov/> using the property map search feature and access a variety of maps and aerial photographs.

When you have your property identified, you can then access geologic information through the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology web site <http://www.mbm.g.mtech.edu/> and use the Montana Natural Heritage Program, to learn about the plants and animals that may be present on your property, including those special places and habitats - <http://mtnhp.org/> For fish, take a look at the Montana Fisheries Information System - <http://fwp.mt.gov/fishing/mFish>

For cultural information, take a trip to the Montana Historical

Society web site <http://www.his.state.mt.us/> to access resources to find out more about cultural resources on your property.

Montana State University Extension Forestry is a great resource for forest landowners: <http://www.cfc.umt.edu/extensionforestry/> and Montana DNRC Service Foresters are a starting point for creating a management plan, incorporating treatments for protecting special

