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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am a life long time Montana native. I have grown up here and lived here my entire 56 years. I went to college in Bozeman back in in 1980-1984. Lived in Missoula from 1986-1996, and lived in Billings from 1996 until today. Most of my family have lived in Montana from from the 1970's until today. I have also worked for another government agency since November 1987 and am currently at a level equal or slightly above a GS-15 equivalent.

My first comment is that in an ANPR process is that your proposals should not be giving the public a myriad of choices. The proper way to issue an ANPR is to proved the public with a stated position and allow for public comment on that position. You are providing the public with multiple stated positions. These positions cover a multitude of ranges on the political spectrum. The range of options you present seem to be, here are options that pleases everyone. That is not the way to make long term plans. It ignores both science, demographics, public comments, your agency budget constraints, local partnerships.

The forest service is made of professionals. You have college degrees. You took an oath of office. Presenting multiple plans to the public is an abdication of your responsibility to do the right thing. You are avoiding responsibility. By presenting multiple plans, you are saying that we as professionals do not know what to do. We do not know how to allocate scare budget resources, If that is the case, just keep the current plan.

You have stated multiple positions. In other words you have not taken a position. This is not fair to the public and places an unreasonable burden on the public to discern the Forrest Services true intent. It is clear that various proposals, Alternatives A-D, cater to different political constituencies. It is irresponsible on the part of the forest service to not start the process with a stated position that reflects your real world budgetary constraints, comments you have gathered over the last several years, science, local economics, and changing demographics.

I find all of your alternatives to be disingenuous, Providing the public with multiple plans is effectively the same as providing the public with no plan at all.

I'm a lifetime user of public lands. I'm 56 years old, have lived in Montana all my life. I have hiked probably close to 500 or more miles of trails in the areas covered by this plan. I have driven many miles of roads by motorcycle, car, pickup, and jeep. I have hunted, fished, and taught my children to hunt, fish, hike, photograph, camp, find fossils, Native American artifacts, cut Christmas trees, gathered firewood, packed it in and packed it out during spring, summer, fall and winter via boots, snowshoes, and cross country skis. I've always tried to be and taught my children to appreciate and be good steward of our public lands.

My children have taken these values and turned them into employment positions within the park service, multiple zoos in Billings, Seattle, Phoenix and Nashville. Our son met his future spouse while working in Yellowstone National Park. With his mother and I, he had probably hiked close to 60% of the trails available in the park.

With this background where am I going. First, as the population ages, motorized access with street legal vehicles must be an imperative. While I've hiked thousands of miles in my lifetime, I can no longer do that. Despite this I still want to get in my Jeep and enjoy our public lands. Any proposal that reduces access to street legal vehicles is a detriment to the public. When you reduce available roads your reduce access. When you reduce roads, you funnel all traffic to specific venues and corridors which increases in use in those areas. That effectively reduces enjoyment of public lands because you've concentrated to many people into to small of space. Makes management of those people easier for you, but diminishes the outdoor experience for all.

I believe there should be no additions to Wilderness Study areas. Congress has not acted on these areas in the last decade or more. Adding acres to Wilderness Study areas is the same as putting these areas in political limbo. This serves no purpose and these areas have already been inventoried once. Adding areas to a wilderness study area is the same as saying let's put this area into political limbo for decades to come. This is the same as the forest service we no longer chose to manage this area.

There are also aspects of your multiple plans I find troubling and disingenuous. I attend one of your public meetings and several of your webcasts. You were good about saying here are plans A, B, C, D, E.

What you were not good about was disclosing the related seasonal recreational proposals in Environmental Impact Statement related to each of these proposals. Many may have looked at the charts you presented at public meetings and said to themselves proposal B or proposal C makes sense to me. What you didn't disclose at public meetings and what individuals who did not read the full EIS is that you have seasonal recreational plans that vary across all of the proposals. These were not discussed at public meetings. This is significant as these EIS items will turn into future travel plans. Even within proposals, the EIS contemplates that significant seasonal closures of acres that are accessible today via street legal vehicles.

In summary, the forest service has went through an extensive process to inventory current lands, assess how those lands are being used, and determining resources required to manage these key issues. The forest service has ignored much of this input and presented for comment multiple plans rather than one preferred plan that public can comment and critique. This is irresponsible on the part of the forest service.

The Forest Service has refused to state a preferred plan based on science, public comment, demographics, and budgetary constraints.

As such, I do not think the public should compromise and simply choose one of the forest service's multitude of alternatives. All choices appear to reflect hidden motives, and various extremes based on emotions rather than boots on ground. Many of the comments I've read to date seem to take a "no use" rather than multiple use position.

I believe our public lands are multiple use resources.

Changing demographics require more miles of roads for legal use, not less. With respect to this. The current plan is better than all of your proposals.

The Forest Service has failed to do its duty. The FS should be advocating and requesting comments on a single proposal, rather than multiple proposals.

The FS has held public meetings where key EIS information was neither disclosed or discussed. The FS never mentioned seasonal recreational plans or maps that were buried in the EIS details.

The FS has many opportunities to partnership with nonprofit groups focusing on motorized use. Rather than reaching out to these groups. The FS has claimed lack of resources to maintain roads. The FS seems willing to partnership with groups seeking to restrict access. Why not be open to partnerships allowing increased access.

New wilderness study areas are proposed. There should be no new WSA areas discussed. Congress is unwilling to act on current WSAs. Adding more is putting additional lands into a state of perpetual limbo.

