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Comments: I grew up in Harlowton. Have worked for the MFWP, BLM, USFWS and Forest Service. I know the landowners and mountain range very well. As the FS Law Enforcement Officer based in Big Timber one might say that I know the ins and outs of this proposal and the paperwork in the local offices. I also know the political influence this project has behind it. It flat out discusses me. The dishonesty and unfairness within this proposal needs to be looked at by the OIG.

The agency is walking away from easements and right aways within the region. The lack of access should be the number one issue instead of trading lands in two different mountain ranges. That was a failed decision on Erickson's part. I talked to Lauren Oswald and was told that the railroad deeds and access provided by them was considered in the 2006 Travel Management decision. I studied those deeds, the maps from 1890 and 1914. I know the historical use of those trails by U.S. Forest Service employees, by hunters, by commercial users and by the ranchers in the area. The fact that the agency did not assert and has not asserted and with this transfer will relinquish their right is monumental mistake. It sets a precedent. And again, it smells of political influence and gain.

The same thing is happening out on the National Grasslands of North Dakota. They have routes on the maps but under the new travel plan proposal they aren't including them.

I reached out to Mark Smith who is the Assistant U.S. Attorney that worked in this project. He wouldn't visit me concerning the railroad deeds. I also understand that during the Low Line Trail court case in Oregon that he basically told the Appeals Court that the US Forest Service didn't care about these trails. That comment is in public record and is downright unconscionable and dishonest.

I see in the comments from the Forest Service that the MFWP stated that the change in ownership and new 22-mile trail will not harm but rather improve hunter opportunities and harvests. I checked with Region Five and was told that they are prohibited from making such a statement or comment. Who in their right mind wants to hike that nasty proposed trail only to look down on thousands of elk in lands that were owned by the US citizens and carelessly traded away?

The Halfmoon parking area isn't big enough to support the current use. I was told that it would be engineered to accommodate the new use. And the visitor who uses experience will suffer from it. I remind you that as a past law enforcement officer I fielded a lot of comments. I am familiar with how they think. The promise of field staff patrolling the area is unfounded and simply isn't going to happen. The agency is foundering in its obligation to provide wilderness trails maintenance and that is a huge reason why the trails in the Crazy Mtns were neglected. And the locals seized on that opportunity. They blocked the trail up Sweet Grass Creek.

One thing I want to point out to you is that back in the day Frank Cifalia and William Avey had consulted the FS Attorneys and were told not to sign in at the Dude Ranch. When Alex S comes and attempts to work on the

problem and tells his staff the same thing, he is destroyed by the political connections of the Rein Family. They destroyed that man's career over their bulls***. Add the fact that Mr. and Mrs. Dringmann are attorney's, county attorney and on the planning board makes for a rough go of it. In fact, they attacked me on several occasions.

The playing field in this alternative has been changed. The comments that folks read and responded to have changed. For instance. The MT Wildlife Federation told me at a meeting here in Big Timber that there would be protections on development within the Sweet Grass drainage. The protection has turned into allowing the Sweet Grass Conservation District to determine whether or not the development could happen. The fox in the chicken house for sure.

I would like to remind the agency that they do have the necessary paperwork, background and right to access Sweet Grass Creek. The public records are available within the agency files. In fact, the county planning board shows the Rein Lane or Road as open and is presently earning State and Federal tax money.

In regards to endangered species. It is a proven fact that grizzly bears have been and are in the Crazy Mountains. They have been photographed by ranchers and hunters. They have even been recognized by MFWP as ranging into that island mountain range.

I am extremely disappointed in Mary Erickson and Lauren Oswald for their decision to work on this project and for walking, not running, away from the prescriptive easements and for allowing gates to be blocked within the GCNF. There have been many opportunities for work in this project. It also concerns me that past District Ranger William Avey made the comment that "don't worry Paige, we won't be coming for access into Sweet Grass." back in 2007. Who gave him the right to make those determinations? And who directed him to?

I wrote a large response last time and I stand by my submission. I read the agency's response, and they in my opinion simply dismissed my comments. The local community within Sweet Grass County is very conservative. There were some folks that, because they are friends with those involved in the trade that they sent letters in support. When I asked some of them why they said we have to support our taxpayers. They didn't read and understand the proposal.

I am asking you to dismiss this land trade and if needed go back to the drawing board and get a broader working group.

I also ask that you obtain the FOIA information and review it. I believe that once you do you will be of the opinion that this is not a good deal. Did you know that two of the landowners did not want this trade to happen? Did you know that one of the the landowners stated that it was a county road. By your approval you are throwing away any future ability to access Sweet Grass Creek? You need to really think about that. Every single representative and senator talks about access and this is a chance to finally complete the cycle or destroy further action. It is a no brainer for me.

Trash this proposal and take each mountain range as one. Don't be swayed by big money and political power!

Fisheries information provided was laughable. The Sweet Grass Creek has world class opportunities. You basically suggest that a stocked high mountain lake that is used for irrigation is the same thing or is a good adjustment. The lake water and its elevation is not owned by the govt rather by the down stream users who don't care about hikers and anglers. Have you been up into the Sweet Grass drainage? Maybe you should!

Also, take a look at the documents provided to Dringmann and Langhus under the FOIA. The support for obtaining access is huge. Also the historical data that has been located by others in opposition to this proposal. Our govt gave away lots of land to get the west settled. That made a lot of folks dirt rich. This proposal is the same land give a way and will overnight make the surrounding landowners richer. I whole heartedly do not believe that an acre of low land is the same value as the rock and ice high elevation lands.

I realize that there has been a lot of time and money spent on this project. I get that. But the amount of opposition against this proposal far out weighs the passage.

I stand by my previous comments and ask for them to be reviewed. As you can tell I didn't put much time into this write up. I was told it was a done deal and my comments wouldn't make any difference. Sadly, I believe that.