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First name: Kerry

Last name: White

Organization: Citizens For Balanced Use

Title: Executive Director

Comments: East Crazy Inspiration Divide Land Exchange

Citizens for Balanced Use (CBU) is an organization with over 7000 members and more than 100,000 supports statewide through our 68 supporting organizations. We work every day to preserve the last remaining public lands open to multiple use for recreation. We promote active forest management to protect our air quality, water quality, and wildlife habitat. We support responsible resource development to provide energy and products necessary for our national defense.

Citizens for Balanced Use is in support of the East Crazy Inspiration Divide Land Exchange with the negotiated boundary adjustment South of Eglise Ridge. Our organization met with Yellowstone Club and the Gallatin Valley Snowmobile Club in an effort to mitigate and reduce the adverse impact to the snowmobile area in Third Yellow Mule. The original proposal brought the new private land boundary into a very desirable winter snowmobile area of Third Yellow Mule.

Through these meeting we were able to bring compromise with the parties affected and come to an agreement which will benefit public land recreationalists while addressing the needs of the private property owners in Yellowstone Club. We are asking the Forest Service to honor our hard work in negotiating this boundary adjustment and making it part of the final decision.

This agreement will have a net positive acreage to the Forest Service in the land exchange by moving the South boundary of parcel 8 back to the North 575 feet. The negotiated relocation of the new private property boundary on the North of Third Yellow Mule will preserve an open bench below Eglise Ridge for a popular vista and turn around area for snowmobiles. The attached aerial view map shows the open bench below Eglise Ridge which would be preserved for winter public snowmobile recreation. We have also included a map showing the negotiated boundary adjustment for your consideration.

Compromise and negotiating are not easy, but if agreements are achieved through this process the result can be rewarding.

The Buck Creek area of the Custer Gallatin National Forest is the most heavily used area for snowmobiles in the entire forest. Preserving this area for snowmobiles benefits the economy and social outdoor experience for visitors from around the globe.

CBU also supports preserving the short trail #468 easement in parcel 8 remaining open to summer motorized and mechanized use in this proposal. Trail #468 provides an excellent opportunity to view the Lone Mountain area.

The public land that will be acquired in the proposal on the west side of section 9 and 15 are excellent snowmobile areas. Currently trail #8 in section 9 and 15 is difficult to locate in the winter causing trespass issues at times on the property owned by the Yellowstone Club. The land swap will provide a clear definition of property boundaries, and with the short trail relocate in the South East corner of section 9, this will illuminate future trespass issues.

The Crazy Mountain area of the land exchange has been in the works for years and finally the Forest Service and land owners have agreed on this land swap which again will benefit everyone. Currently there are nearly 30 square miles of land in isolated sections proposed to be traded in this proposal. How would anyone oppose

adding 30 square miles of accessible land to the public domain that is currently inaccessible? CBU has reviewed some of the comments in the reading room from environmental groups and organizations that are opposing the land swap in the Crazy Mountains. We hear them scream about isolated parcels all the time but when a plan to consolidate these parcels is proposed they don't support it either. Not sure what it takes to satisfy the people who belong to or represent these groups.

It would be nice to have the new trail in the proposed Crazy Mountain land swap be open to multiple use as in allowing both motorized and mechanized use. This would provide better maintenance and access for the elderly, physically challenged, and people unable to walk the 22 miles of proposed trail. Not many people will have the time or ability to make this 22-mile trek and even on horseback the round trip would equal 44 miles. Not a day trip by any means. CBU suggests we look into adjusting this use to allow motorized and mechanized use during a future travel planning effort.

CBU appreciates the Forest Service bringing this proposal forward and we also thank the Yellowstone Club and the Gallatin Valley Snowmobile Association for their time and effort in working with CBU on a true solution that preserves the Buck Creek area for multiple use recreation.