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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. I have hiked in Cowboy Heaven and can attest to its wilderness characteristics. As part of the Gallatin Forest Partnership, a recommended wilderness designation was recommended by individuals, businesses, and all of the mountain biking clubs in the GFP. County Commissioners in Gallatin, Park, and Madison Counties also endorsed this recommendation. Adjacent landscapes in the Beaverhead Deerlodge Forest and Lee Metcalf Wilderness make Cowboy Heaven an appropriate addition for recommended wilderness. I request reconsideration. Please incorporate this

important element of the Gallatin Forest Partnership Agreement by recommending Cowboy Heaven for wilderness in the final plan.

Crazy Mountains:

Protecting the Crazy Mtn. is essential to recognize the spiritual and cultural values of the Crow Nation. I have hiked and backpacked in the Crazies and recognize the ruggedness and wilderness characteristics of this landscape. Especially the southeastern area deserves primitive status preserving limitation of transport to traditional foot and stock. 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. The east side of the Crazies is extremely rugged and deserves to remain limited to foot and stock transport. 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 geographical structure of sandstone buttes makes the Chalk Buttes a challenging landscape that is not consistent with mountain biking. I request reconsideration and addition made to disallow mechanized and motorized travel in the Chalk Buttes. 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. The Pryor Mtns exhibit diversity in landscape, geography, ecology, and wilderness characteristics. The biodiversity and ecological health of the 4 areas would be better maintained with a consistent management priority. Additionally, each of the 4 areas are culturally significant to the Crow Nation and deserve similar protection. 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. I request that the forest service reexamine the 5 RWs that the plan has withdrawn from RW status. The Lionhead deserves reexamination due to its wilderness characteristics and important area for wildlife habit and migration. Bordering the Targee Creek RW in Idaho, the Lionhead is appropriate for continued RW. Mountain biking could still occur outside the RW.. 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 doesnt offer any protection for the South Cottonwood Area or Mount Blackmore. South Cottonwood Trail is a popular hiking trail that winds through old growth forest and crosses South Cottonwood 4-5 tiems before entering a beautiful meadow. Beyond the meadow the trail winds up to meet the Mtn. Blackmore in Hyalite canyon. Well loved and well used by hikers, dog walkers, birders, and mountain bikers, this landscape desserves protection from logging and road buiding. 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.

I recommend that the forest service provide additional protection for wildlife in the Porcupine Buffalohorn BCA. Irecommend that Hyalite Peak be included in recommended wilderness to provide additional protection for this resources.

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.