

CAPITAL TRAIL VEHICLE ASSOCIATION (CTVA)

**P.O. Box 5295
Helena, MT 59604-5295**

January 22, 2023

Butte Ranger District
Attn: Michelle Peterson
1820 Meadowlark
Butte, MT 59701

Re: Basin Creek - Butte Watershed Project #63295

Dear Ms. Peterson and Project Team,

We have assembled the following comments, information and issues from our members and other motorized recreationists for the project record. We appreciate the opportunity to provide our comments for the Basin Creek - Butte Watershed Project. We enjoy riding our OHVs on primitive trails and roads in our public lands. All multiple-use land managed by the Beaverhead-Deer Lodge National Forest including the Basin Creek - Butte Watershed Project area provides a significant source of these OHV recreational opportunities. Moreover, the pandemic has reconnected visitors to our public lands as a critical way to counter the stresses of ever day life. Ninety-eight percent of these visitors are looking for multiple-use activities including OHV recreation. We are passionate about OHV recreation for the following reasons:

Enjoyment and Rewards of OHV Recreation

- Opportunity for a recreational experience for all types of people.
- Opportunity to strengthen family relationships.
- Opportunity to experience and respect the natural environment.
- Opportunity to participate in a healthy and enjoyable sport.
- Opportunity for relief from the pandemic.
- Opportunity to experience a variety of opportunities and challenges.
- Camaraderie and exchange of experiences.
- We like to build and maintain trails for use by everyone.
- We enjoy observing flora, fauna, and landscapes.
- For the adventure and “flow” of it.

Acknowledged Responsibilities of Motorized Visitors

- Responsibility to respect and preserve the natural environment. We are practical environmentalists who believe in a reasonable balance between the protection of the natural environment and the human environment.
- Responsibility to respect all visitors.
- Responsibility to use vehicles in a proper manner and in designated places.

We are a locally supported association whose purpose is to preserve trails for all recreationists through responsible environmental protection and education.

- Responsibility to work with land, resource, and recreation managers. We are committed to resolving issues through problem solving and not closures.
- Responsibility to educate the public on the responsible use of motorized vehicles on public lands.

Motorized recreation represents and supports many different visitor interests. Supporting motorized recreation is the best way to support diversity of uses and multiple-use. This over-arching fact should be adequately addressed in the purpose and need and adequately considered in the analysis and decision. We are representative of the needs of most visitors who recreate on public lands but may not be organized with a collective voice to comment on their needs during the public input process. These independent multiple-use recreationists include visitors who use motorized routes for family outings and camping trips, weekend drives, mountain biking, sightseeing, exploring, picnicking, hiking, ranching and grazing, rock climbing, skiing, camping, hunting, RVs, shooting targets, timber harvesting, fishing, viewing wildlife, snowmobiling, accessing patented mining claims, and collecting firewood, natural foods, rocks, etc. Mountain bikers have been observed to prefer OHV trails because we clear and maintain the trails and the trails have a desirable surface for biking.

Multiple-use also provides for the needs of physically challenged visitors including the elderly and veterans who must use wheeled vehicles to visit public lands. These multiple-use visitors use roads and motorized trails for their recreational purposes and the preferred alternative and decision should adequately consider motorized designations serve many recreation activities, not just recreational trail riding. We have observed and documented that 98% of the visitors to our public lands are represented by the activities discussed above. Ninety-eight percent of the visitors are there to enjoy activities associated with motorized access and motorized recreation.

We support the Basin Creek - Butte Watershed Project but want to make sure that the following significant issues are adequately addressed:

1. We oppose the closure of any existing motorized routes including roads, and ATV and singletrack trails as part of the Basin Creek - Butte Watershed Project.
2. We support the Basin Creek - Butte Watershed Project if all existing motorized routes including roads and trails are kept open. The public needs all of the existing motorized routes for their recreation use.
3. Past vegetation projects have obliterated the tread of existing roads and trails to the extent that the public cannot find them after the project. We ask that the existing road and trail tread be protected during the project and/or restored after the project so that the public can continue to find and enjoy these motorized routes.
4. The cumulative effect of all motorized closures during the past 40 years has left the public with inadequate motorized access and motorized recreation opportunities. We ask that the Basin Creek - Butte Watershed Project include all reasonable opportunities to enhance the existing system of motorized roads and trails to address this significant issue.

We are looking forward to reviewing to your consideration of these significant issues and your use of them to develop a reasonable alternative for the Basin Creek - Butte Watershed Project.

Thank you for considering our comments and issues.

Sincerely,

/s/ CTVA Action Committee on behalf of our 240 members and their families and friends
Capital Trail Vehicle Association (CTVA)¹
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¹ CTVA is also a member of Montana Trail Vehicle Riders Association (mtvra.com), Blue Ribbon Coalition (sharetrails.org), and New Mexico Off highway Vehicle Alliance (nmohva.org),. Individual memberships in the American Motorcycle Association (ama-cycle.org), Citizens for Balanced Use (citizensforbalanceduse.com), Montana 4X4 Association, Inc. (m4x4a.org), Snowmobile Alliance of Western States (snowmobile-alliance.org), and United Four Wheel Drive Association (ufwda.org)