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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I would like to thank the Forest Service for all of the work that has gone into the Forest Plan. I was especially excited to see that the Forest Plan includes the following:

Recommended wilderness in the Crazy Mountains and recognition of the area as important to the Crow Tribe. Expansion of recommended wilderness in Lost Water Canyon and the addition of Bear Canyon in the Pryor Mountains. Maintaining the primitive character and management of the roadless areas in the Ashland Ranger District (Tongue River Breaks, King Mountain, and Cook Mountain). Ensuring recommended wilderness will be managed without non-conforming uses. Incorporating many elements of the Gallatin Forest Partnership, including recommended wilderness for the Gallatin Range..

Statement of issues and/or parts of the plan revision to which the objection applies:

My objections apply to the following issues in the Custer Gallatin Land Management Plan:

Cowboy Heaven (MG-CHBCA)

Crazy Mountains Backcountry Area (BC-CMBCA)

South Crazy Mountain Recommended Wilderness

Chalk Buttes Backcountry Area (SX-CBBCA)

Pryor Mountains BCAs

Elimination of recommended Wilderness, including Lionhead

Hyalite area (MG-HREA)

Concise statements explaining the objection and suggestions on how the proposed plan should be improved:

Cowboy Heaven (MG-CHBCA):

I strongly object to Cowboy Heaven not being recommended for Wilderness. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epis> From the dry canyon, the ecological bridge of Cowboy Heaven sweep upward for 6500 feet to the craggy crest of Spanish Peaks. Please give Wilderness protection to Cowboy Heaven which is aptly named and given solace to those who find it between already designated Wilderness and recommended Wilderness in the Beaverhead Deerlodge National Forest. Cowboy Heaven is priceless habitat and an important wildlife corridor. Please incorporate this important element of the Gallatin Forest Partnership Agreement by recommending Cowboy

Heaven for wilderness in the final plan.

Crazy Mountains:

The Crazies are a respite island for many species, and a critical watershed area. Many important areas were left out of allocated wilderness in the Crazies. Think seventh generation after us. Think how Montana is booming and tourism, hunting, fishing, etc. and WATER grows more important. So much change in my lifetime! Think longterm and use Wilderness designation for more of the Crazies. Access is critical also!!! The proposed Backcountry Area should be modified to prohibit mechanized use. There are no existing mountain bike trails in this area and leaving the door open for the trails to become designated down the road only invites conflict where there doesn't need to be any. Please develop logging roads as mountain biking trails --- not opening up areas of hiking and hoofstock recreation to biking which just longterm causes user conflict!!!!!! I feel very strongly that the area should include a suitability component similar to the Bad Canyon backcountry area: The backcountry area is not suitable for mechanized transport, except use of game carts.

I would also like to see the Crazies BCA expanded east to include sections 4, 22, 26, and 34. If the proposed East Crazy Mountains land swap goes through, this will be a contiguous area and should be managed consistently with the adjacent backcountry area.

I was extremely pleased to see the Crazies receive some recommended wilderness protection. While I wish it was much bigger, I understand that there are many interests Supervisor Erickson is balancing. However, I ask that the South Crazy Mountains recommended wilderness be expanded east. That would help to make a larger contiguous recommended wilderness area.

Chalk Buttes:

The Chalk Buttes are another important place where I would like to see improved language in the backcountry area plan components. The trailless Chalk Buttes are a fragile area that could be damaged longterm by biking. Keep mountain biking on all the roads we have available from logging! Similar to the Crazy Mountains, there are no existing designated mountain bike trails here. The Backcountry area should include the following suitability component in order to protect the current wild character of the area: The backcountry area is not suitable for mechanized transport, except use of game carts.

Pryor Mountains:

While I appreciate that recommended wilderness was expanded in Alternative F, I would like to see Punch Bowl and Big Pryor also recommended for wilderness. Again think long-term for the Punch Bowl and Big Pryor in the Pryor Mountains for Wilderness. Glad to see Bear Canyon and Lost Water Canyon in Wilderness but the Pryors deserve more protection as Wilderness as they are another island for many species. Protect the land and the lives of those who call it home during this era of climate change For these reasons, I request that the Big Pryor and Punch Bowl areas be recommended for wilderness in the final plan.

Elimination of recommended Wilderness:

I was extremely disappointed that the Forest Service decided to eliminate 26,135 acres that had been previously recommended in the 1986 and 1987 plans respectively. I am particularly disappointed to see that the Lionhead recommended wilderness has been eliminated. Jeepers, the Lionhead Area has been recommended since 1987 and I have my heartstrings pulled thinking of time spent there so close to Bozeman. It is priceless and deserves strong Wilderness protection as do the other 4 recommended wilderness areas eliminated for designation.. Please consider reincorporating the Lionhead, Burnt Mountain, Republic, Mystic, and Line Creek Plateau as recommended wilderness in the new plan. It is important that we continue to protect these areas as recommended wilderness because the wilderness character has not changed there since they were recommended in the old plans.

Hyalite:

I encourage the Forest Service to fully implement the Gallatin Forest Partnership agreement, including key elements of the agreement that would protect Hyalite. Currently the plan doesn't offer any protection for the South Cottonwood Area or Mount Blackmore. The Hyalite area is becoming overrun and that is why South Cottonwood and Mount Blackmore should be protected from logging and road building. Such protection gives a blanket of protection around the heavy use of the Hyalite area. It is important that these areas receive protection as the Gallatin Forest Partnership recommends.

In addition, I would like to see the Hyalite Recreation Emphasis area include the standard that was in Alternative C in the DEIS: Construction of new motorized trails shall not be allowed. It is very important that we ensure that the motorized footprint does not continue to expand because of the impact it has on the opportunity for high quality recreation for other users. There is plenty of motorized opportunity in Hyalite as is. Please include this important standard to ensure that Hyalite continues to be a place where users of all types can have high quality recreation experiences.

Thank you for all you do. My grandfather started with the Forest Service in Salmon Idaho in 1910 and he taught forestry at UM. I know he loved Wilderness! Let's protect what we have left. As our world becomes smaller in some ways, Wilderness becomes ever more critical and priceless!!!!

Statement demonstrating the link between objection and prior formal comments:

I submitted a comment on the draft plan and draft EIS last spring. While I appreciate that many things I supported are included in the final plan, my objections speak to those priorities from my prior comments that were not included. Thank you for considering these objections that I believe could significantly improve the final plan.