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Organization:

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Comments: Dear Mary Erickson and to whom it may concern,

As you have found through the comments of many concerned public land owners in regard to the South Crazy Mountains land exchange #56687, I recognize and am in favor of working with private land owners to exchange land for equal value to extend and expand opportunity for the public land owners access and ability to utilize the land. The exchange of section 4 and 6 is not an equal value land exchange even if it was for ten sections similar to the three Crazy Mountain Ranch sections that are being proposed. I have spent a lifetime of hiking, fishing, camping and hunting in the Crazy Mountains and Montana. I have put time, eyes, and/or boots on the ground in all of the sections being proposed for exchange. I am not writing this response in the blind. Sections 4 and 8 consist of a special ecosystem that is not only hard to find in the Crazy Mountains, it is hard to find across any US Forest Service Land period. I was raised in the Forest Service by a Silviculturist and Timber Management Officer/Fire Management Officer, which doesn't mean a whole lot. What matters is they taught me land ethics, the importance of ecosystem diversity. Sections 4 and 8 have everything. They are the "Heart" of the south crazy mountains.

The perfected access to section 8 and the offset corner to section 4 allows public land owners to utilize this USFS public land. Further, the trade of section 33 to Rock Creek Ranch would open up reasonable access to the whole sheep creek drainage, which is currently difficult for hikers to access.

Now lets consider land management for a second. Sections 4 and 8 are actually lands that the USFS could manage and could provide great efforts in recreation, logging/timber, stream management, silviculture, range, etc. It is true that the trade would allow for easier land management. That is because you do not have to manage rocks, and Goats are taken care of by MTFWP.

I myself have made a career with the USFS as a firefighter, engineer, and NTDP project manager. I believe in what we do for the public land owners. We often give ourselves a bad name for being a slow moving bureaucracy, however I also believe that most of the employees that serve the land and care for the public land owners are educated decision makers who's best interest is for the future of the land. I do not see where we, the people, benefit from the exchange of sections 4 and 8. Please take the time to put your boots on the ground in these sections. Google Earth does not give them justice for what they are worth. Not only that, but no appraisal or appraiser can take into what you know as a steward of the land. The vast diversity of this ecosystems can not be stated enough and are being grossly underestimated by those trying to push this land exchange through.

Furthermore, I see no reason why this land exchange needed to be put together in one large exchange. Each exchange could easily have been broken down separately with one EA, and still can for that matter. Is there a long term goal not being talked about? These are simple things that continue to make the USFS look foolish.

I also have major concerns that Timber was not addressed in the NEPA documents. There is old growth Douglas Fir timber in Sections 4 and 8 that by itself out values the three sections of rock that are being considered.

Paying close attention, but not being able to attend the public meeting, it sounds and appeared that it was poorly constructed. I thank you for offering it up, and know you did not have to, however it seemed more of an attempt to get people to see it your way than to actually receive feedback and allow others to educate you on their knowledge.

Please take into consideration the public land owner. Large green blocks are not always the answer. Take a look

at all of the ex- and current USFS employees who oppose what you asking. They have written a lifetime out of being servants of the land and I hope you consider all of their hard work and efforts. "Caring for the land and serving people" I believe the exchange of sections 4 and 8 violates every word in this oath. My recommendation is that you continue with the rest of the land exchange and terminate the exchange of sections 4 and 8. This secures access for your children and mine.