

My comments for the Revised CGNF Plan:

West Fork Road

BRTA has a permit to groom the West Fork Road. This multi use area is impacted by snowmobilers, walkers, dogs, skiers, snowshoers and bicyclers but is not mentioned in table 2-26 as a REA. Here the FS needs to address:

- (p 22) pollution control (dog poop; this river is a public drinking water source); research is needed. (Similar problems in the Bozeman Creek area).

- reduce conflicts (in this multi use area) via education and rules. Do not allow tracked vehicles on this groomed road.

- (p 103) Why not include West Fork Road and Silver Run Trails as a Recreation Emphasis Area? They meet the listed requirements.

02 trail connections for summer and winter recreationists has been a goal of locals for years. This could be a focus of the District to aid the community in achieving nonmotorized connections.

04 educational programs can be increased in a variety of areas.

- no discharge of fire arms due to density of trails, visitors, homes, campgrounds, dispersed camping, and fire danger along the West Fork Road and Silver Run Trails, summer and winter.

- the FS should plow roads and parking for access to high use winter areas to enhance recreation; currently local citizens foot the bill with the FS providing no monetary input. And parking space at winter trailheads should be expanded.

- (p 98) National Recreation Trail (what is the definition?) needs interpretation and education [Silver Run Trails; Parkside Tr.].

- West Fork Road and the rest of the Custer NF needs Winter Travel Plan to address motorized use, including no tracked vehicles in the West Fork; free snowmobile permits to users listing rules of travel would alleviate conflicts with nonmotorized recreationists.

- need for Subpart c Winter Travel Planning across the Forest (little or no rules at this time; potential for conflict; need for the FS to document usage in high use areas)

Line Creek Plateau

- this area needs more permanent protection from extraction and motorized use while allowing nonmotorized recreation (incl. bicycles), while keeping RNA status. It is vulnerable to oil and gas exploration. It contains an increasingly popular bicycle route that needs controlling to prevent erosion and damage to the flora that gives it Research Natural Area status; route marking and signage would vastly improve the situation.

The Pryor Mountains

(p.122) What is the definition of a “Backcountry Area”? I agree “quiet, nonmotorized recreation” should predominate. But why not build new nonmotorized trails? They are sorely needed in the Pryors (walking on roads is fine most of the time...until motor vehicles show up and impact the experience).

(p. 59) More protection of the Pryors is needed to reduce impact to Native American historic interests, not by designating individual sacred sites but by designating areas where education and limited recreation take place to protect these sacred areas.

(Similar to Devils Tower NM where recreationists are asked to not climb on the Tower during June in respect to Native American interests there).

There are hundreds of acres in the Pryors which could be recommended for Wilderness.

Dispersed Recreation

(p. 80) I see many places in the Beartooth District where dispersed opportunities are not compatible with environmental resources. E.G., the Main Fork of Rock Creek has nearly unlimited dispersed camping with little or no facilities, no payment fee, and everyone crowding as close to the river as possible. The Forest Service needs to create limited camping in this valley, with fees charged and toilets and tables provided. No camping within 100’ of streams seems to be a minimal desired condition. Treat it as a spread out campground, but control it. The West Fork Road has some of these same dispersal problems, and the Lake Fork has similar problems in the Richel Lodge area.

The Alpine-to-Cooke City trail up the East Rosebud is a high use, highly impacted area needing Wilderness toilets, designated campsites at the highly impacted areas, and likely permitted camping in those areas.

Wild or Scenic Rivers

I see no reason to not recommend all the eligible rivers in your list on p. 95 and 127.

The Beartooth Highway on the Plateau: (p130) why is a 500’ wide corridor allowed for snowmobile travel? This seems excessive and defeating of the purpose of the rule.

I recommend that the Forest coordinate with the Shoshone NF and reduce conflict between snowmobiles and skiers & boarders along the Highway in the spring and summer when the highway opens. (p. 77, 06) Currently, snowmobiles are allowed anywhere and everywhere, including in popular nonmotorized recreation areas. Some off limits areas designated in a Winter Travel Plan are needed.

Thank you

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