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First name: Roxanna

Last name: McLaughlin

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I support Alternative D, revised to recommend 230,000 acres of Wilderness as recommended by Montanans for Public Wilderness.

I support biking, but not in Wilderness, so please do not allow it.

I am a hiker and camper, a very active volunteer with one of the organizations that supports another Alternative, but I think they have compromised at the cost of our wild places on their plan proposal. I understand and support the different recreational interests, but I also cherish our still wild places and they must be protected and preserved for many reasons, not just my enjoyment of a quiet trail, but for the preservation and health of the plants and animals that have evolved to use these places for refuge and connectivity for healthy breeding, and for biodiversity for the planet.

If increasing pressure from motorized (including bikes) is allowed to continue to compromise our Wilderness protection, we will have no Wilderness left. The line needs to be drawn now.

I know that good science documentation has been cited by proponents for the plan I support. I won't load you down with that again. E. O. Wilson proposes the Half Earth project... you are likely familiar with that. I doubt that will happen. Some people say Wilderness protection is hopeless. I do not. I think there is hope because of opportunities like this.

There are no more living witnesses to the signing of the Wilderness Act. We, the living, are the witnesses to Wilderness now. We are the ones. So please, create a forest plan that will preserve the best the forest has to offer... it's pure, unmarred wild places, so that future generations will know them, and learn from them.

From an issue of National Geographic Magazine: "Even after centuries of effort, some 86 percent of Earth's species have yet to be fully described, according to (a) new study that predicts our planet is home to 8.7 million species.

That means scientists have cataloged less than 15 percent of species now alive-and current extinction rates mean many unknown organisms will wink out of existence before they can be recorded.

The study was driven by a simple question: "Are we within reach of finding all species, or are we way off?" said study co-author Boris Worm of Canada's Dalhousie University."

This is just one example of the fact that we have an enormous amount to learn from our home, the earth. Every packet of Wilderness we can protect offers an opportunity to learn more, to find that cure for cancer, to find out how to live well and wisely.

Please recommend as much of the Custer Gallatin Forest as you can to be designated Wilderness. Again, I support Alternative D, to be revised to include 230,000 acres as recommended by the Montanans for Public Wilderness.