

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/18/2019 11:00:00 AM

First name: Eric

Last name: Hull

Organization: Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Title: Access Technician

Comments: Please see attached letter for official comments from Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

-----

Copied from attachment:

November 15, 2019

Mary Erickson, Forest Supervisor

Custer-Gallatin National Forest

PO Box 130

Bozeman MT 59771

RE: Proposed South Crazy Mountains Land Exchange

Dear Supervisor Erickson,

The mission of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) is to ensure the future of elk, other wildlife, their habitat and our hunting heritage. RMEF represents over 234,000 members [ndash] including 13,900 members in Montana, many of whom are hunters that hunt exclusively on public land.

RMEF recognizes several positive aspects of the proposed South Crazy Mountains Land Exchange. Specifically, RMEF supports the Forest Service's efforts to secure permanent, legal easements to existing roads, trails and trailheads through this proposed land exchange. We also support the consolidation of public lands and the resulting benefits of improved land management regarding this proposal.

RMEF is concerned about the loss of Sections 4 and 8 (T2N R11E), and does not support this component of the proposed Land Exchange. While RMEF is generally supportive of land exchanges that improve the management of both private and public land, these two federally owned Sections are accessible via an access easement and an overlap at the Section corners. Additionally, the Sections provide high quality, mid-elevation wildlife habitat and constitute a major public land asset in this area. In our opinion, these Sections are not ideal candidates for an exchange.

RMEF believes the Forest Service should closely evaluate the impact and loss to existing public access that would result from the disposal of these Sections. We strongly feel that existing public access should always be a factor when disposing of federal lands and we urge the Custer-Gallatin National Forest to thoroughly analyze and heavily weigh the loss of existing public access to these two Sections.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed South Crazy Mountains Land Exchange, and commend the Custer-Gallatin National Forest for the continued work to resolve complex access issues in the Crazy Mountains.