

EI - 19066

Les & Donna Hirsch
1840 Tongue River Road
Miles City, MT 59301
Phone #: 406-421-5424
E-Mail: ljhdmh@yahoo.com

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To Whom It May Concern:

The proposed Tongue River Railroad has the following environmental concerns for our ranch and the perpetual conservation easements with the Department of Fish Wildlife & Parks. These concerns are specific to the proposed line on the west side of the Tongue River. Other alternative routes will not have these impacts.

1. Access over or under the rail line is important as the ranch is completely severed. Public hunting is mandatory so that may raise concerns about railroad crossings, etc. Also, livestock movement is important along with our compliance with a rest-rotation grazing system.
2. Movement of wildlife is critical. The rail line severs the riparian area from the secure areas in the hill country.
3. The economic devaluations of the conservation easement and of the ranch property will have to be quantified.
4. Bonding for future damages will be necessary.
5. Range fires are a special concern as we delay grazing of native range for a full year. Lots of fuel becomes available in case of fire.
6. My wife and I donated some of the value of the conservation easement and received a tax credit from the IRS. We're not sure how that might play out.

Fortunately, no irrigated land or dry land farmground is effected. If you are planning on-site inspections on this ranch, we will be available to help with that. Thank you for your attention to these concerns.

Sincerely, *Donna M. Hirsch*
Les Hirsch
Les & Donna Hirsch