

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 7/29/2020 3:10:52 PM

First name: Mark

Last name: Egge

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Supervisor Erickson, Custer Gallatin Forest Plan Revision Team and Reviewing Office:

This objection pertains to the Custer Gallatin Forest Plan revision Draft Record of Decision (draft ROD) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), noticed May 21, 2020 and is addressed to Mary Erickson, Custer Gallatin National Forest Supervisor, Responsible Official. In my comments on the draft EIS, filed on March 24, 2019, I expressed support for the Gallatin Forest Partnership Agreement and requested the Forest Service include strategies for enhancing winter access for non-motorized recreation across the Custer Gallatin National Forest in the management plan.

As a trail runner and backcountry skier I have spent considerable time engaged in quiet recreation in each of the areas I address below. I commend the plan for recommending Wilderness protections for the Gallatin Crest and Crazy Mountains. These areas are richly deserving of Wilderness protection.

I believe the draft plan is a sound management foundation for the coming decade. That said, there are several areas where the plan should be improved:

* I object to excluding the South Cottonwood Drainage from the Hyalite Recreation Emphasis Area. The Gallatin Forest Partnership Agreement envisions South Cottonwood as part of a Hyalite Recreation Emphasis and Watershed Protection Area, and including the South Cottonwood drainage in the Hyalite Recreation Area would remedy my objection. This area is an integral part of Hyalite's high peaks currently included in the recommended Hyalite Recreation Area.

* I object to the lack of protective measures associated with Backcountry Management Areas. The Gallatin Forest Partnership Agreement includes recommendations for sustainably managing recreation in these wild, and wildlife-rich, areas. To remedy my objection the Forest Service must strengthen the provisions for Backcountry Management Areas to maintain their wild character and secure wildlife habitat while maintaining recreation uses.

* I object to the Forest Service's failure to recommend Cowboy Heaven for Wilderness in the 2020 plan. I support the Gallatin Forest Partnership's recommendation that this area be Wilderness. To remedy my objection, the Forest Service must include the Cowboy Heaven area with the recommended new Wilderness at the north end of the Madison Range.

* I object to the Forest Service's failure to provide a forward-looking winter Recreation Opportunity Spectrum that helps to address growing winter recreation use conflict in the Bridger Mountains. Growing use, new technologies, and changing use patterns demand an update to the Gallatin Winter Travel Plan in the Bridger Range. To remedy my objection, the Forest Service must update the winter ROS map for this area in the final plan, to set the stage for an update to the 2006 Winter Travel Plan in the Bridgers.

* I object to the Forest Service rescinding Recommended Wilderness protections for the Republic Mountain area near Cooke City. This area is important for backcountry skiing and maintaining it as Recommended Wilderness aligns with Forest Service intent to manage lands south of Highway 212 in Cooke City for non-motorized winter recreation - focusing snowmobiling north of town. To remedy my objection, the final plan must include a Republic Mountain Recommended Wilderness Area.

Please inform me of any opportunities to discuss my objections with the Reviewing Officer.

Sincerely,

Mark Egge