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Mary Erickson

Forest Supervisor
Custer Gallatin National Forest Service
PO Box 130
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Dear Mary Erickson,

Today, I'm writing to you as a concerned public land owner. I recently attended the open house for the South Crazy Mountains Land Exchange in Livingston with my 4 year old son. While I learned about opportunities created through the exchange, it does not amount to what the public is losing. I firmly support Alternative A - No Action. If this land exchange goes through, not only will it affect the current generation, but my future generations like my son.

As mentioned previously, I am a public land owner. Time spent in the outdoors to me is very special. Whether I'm hiking, camping, fishing, hunting, or skiing it's a time to think, reflect, and be thankful for what we have. After attending the open house I decided to spend opening weekend of big game season hunting S4 and S8 of the proposed land exchange, full well knowing it might be my last opportunity to walk that land. Weather turned me around on Saturday, but Sunday (Theodore Roosevelt's birthday) I made it to the Rock Creek Trailhead. After hunting until the afternoon and bumping a couple of large bull elk I decided to hike out. On my hike out, I came over a small rise and saw elk standing about 70 yards away through the timber. I was able to harvest one of those elk. My FIRST PUBLIC LAND BULL!

On my five mile hike out with my bull, darkness fell. While hiking with a 100 lbs pack I ran across a cabin with the light on. I was exhausted with a two mile

hike still ahead of me. Knocking on the door, and hoping for a warm place to rest I was invited in. The cabin didn't belong to Crazy Mountain Ranch, but to a family that had homesteaded in the Crazies. After speaking with them for awhile I asked for a ride back to my truck, which they obliged. I was treated with courtesy and kind-heartedness. I highly doubt I would be offered the same from out-of-state ranches like the Crazy Mountain Ranch.

If the land exchange goes through, not only will the National Forest Service be affecting all public land owners, but private land owners who have been hunting S4 and S8 for generations. Giving away public land to rich out-of-state ranches is deplorable.

Another reason I am so against this exchange is because trading prime elk hunting and fishing habitat is not worth a pile of rocks, and that is exactly what S11, S13, and S21 are. Securing habitat for cutthroat trout is a lie. Stocking lakes with fish is not a solution when fish cannot survive in an environment, especially if the Crazy Mountain Ranch is deeded rights to drain Rock Lake every year to irrigate.

There is a solution to the Crazies, but this is not it. Please go back to the drawing board and come up with another solution. One that benefits the many, not the few.

Charles Raymond