

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/2/2020 11:50:32 PM

First name: Kathleen

Last name: Ralph

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I appreciate all the work done by the Forest Service on the Forest Plan. Thank you especially for recognition of areas important to the Crow in the Crazies. I have the following objections to issues in the Custer Gallatin Land Management Plan:

Cowboy Heaven (MG-CHBCA):

I strongly object to Cowboy Heaven not being recommended for Wilderness. N/A Please incorporate this important element of the Gallatin Forest Partnership Agreement by recommending Cowboy Heaven for wilderness in the final plan.

Crazy Mountains:

I live near the Crazies and value them for their wilderness and their cultural importance to the Crow. Even though my son is an avid mountain biker, I am opposed to allowing any bikes in the Crazies. Bikes are hard on trails and disrupt wild life. The BCA should be amended to permit only non-mechanized and non-motorized use in the Crazies. Preserve the wilderness!! 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.

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 happy to see the Crazies receive some recommended wilderness protection. I also think that the South Crazy Mountains recommended wilderness should be expanded east. That would help to make a larger contiguous recommended wilderness area.

Chalk Buttes:

Keep mountain bikes out of the Chalk Buttes. Mountain bikes and wilderness don't really work - too much is lost when mountain bikes are permitted. 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. 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. Wilderness areas are few and very popular in the Bozeman area. All should be kept and protected. I have seen a tremendous increase in wilderness use during this pandemic and we really need to keep all that we already have and expand, not reduce. More people are realizing how important these wild spaces are than ever before.. 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. Hyalite is the reservoir for Bozeman which is one of the most rapidly expanding urban areas in Montana. The idea of allowing logging in South Cottonwood and Mt Blackmore is ludicrous. These two areas are also heavily used by locals for recreation year-round. The increased usage of these wilderness areas during the pandemic underscores their importance. They must be protected from logging and road building!! 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 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.