

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 6/6/2019 6:00:00 AM

First name: Peter

Last name: Soper

Organization:

Title:

Comments: First of all I want to express my appreciation for the obviously challenging and hard, yet well-presented and well thought out creative work that went into preparing these alternatives for the next phase of forest planning. There are a lot of divergent interests with stakes in the outcome, and it would be hard to imagine a better thought out and varied set of proposed alternatives for these stakeholders to consider, so kudos to everyone who has worked so hard to get the plan to where it stands today.

With that said, I feel that none of the alternatives by themselves will really suit the broad expanse of those various needs, so my inclination is to want to look at each geographic region by itself and weigh in on the alternatives as they are presented.

Sioux Geographic area

The Alternatives do not seem to have a lot of variation between them, this is an area I am not familiar with so I do not feel very qualified to comment on the proposals for this region

Ashland Geographic Area

I would advocate for one of the alternatives (A, B or C) which set aside back country areas, I feel that the recommended wilderness designation is potentially overly restrictive, although in this region since there is not already any wilderness designation, and in this region the proposal is not so all-encompassing as it is in some others, so I am not as adamant in my opposition to alternative D as I am for some of the other regions.

Pryor Mountains Geographic area

Here I would support alternatives B or C as I feel they present a good compromise with the recommended wilderness, wild horse territory and backcountry designated areas, I would not be in favor of either alternatives A or E leaving too much of that area un-protected, and I feel that alternative D is overly restrictive with so much being recommended wilderness.

Absaroka Beartooth Geographic area

In this area I would advocate for alternative B,C, or E- again I feel that A is not enough protection, but that alternative D would be overly restrictive for an area which already contains some of the best and longest protected wilderness in the country.

Bridger Bangtail and Crazy Mountain Geographic areas

Frankly none of these alternatives really fit my desires for the future of these areas which I spent much of my life recreating in and around, clearly the current status needs some revision, but alternative D I feel is not acceptable on account of the wholesale locking up of the Crazies, I would support a smaller wilderness designation perhaps to protect Native American sacred lands on Crazy Peak and a few of the adjacent drainages, but I feel that there is so much of that area which deserves to be left accessible for other recreational opportunities. Of the proposed alternatives, I feel that C is closest to the goals I would support, although as I mentioned I could go along with some recommended wilderness, but not as much as alternative D proposes.

Madison, Henry's Lake, and Gallatin mountains Geographic area

Of the proposals for these areas, alternative E is the only one I can enthusiastically support, I used to mountain bike up along the Gallatin crest back before it was illegal, and was saddened when that was closed off to bicycles, I think that closing off the rest of the Buffalo Porcupine wilderness study area (or worse still- expanding it) and designating it as recommended wilderness will deny recreational opportunities which the increasing population of this region deserves to retain access to.

Similarly, the Lionshead area west of Hebgen has a long tradition of use for motorized and non-motorized recreational use which I feel would be a tragic loss to have closed off as recommended wilderness as shown in most of the other alternatives

I might be willing to accept aspects of alternative B in the northern end of the Gallatin Range, or alternative C as it is offering access corridors in the Lionshead area, but taken as a whole neither of them seem to leave enough of what I've grown up feeling is prime recreational lands that future generations should have access to without wilderness restrictions.

Thank you for consideration of these comments