

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/10/2023 6:19:16 PM
First name: Pedro
Last name: Marques
Organization: Big Hole Watershed Committee
Title:
Comments: 1/13/2023
Re: Basin Creek-Butte Watershed Project #63295

Dear Tim Lahey
Butte District Ranger
1820 Meadowlark Ln
Butte, MT 59701

The Big Hole Watershed Committee (BHWC) is a collaborative conservation organization in Southwest Montana that has, since 1995, brought together stakeholders to achieve meaningful solutions for water management that provide for all water uses and users. Butte-Silver Bow's water supply team has been a member of our Governing Board for decades, given the importance of the Big Hole River to municipal water supplies. The ability of the Basin Creek water treatment facility to supply water to the growing city of Butte has huge implications on water withdrawals from the Big Hole River. The proposed project, by mitigating against the potentially catastrophic effects of a wildfire in the watershed, is well worth the effort. The project will avoid downstream costs of cleanup, will reduce the probability of increased withdrawals from the Big Hole, and will lead to a more resilient and diversified forest above the Basin Creek Reservoir. Every effort should be made to approve and implement this project with the sense of urgency it deserves. Our river simply cannot afford a major fire in this watershed. We support the fuels reduction activities as written. Thank you,

Sincerely,

Pedro Marques
Executive Director
Big Hole Watershed Committee
pmarques@bhwc.org