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Comments: Thank you

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Assessment of Existing Conditions and draft Preliminary Need to Change reports. Also, thank you for your work on these well-written documents.

Here are some thoughts I'd like to share with you as you finalize these documents:

I urge the CGNF to change its approach to managing recommended wilderness and stop allowing non-conforming uses (such as mountain biking and motorized activities). Allowing these kinds of uses in recommended wilderness compromises an area's wilderness characteristics and creates conflict among user groups. Please treat these areas as wilderness!

The draft Assessment of Existing Conditions acknowledges that land swaps on the east side of the Gallatin Range consolidated public lands within the Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area (HPBH WSA). The Forest Service acknowledges that the previous checkerboard situation was "largely responsible" for the Forest Service not recommending HPBH WSA as wilderness in the 1987 plan. Now that the public land is largely consolidated within the HPBH WSA, we urge the Forest Service to change the management status of this landscape.

The Assessment of Current Conditions emphasizes the importance of identifying landscapes that are culturally significant to Native American tribes. The draft "Areas of Tribal Importance" report also specifies a need to identify areas traditional locations that may affect management direction. In areas that have not adequately been surveyed or not been subject to consultation with tribal leadership, we strongly recommended the Forest Service manage these areas to preserve potential culturally significant sites until adequate surveying and consultation take place.

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