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Comments: I am opposed to the designation of the Stein Mountain Evaluation Focal Area for inclusion as a Wilderness Area. This Evaluation Focal area does not meet the requirements of apparent naturalness and existence of opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

A largely overlooked characteristic of the Stein Mountain region is the constant flight traffic directly over the area. The Stein Mountain Evaluation Focal Area lies under Military Training Route IR (Instrument Route) 301 and IR 307. Additionally, the majority of the air space above the Focal Area is rated Class E by the FAA, which puts pilots at between 700ft AGL to 1200ft AGL (Above Ground Level). Lastly in terms of aircraft use, the Evaluation Focal Area lies on the direct path from Salmon to the Ravalli County airport, the Stevensville Airport, and most importantly the Missoula Airports in Montana. All these lie on the Victor Airway (V231) which is an 8 nautical mile wide civilian airway. Please reference VFR and IFR charts for KSMN.

So what does that all mean? There are dozens upon dozens of aircraft flying over the area, many at only 700 feet above the ground every single day in the Spring, Summer, and Fall Months. I know because I live in the Stein Mountain Evaluation Focal Area and observe the constant air traffic daily. This does not take into account the Fish and Game helicopter flights that capture and collar elk within the Stein Mountain Wilderness area in the Winter months (a process that also would become illegal if this Focal Area is designated Wilderness.)

Between the Military Flights that are loud and visible on IR 301 and 307, the commuter flights heading to Missoula, or the numerous small single engine planes within the Salmon Airspace at 700 feet above the ground, one would find it difficult to locate an area of solitude and apparent naturalness amid the cacophony of Cessna's buzzing over your head.

If Merriam Webster defines solitude as being alone, or remote, or retiring to a "quiet" place, the Stein Mountain Evaluation Focal area doesn't match that definition due to the extent of air traffic including the Class E Airspace (planes flying at only 700 ft above the ground), 2 Military Flight Training Routes, and an 8 nautical mile wide civilian airway.

Please remove the Stein Mountain Focal Area from Wilderness consideration as it does not fit the requirements as set forth in Forest Service Handbook 1909.12 Chapter 70.