

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/27/2020 7:25:20 PM

First name: Roger

Last name: Jenkins

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to continue to comment on the Final EIS for the Plan for the Custer-Gallatin National Forest (CGNF) and to put forth a couple of "Objections" to the Plan.

First, however, I want to thank the CGNF staff for the huge amount of work that went into the analysis behind the Plan, even if I don't agree with everything in the Final EIS. I also specifically want to thank the Supervisor, Mary Erickson, for providing rationale for her decisions and accepting responsibility. It is great to see a public servant doing so.

Secondly, and this is not an objection, but a statement of appreciation: It was nice to see that the Gallatin Polygon #62 included in Recommended Wilderness. I have hiked in that area several times, and it certainly has true Wilderness Character.

Now, to my objections.

The first regards the Line Creek Plateau. I commented about the utility of boundary adjustments for AB Polygon #6, but the decision to remove the Plateau from Recommended Wilderness status seems to conflict with the CGNF original analysis. To quote: "Lack of infrastructure within the interior would make the area generally manageable as wilderness, because of its relatively large size, lack of private inholdings and roads within the boundary, lack of grazing infrastructure, water developments or other permitted special uses....."

In the Supervisor's rationale, she states there is no threat to development. Frankly, given the 20 - 30 year cycles of Forest Service Plans, I do not see how such a statement can be confidently made. It is very hard to predict the future. Also, she states that the landscape is rugged and inaccessible. I would argue, based on my "boots on the ground" experience, that the plateau is very accessible. Less than 1.5 miles from the trailhead immediately off of US 212, one can be on the trail that leads right up to the plateau, with a modest 300 foot climb. Simply put, I am afraid I do not find the Supervisor's rationale congruent with the situation on the ground, nor compelling. The Line Creek Plateau ought to remain in the Recommended Wilderness status.

My second objection is in regard to the Cowboy Heaven Area, much of which is in the Madison's #25 Polygon. My original suggestion was move the northern boundary of the area south of the conflicting bike trail, and since the area is bordered by parts of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness on both the west and the south, it would be easy to manage the area as additional Wilderness. The supervisor's rationale for managing the area as "Backcountry" appears to be tied to the loss of flexibility in management if the area was designated Wilderness. However, that argument could be made against recommending any area as Wilderness. The area is long overdue for designation as Wilderness. The hesitancy of the Gallatin County Commissioners with endorsing the area for Wilderness should not be an impediment. The area in question is not even IN Gallatin County. I do not find the Supervisor's arguments compelling.