

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/19/2019 3:41:30 AM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Supervisor Erickson,

I hope that our Forest will seriously consider the outpouring of opposition to portions of the proposed South Crazy Mountains Land Exchange (particularly speaking to the exchange of public land sections 4 and 8 (Township 2 N., Range 11 E.) for private sections 11, 13 and 21 (Township 3 N., Range 11 E.) in the Crazy Mountains, my comment being one of many.

While I understand the reasoning behind consolidating Forest lands, I cannot stomach the loss of the (sections 8 and 4 on Middle Fork Rock Creek) parcels I, as a member of the public, currently own, for the rock and ice parcels (11, 21, and 13) named in the exchange.

In this part of the exchange, I feel as though the public will not be benefitting in an appreciable way, and the private land owners who are exchanging land are the primary beneficiaries.

We (the public) gain: two sections of high country rock and lakes, only likely accessible in the summer and perhaps portions of the spring and fall. Access to these lands is much more difficult than the lands we currently own. We lose: two incredible ( and adjoining) sections of low country including a beautiful stream and excellent wildlife habitat, which are a rarity on public lands, and especially rare in the Crazy Mountains. These sections are accessible whenever a person can get to the trailhead. These lands (public land sections 4 and 8 (Township 2 N., Range 11 E.) provide excellent hunting and fishing opportunity and greater accessibility (distance from trailhead and difficulty of the trail) for the public. I know this because I have personally hunted on these two sections, seeing grouse, black bear, elk, and deer sign on my visits. It's well-known that elk in the Crazy Mountains typically move from high country to low country with hunting pressure and snow. The public sections we currently own are much more valuable to hunters (including myself) than the proposed exchange lands. I feel that more members of the public will benefit from keeping the proposed lands as currently owned, than if traded. Many fewer folks are willing, or even able, to make the trek to the proposed trade lands than are able to reach the lands they own right now.

Private land owners involved in this proposal gain: Two sections of high quality wildlife habitat and grazing lands. Private land owners retain: Access to Rock and Smeller Lakes, as well as some, but not all, water rights. There would essentially be no change in how the current private land owners use sections 11 and 13, as it is very unlikely that they would decide to develop those areas. They can still ride, hike, and take guests to said lands if transferred to the Forest Service.

I would strongly consider, and perhaps support, a land exchange for private sections 11, 13 and 21 (Township 3 N., Range 11 E.) for public lands that are at the same elevation and not currently accessible by a trail or any other kind of easement, and that would be unlikely to ever gain public access. I'm sure our USFS professionals can identify lands that would fit this description. This kind of trade seems beneficial for the public and private land owners. Because, regardless of accessibility, landlocked public lands are still being managed by our agencies and paid for by the public. I support the portion of the proposal to exchange public land sections 2 and 12 (Township 2 N., Range 11 E.) for private sections 31 and 33 (Township 3 N., Range 11 E.) and public section 8 (Township 2 N., Range 12 E., next to Kid Royal Mountain) for private section 1 (Township 2 N., Range 11 E.).

Thank you for your time in reviewing my comment and working for the public interest.

Sincerely,

