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First name: Ivy

Last name: Burford

Organization:

Title:

Comments:

I support CGNF's efforts to balance the many demands put upon today's national forest land, and specifically support the Gallatin Forest Partnership. I'm a lifelong resident and recreationist, the two components I value most are conservation and non-motorized recreation and access, specifically mountain biking access. I support selective timber thinning, very little mining, no other industrial developments, and certainly no exclusive ski resorts or the ever-ubiquitous trophy home against national forest land... not to say that's all within your purview!

As a resident of Livingston, the Bridger Range is one of our only accessible ranges for nearby rides. The front range of the Bridgers is certainly facing more pressure, and perhaps someday sharing arrangements similar to Hyalite will be in order. But altogether closures is not the answer, and doing so would exclude a good portion of the population of trail users of many of the Bridger trails. This is why I strongly oppose Alternative D. I support efforts to keep existing wilderness areas in tact, but I also see the realities of the increased population to SW Montana. Closing more areas to various forms of recreation will not create a sustainable model for the Bozeman area in the years to come.

The Gallatin Forest Partnership agreement is clearly a long-fought effort to create some balance of use in the immediate and surrounding area, and I fully support the GFP. Closing wilderness study areas to bikes is another such consideration that will only exacerbate issues in other areas that are more popular with hikers. Areas like Lionhead is well suited for mountain bikes, given that it generally sees less hikers and recreationists than somewhere like Hyalite. Mountain bikers also help clear and maintain trails, leaving them better than we found them whenever possible.

In a perfect world, many more trails would be built to address the recreation needs of a growing community like Bozeman. I would love to see CGNF work with entities like Bridger Bowl, utilizing an already disturbed area as a way to offset the needs of the mountain bike community of SW Montana. More trails on the north end of the Gallatinis is sorely needed, so I am very enthusiastic over the last few year's work in the West Pine/North Dry areas, as well as the future proposals in the GFP.

I truly applaud the work that all of you do. I support our National Forests, I wish more funds were allocated, and I try to vote that way! Thank you.