Mr. Wayne Dusterhoff
Sheriff
Glacier County Sheriff's Office
502 East Main St.
Cut Bank, Montana 59427

Testimony
Before Committee on Resources
United State House of Representatives

Hearing on Border Security on Federal Lands
August 28, 2006
Hamilton, Montana 59840

Glacier County Sheriff's Office
502 East Main Street
Cut Bank, Montana 59427
Phone 406-873-2711
E-mail: sheriff@co.glacier.mt.us

GLACIER COUNTY BORDER REALITY

Wayne Dusterhoff, Sheriff

Glacier County has approximately ninety (90) miles of border with Canada. Glacier County constitutes approximately 6300 square miles of this area for law enforcement. The border barrier is principally only a 3-4 barbed wire fence. Within Glacier County there are three (3) Ports of Entry into the United States. Glacier County is one of the few counties in Montana that has multiple ports of entry into and out of the United States. My agency also provides services and assistance to the ports of entry when requested.

One of these ports is only open during the summer tourist months, and that is the Chief Mountain Port. This port is an access route into the United States into Glacier National Park from Canada.

The second port of entry is the Piegan Port, Babb, Montana, and this is considered the main entry port within Glacier County as it is open year around and the longest in time opening 0700 am until 2300 or (11:00) pm.

The third port of entry is at Del Bonita Montana, and this port is normally open year around from 0900 am until 1800 (6:00) pm. This ports hours are extended throughout the summer months from 0600 am until 2100 (9:00) pm.

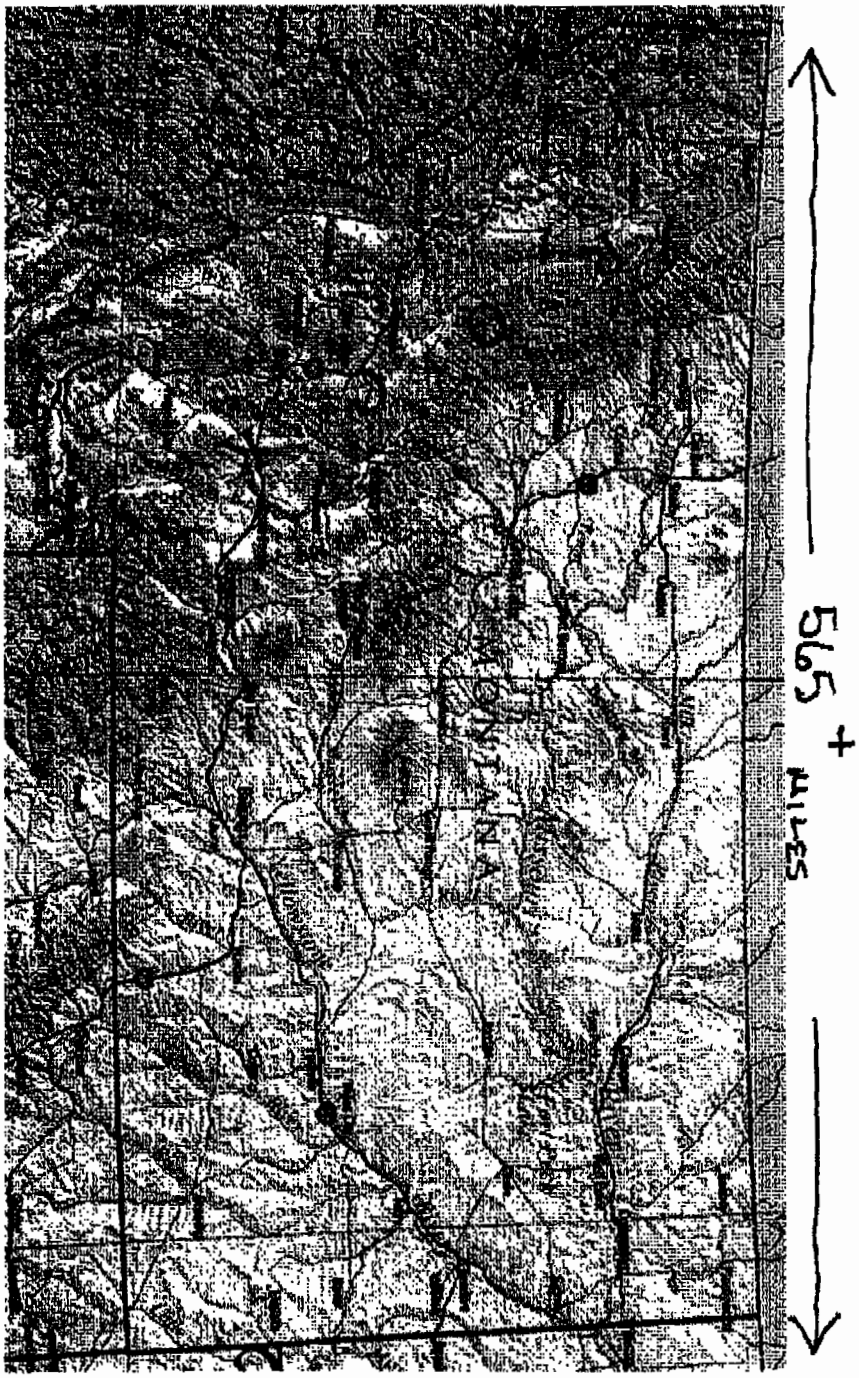
The rest of the border in our rural setting of Glacier County to our knowledge has very minimal border detection capabilities. A large segment of the thinly manned border is within Glacier National Park. This area presents a great capability for having undetected high foot traffic to enter the United States on the back country trails. This along with other types of traffic such as, mountain bikes, snowmobiles, four-wheeler traffic (which is illegal in its own essence) presents a significant enforcement problem. Also with this particular back country traffic area there is little or no law enforcement presence for deterrence to persons desiring to enter into the United States. In most cases these persons often enter or cross the border areas during the night times.

These persons are in most case extremely attuned and knowledgeable as to the law enforcement operations within the area. In many cases these people have access to Mobil radios, radio scanners, night vision goggles, and other items to help them in their entry attempts. Most times they know the officers' schedules and routes as well as the officers on duty do. Therefore, their chances of a successful entry are extremely good if they choose to illegally enter into the United States in this area.

My office has twelve (12) full time officers including me. Two (2) of these officers are administrative. Two (2) of these officers are assigned to a FBI Federal Narcotics Task Force. That means that I have eight (8) officers available for patrol duties, and to maintain our local detention facility. These eight (8) officers must cover the entire county during their assigned eight (8) hour duty shifts. We also have five (5) sworn Reserve Officers who are non-paid and come out to assist when they are available. With this manpower I must provide the citizens of Glacier County with Public Safety protection 24 hours a day, (7) days a week, 365 days a year. What this means is that many times there is only one (1) officer on duty during a shift and he must be available to respond anywhere within the 6300 square miles of Glacier County we are responsible for providing services in. I do not have the manpower or resources necessary to provide the increased visibility required to deter illegal narcotic or alien traffic along the border. In most cases the only way we are advised of illegal entry suspects or activity is by local residents who see persons or vehicles in areas they are not supposed to be in. We do not get this essential information from any electronic sensor notification means.

My communications dispatch center receives numerous reports, (many times after the incident has occurred) that there are or have been people and vehicles spotted by the local residents within areas that there should not be anyone except the local residents. Much of the northern border within our area has only a barbed wire fence to keep someone out. This never has, nor will be any type of a determent to someone wanting to come into the country illegally for whatever reason. This fence is local joke as to where you need to pull it down and cross the easiest and fastest, and not get caught.

**** (PICTURES OR MAPS OF THIS AREA TO SHOW CONCERNS) ***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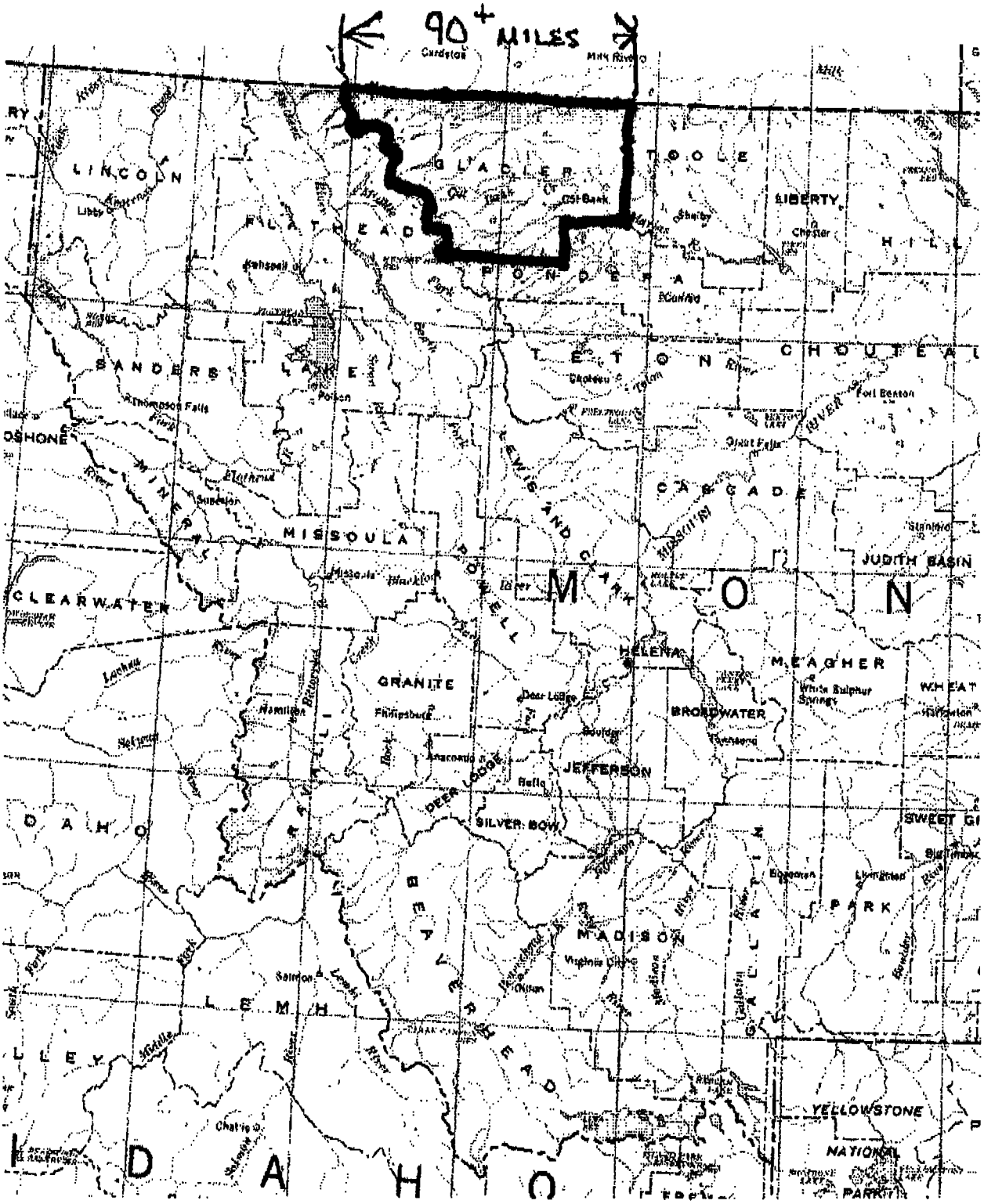
MILES


90+ MILES
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JUDITH BASIN
CLEARWATER
MONTANA
HELENA
MEAGHER
GRANITE
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MADISON
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LEMHI
YELLOWSTONE
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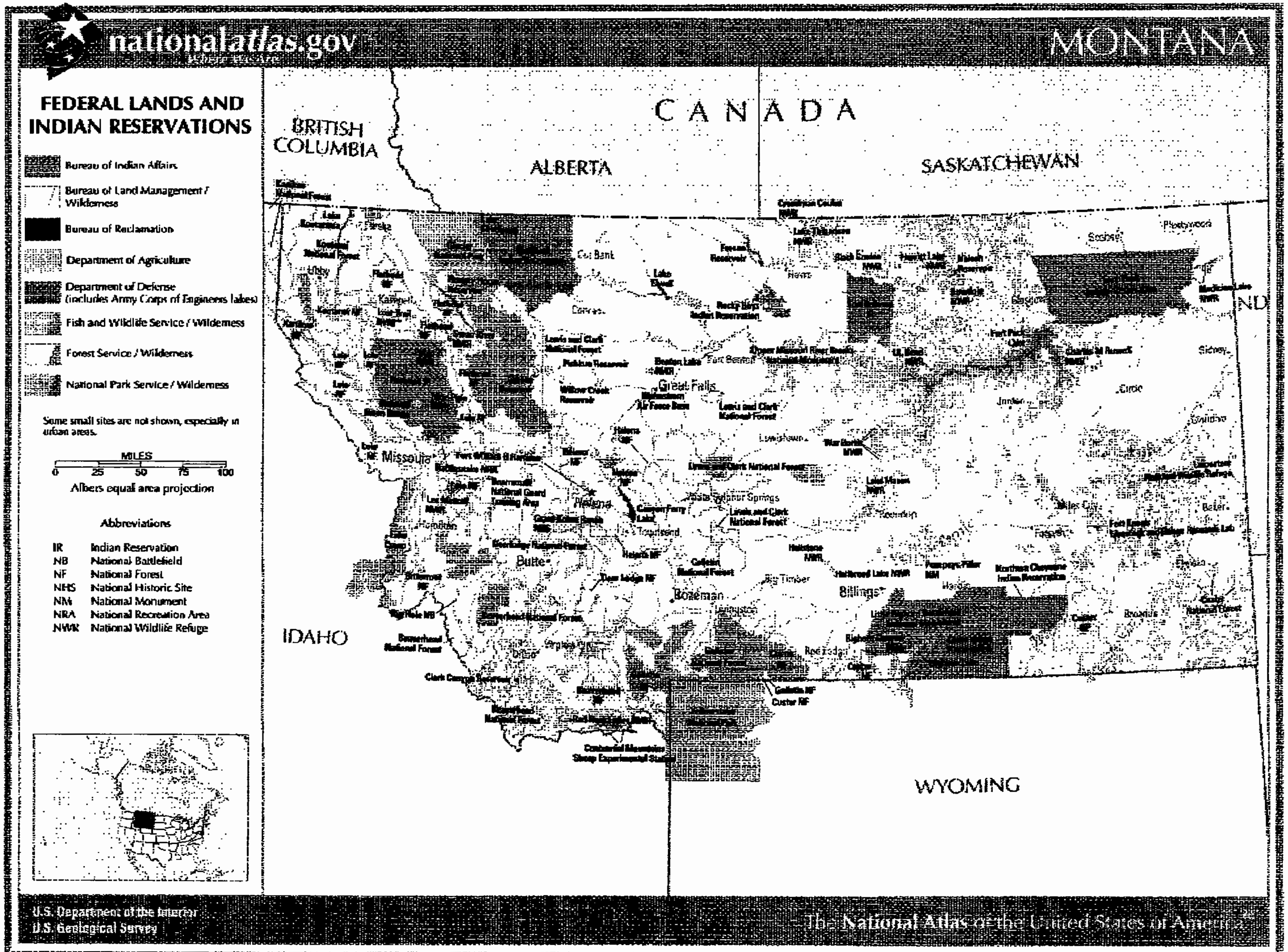
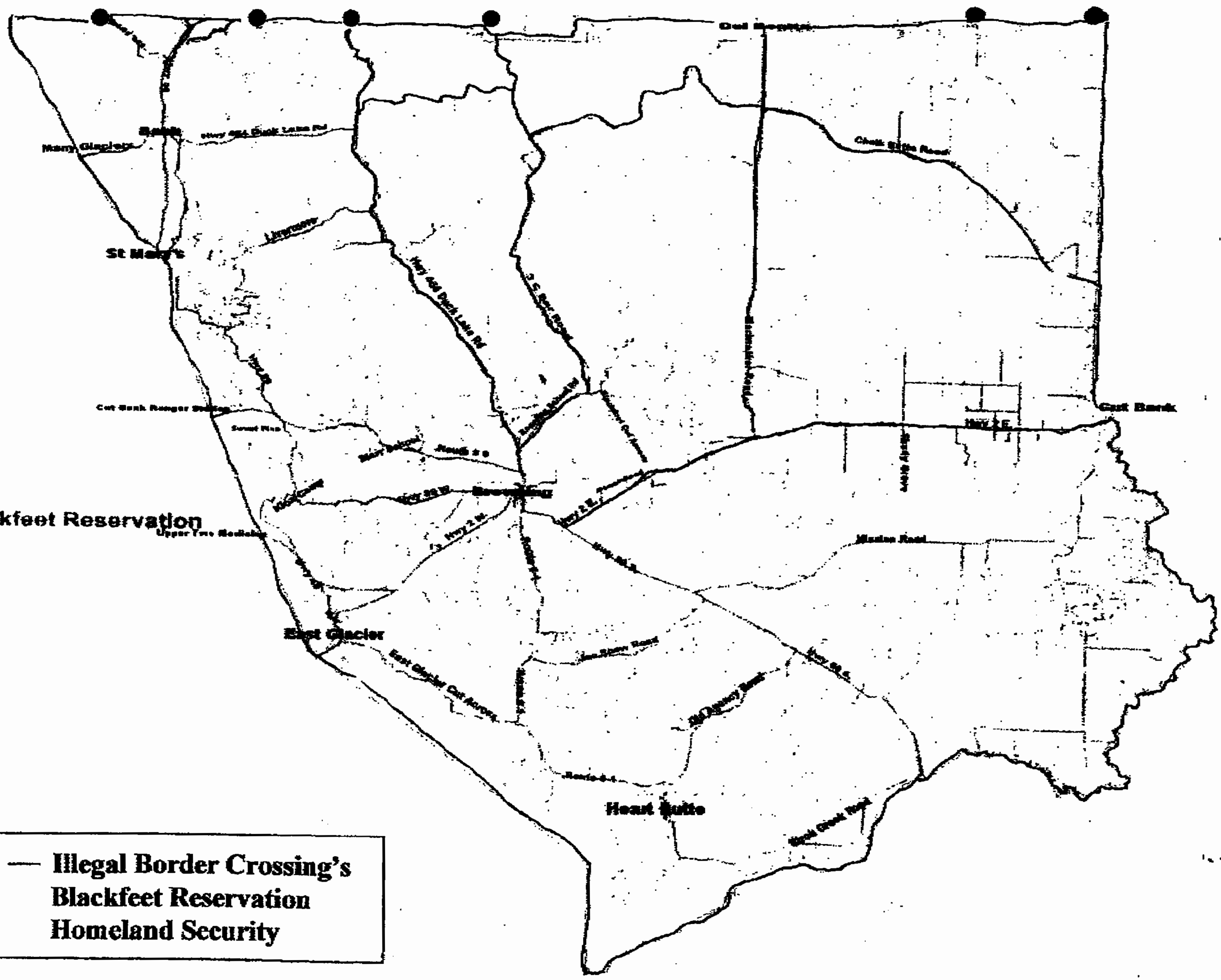

nationalatlas.gov
MONTANA
FEDERAL LANDS AND INDIAN RESERVATIONS
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Land Management / Wilderness
Bureau of Reclamation
Department of Agriculture
Department of Defense (includes Army Corps of Engineers lakes)
Fish and Wildlife Service / Wilderness
Forest Service / Wilderness
National Park Service / Wilderness
Some small sites are not shown, especially in urban areas.
MILES
0 25 50 75 100
Albers equal area projection
Abbreviations
IR Indian Reservation
NB National Battlefield
NF National Forest
NHS National Historic Site
NM National Monument
NRA National Recreation Area
NWR National Wildlife Refuge
CANADA
BRITISH COLUMBIA
ALBERTA
SASKATCHEWAN
IDAHO
WYOMING
ND
Missoula
Great Falls
Helena
Butte
Bozeman
Billings
U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey
The National Atlas of the United States of America

3 Blackfeet Reservation



● — Illegal Border Crossing's
Blackfeet Reservation
Homeland Security

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A SOLUTION WILL REQUIRE THESE THINGS:

I **An improved co-operation and information sharing process. Especially concerning those events that are ongoing or that may occur in the future within our local areas. This is especially important to those situations that impact local law enforcement and response agencies. Information many times is still extremely compartmentalized within the Federal Agencies with respect to the local law enforcement, that we are not informed. It is principal requirement that we have a more effective intelligence communications relationship so that everyone is assisting in the ultimate goal of security of every citizen in the United States.**

II There must be improved Radio Communications of the Federal Radio system to be compatible with the local agency radios and radio communications centers. This must be improved Radio Interoperability Communications that is designed to integrate into the local area needs, and not that of Washington D.C, or the federal agencies only. Within Montana we have twelve (12) border counties, and four (4) Indian Nations who have a Memorandum of Understanding, and are currently involved with the communications project known as: NORTHERN TIER INTEROPERABILITY RADIO PROJECT. I am the Project Director for this endeavor which to date has been funded primarily through Homeland Security funds and some State of Montana funds that is approximately $10-12,000.000. This is an essential radio communications project that must be completed not only for local response operations, but for national border operations as well. Yet, with all this being currently done, other Homeland Security agencies still can not communicate effectively with us. A recent example of this is a short time ago in Glacier County I had a fatal shooting incident that involved Federal Agents. These agents were not able to communicate with us much of the time because of radio and communication dispatch inabilities. This created a very definite officer and other emergency responder safety issue for us to deal with by not having information on what was going on or where it was going on at.

III There must be more over flight specifically by aircraft with thermal and infrared capabilities by utilizing the resources from the National Guard or Federal agencies who have these resources. We understand this is forthcoming from the ICE perspective with a stationing of aircraft and personnel in Great Falls, Mt. in the near future. There must be increased availability of funding and resources to the local law enforcement so that we can assist in the enormous task at hand of helping to secure the border situation. This funding will increase the assets available to local areas to react swiftly to any response requests from the flight operations and other essential requests. By increased funding to

local law enforcement agencies this will help accomplish the mandated homeland security tasks, and will increase officer and public safety overall. This funding will also provide the necessary equipment such as Night Vision Goggles, Infrared heat detectors, and other necessary equipment to officers to work the border area safely.

IV More public and media awareness of law enforcement on the Northern Border and how important they are to our Local and National Security. We must be proactive and not reactive in nature to events that are essential to our citizens' security needs.

V More Homeland Security funds for training the Law Enforcement Officers and Radio Communications Dispatchers on local levels on the importance of the goals , concerning the importance of properly doing the essential security tasks effectively and safely.

VI There must be a more concentrated effort to de-compartmentalize information and intelligence to the local agencies so that they can assist the Federal Agencies and agents, who many times are spread very thin within areas so as to be overwhelmed and sometimes ineffectively able to cover assignments. Many times they do not have the time to work effectively with the local law enforcement officers. In some cases they may feel that they do not have to include the local agencies in the loop of information.

A case in point my Undersheriff is a former Immigration officer, and many times when he was employed with the Immigration Department at the Ports of Entry in Glacier County he would read information and intelligence bulletins that stated on the bottom of the paper, "DO NOT DESIMINATE OUTSIDE THE AGENCY"; What good does this information do to a local officer who may come upon this situation and be unaware of what is going on? This is a definite safety issue for the local law enforcement!

VII How can we as the local officer better help the Federal agencies accomplish their required missions? We are more than willing to undertake this task as an equal. There must be better interaction of all agencies in operations. It must be remembered by Federal Agencies that local agencies must work within their limited funding sources to also accomplish their required public safety mission to their local residents. Better cooperation and interfacing with all agencies will increase the necessary and required resources available to work to accomplish the essential security missions. More importantly cooperation will greatly expand the capabilities of all agencies to present a unified action and solution!

VIII There have been many times in the past that Federal agencies have performed enforcement or intelligence operations within our local county and surrounding counties without even a consideration call as to the nature of the operation. This is a definite safety issue to local officers if they come upon an operation and do not know who or what is going on. There could be drastic consequences in the outcomes of these

encounters. The locals must be kept informed what is going on in there vicinity; if for nothing else, principal safety concerns. We have had operations conducted within our area in the past, and in most cases many of the agents involved were not aware of the local routes, the area, the people, the assistance, etc. My officers, and other county Sheriff's Officers are fully aware of the local area access, people, and many times the hidden routes that can be traveled. This input would be invaluable if utilized. Again, communications and intelligence information sharing will eliminate this problem!

IX Place a local Federal Magistrate within our area; at present we must transport all federal prisoners 254 miles round trip to Great Falls, Montana which is the nearest Federal Magistrate that we must work with to have arrested prisoners arraigned for Federal Crimes committed within our area. This is especially important to the surrounding local governmental entities, and is also very important to the Federal agencies as they must also travel this great distance to arraign prisoners; which is a drain on manpower, time resources, and effectiveness!