

A Montana-Made Plan

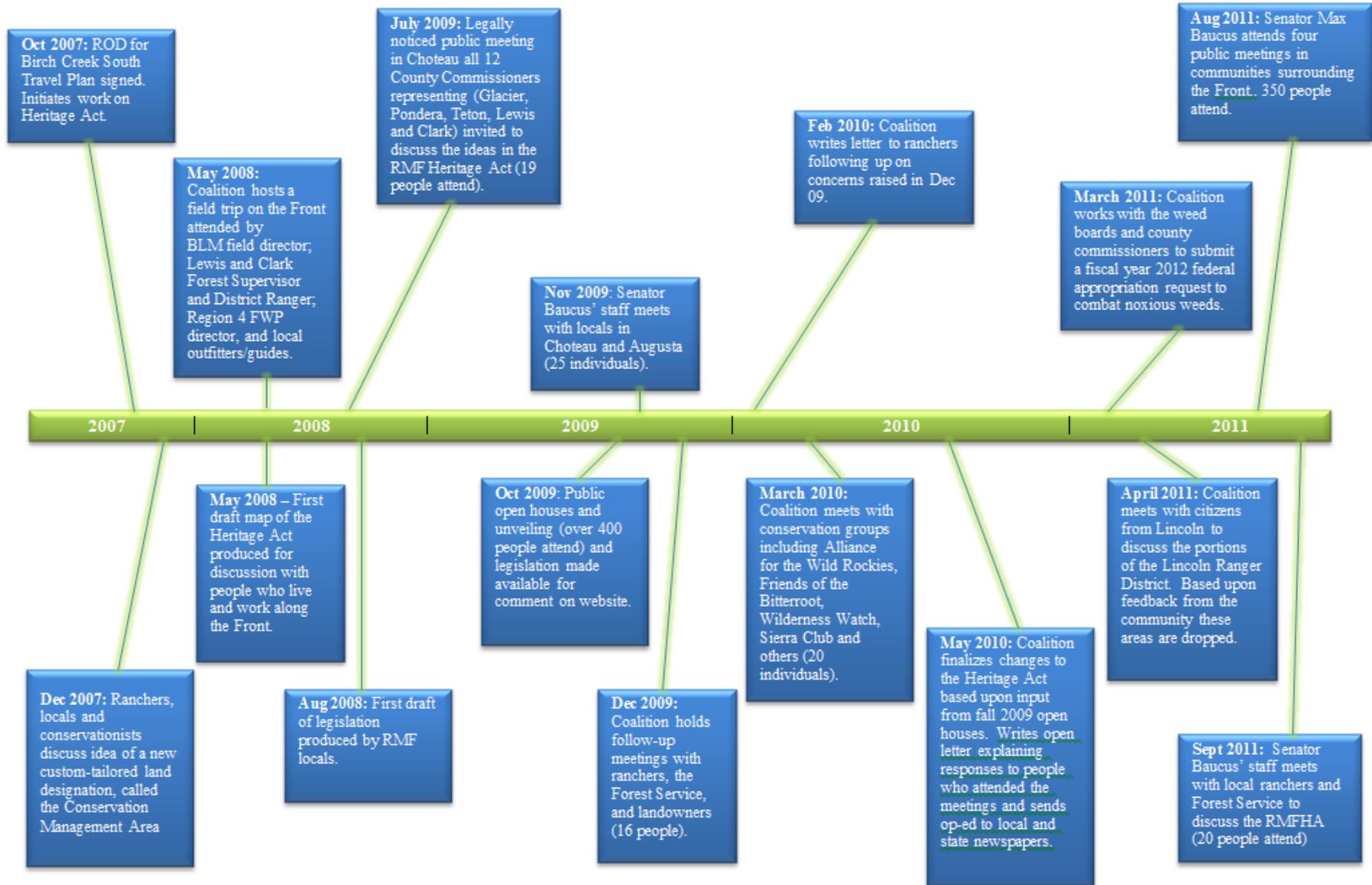
The Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act Resource Guide

Timeline of public process.....	page 2
Summary of Major Changes to RMFHA.....	3
Map showing changes to the bill over time.....	4
Major Changes to RMFHA over time.....	5
Map showing current management plan.....	12

“The Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act is a home grown, made-in-Montana proposal that will help keep the Front the way it is and protect a way of life that we all have grown to enjoy. It's a pretty straightforward and common sense deal without any complicated provisions or departures from existing laws.”

-Fred Fitzpatrick, East Slope Backcountry Horsemen

Heritage Act Timeline

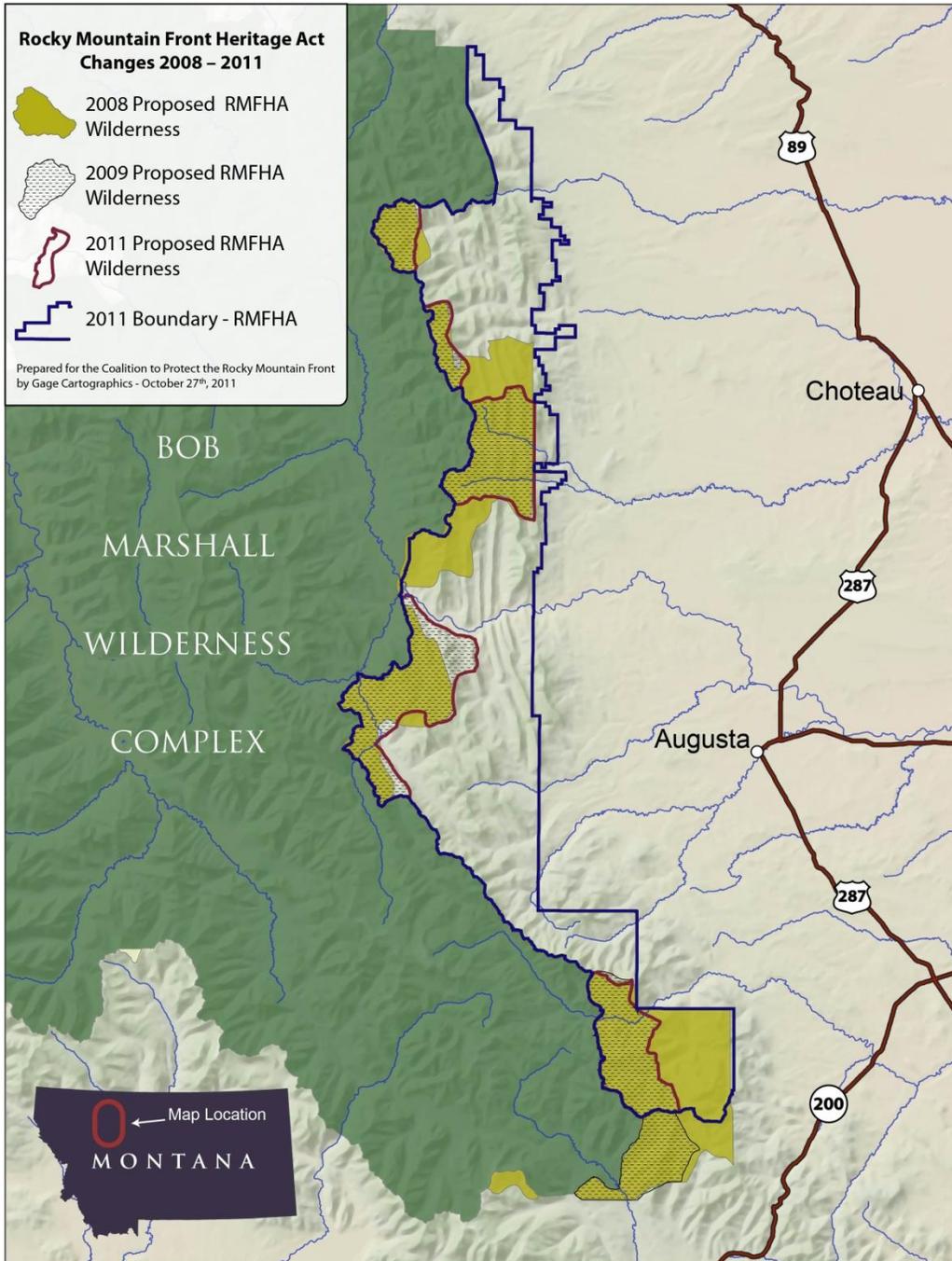


Summary of Major Changes to the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act

	CMA* (acres)	Wilderness additions (acres)	Weed control (acres)	Explanation of major changes
2008	352,891	124,763	818,000 (Rocky Mountain Division, Lewis & Clark NF, part of Helena NF, and BLM ONAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMA designation included Badger-Two Medicine area. • Required a public/private task force to develop a weed management plan for federal lands. • Included an administrative transfer of BLM Outstanding Natural Areas lands to USFS.
2009	222,891	86,438	818,000 (Rocky Mountain Division, Lewis & Clark NF, part of Helena NF, and BLM ONAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased proposed Wilderness in the Silver King and Falls Creek areas. • Dropped the Badger-Two Medicine from CMA designation. • Dropped transfer of ONAs from BLM to USFS. • Added language that non-wilderness activities could continue next to any Wilderness additions.
2010 and 2011	208,160	67,112	790,000 (Rocky Mountain Division, Lewis & Clark NF and BLM ONAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refined boundary based on local and USFS feedback. • Added Beaver-Willow Road to list of named roads. • Dropped portions of Helena NF. • Added requirement for a non-motorized trail (mountain bicycling) feasibility study. • Dropped requirement of the development of a management plan for the CMA.

*Conservation Management Area

Note: The earliest version of the RMFHA was written in the summer of 2008. The first draft map was printed in the spring of 2008. Outreach to grazing permittees, landowners, and outfitters began in 2007 - well before any legislation was penned. The RMFHA has undergone dozens of substantive changes in response to concerns. These changes are reflected in the acreage adjustments and explanation of major changes above.



Changes to the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act

<u>Date/Issue Addressed</u>	<u>Boundary Adjustment</u>	<u>Language Change</u>	<u>Input Received From</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Early spring 2009 Wilderness/ Boundary	Yes	No	Discussions took place with five ranching and outfitting families along the Front including outfitters.	Moved Deep Creek wilderness boundary further north of the Sun River.	Reduced wilderness acres from approx 42,000 to 18,535 acres in Deep Creek planning area. There was a corresponding increase in acres of CMA. Wilderness within the southern end of Deep Creek would have adversely impacted economic viability of outfitting operations.
Early spring 2009 Wilderness/ Boundary	Yes	No	Rancher	Slight decrease in proposed Wilderness in Falls Creek area.	More manageable boundary from USFS perspective and rancher routinely uses chain saw in Camp Creek. This is an area of heavy dead fall from past fires.
Early spring Wilderness/ Boundary	Yes	No	Rancher	Decreased proposed Wilderness in the Silver King area.	More manageable boundary from USFS perspective and rancher uses chain saw to clear heavy dead fall from past fires.
09/2009 Noxious Weeds/ Funding	No	Yes	Senate staff	Dropped federal appropriation request to augment noxious weed prevention work.	Earlier versions of RMFHA included appropriations request ranging from \$200K-350K annually over 10 years.

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09/2009 Noxious Weeds/ Funding	No	Yes	County Weed Districts; Members of the RMF Weed Roundtable; County Commissioners	Dropped federal appropriation request to augment noxious weed prevention work and pursued funds outside the proposal.	Various ideas for securing funding were explored. Eventually opted to partner with counties to pursue a separate federal appropriation and explore other funding options outside of legislation – such as existing grants.
02/2010 CMA/Roads	No	Yes	USFS District Ranger	Changed time of obliteration of temporary roads from 5 to 3 years following completion of project.	District ranger was concerned about spread of noxious weeds and lack of budget to get rid of temporary roads. He thought 3 years was better than 5 year planning horizon.
02/2010 CMA/ Vegetation Management	No	Yes	USFS District Ranger, Forest Supervisor and locals	Language added stating that nothing in the Act prohibits the FS from carrying out forest management projects that are consistent with current regulations and policies.	Concerns were raised that small-scale habitat improvement, fuel reduction, and vegetation management projects could be hampered without the insertion of this language.

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02/2010 Transfer of management authority from BLM to USFS	Yes	Yes	Local ranchers holding grazing leases on BLM lands and the USFS.	Dropped language requiring transfer in management authority for the four BLM Outstanding Natural Areas (total 13,000 acres) to the Lewis and Clark NF	The rationale was that it would be more efficient and for the FS to manage the ONAs. Locals thought this would be disruptive and confusing. This action does not require federal legislation so if in the future it is a desired outcome it can be accomplished administratively.
02/2010 CMA/Grazing	No	Yes	Ranchers holding grazing leases on BLM and USFS land.	Added language making explicit that grazing is permitted use in the CMA to be managed under applicable law and regulation.	
02/2010 Wilderness/ Buffers	No	Yes	Montana Pilots Association	Added language to ensure overflights and other non-wilderness activities occurring outside of wilderness will not be impacted by wilderness designation.	Concern expressed that the Benchmark Airstrip (located outside of Wilderness) might be adversely impacted by RMFHA

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02/2010 Wilderness/ Grazing	No	Yes	Ranchers who graze cattle on the RMF	Incorporated the Congressional Grazing Guidelines into the RMFHA.	Makes explicit that grazing and the maintenance of grazing facilities will be permitted to continue in the wilderness wherever it is already established.
02/2010 Noxious Weeds/ Management Plan Timeline	No	Yes	USFS; landowners concerned with noxious weeds; County Weed Districts	Changes from three year timeline to one year the requirement that the USFS develop a comprehensive weed management plan.	There is a sense of urgency to come up with better strategies to fight noxious weeds and a general feeling that the USFS should move quickly. The USFS agreed that they could do so.
04/2011 RMFHA/ Reduction in Acres	Yes	Yes	Lincoln Community Members	Dropped CMA (approx. 14,725 acres) and proposed wilderness (approx. 14,212 acres) in Helena NF/Lincoln RD	Concern that not enough community outreach had been done in Lincoln. Issue with ongoing travel planning.
08/2011 Wilderness/ Boundary	Yes	No	USFS	3,400 acre reduction in Wilderness in Beaver Creek	Correction to earlier mapping error.
08/2011 Wilderness/ Boundary	Yes	No	USFS	Willow Creek and Cyanide Creek small changes in wilderness boundary	USFS suggested this as a more manageable wilderness boundary

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10/2011 Wilderness Boundary	Yes	No	USFS; rancher	Moved wilderness boundary approx. 40 acres	USFS suggested this as a more manageable wilderness boundary.
10/2011 CMA/Access	No	Yes	USFS; rancher	Adds the Beaver-Willow Road to the list of named roads included in the CMA section of the Heritage Act.	The Beaver-Willow Rd has some private in-holdings and property at the southern end. The area is also used for fire-wood gathering and dispersed camping.
10/2011 Wilderness/ Mountain Bikes	No	Yes	Montana Mountain Bike Association; International Mountain Bike Association; individual mountain bikers from Great Falls and Helena.	Added language to RMFHA authorizing a trails feasibility study to explore potential mountain bike trails within the CMA.	Concern expressed by some mountain bikers that the RMFHA reduces mountain biking access by designating the Deep Creek Wilderness area and prohibiting bikes on the Green Gulch-Rierdon loop (approx. 19 miles).
10/2011 Planning Requirement	No	Yes	Rancher	Removed language requiring the USFS to produce a management plan for the CMA within three years of enactment.	Some felt this was an unnecessary step and that would cost money and that the USFS should do planning for the CMA when they revise their Forest Plan in the future.

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10/2011 CMA/ Access	No	Yes	Ranchers who attended Aug 2011 open houses	Within the CMA, authorize the use of motorized vehicles for administrative purposes, (including noxious weed eradication or grazing management)	Ensures that the USFS can effectively fight weeds and manage grazing permits.

