

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit  
Project Summary

**Project Title:** Citizen Science Inventory and Monitoring of Wilderness Study Areas, BLM MT – Billings Field Office

**Agreement #:** L19AC00311

**Type of Project:** Technical Assistance/Education

**Project Discipline:** Interdisciplinary

**Funding Agency:** Bureau of Land Management

**Other Partners/Cooperators:** University of Montana

**Effective Dates:** 09/22/2019 – 09/21/2022

**Funding Amount:** \$28,373

**Investigators and Agency Representative:**

**Agency Contact:** Jennifer Alexander; jalexander@blm.gov

**Investigator:** Lisa Gerloff, 32 Campus Drive, Wilderness Institute, University of Montana, Missoula, MT 59812; 406-243-6936; lisa.gerloff@umontana.edu;

**Project Abstract:** The Wilderness Institute's (WI) Citizen Science Program will enlist citizen volunteers to implement monitoring and restoration work in the Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) in Montana managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The BLM is required to manage WSAs as to not impair the areas' wilderness character. Decreasing agency resources limits BLM's ability to monitor and evaluate resource conditions. The proposed project builds on nine years of citizen-based monitoring and restoration work in designated Forest Service Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas in Montana and Idaho. Community volunteers help trained field staff monitor invasive plant species, document recreation use and impacts, assess elements of wilderness character, and restore native plant communities. Community involvement increases awareness of and participation in the stewardship of public lands, and increases both agency and community capacity for citizen stewardship. Project reports provide detailed inventories of invasive plants and recreation use to land managers, and inform decisions about how to mitigate user-created impacts, maintain quality recreational opportunities for visitors, and improve or restore wildlife habitat on these unique BLM lands.