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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. 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. This area is a pristine area and should remain so. It is one of the few places left that makes MT the last best place. If the wilderness protection is not maintained then the area will be lost to those who enjoy wilderness. 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 is a fairly wild area yet. It should not have mountain bikes within it. I am a mountain biker but I have lots of places to recreate. When I want to hunt or otherwise enjoy wilderness there are fewer and fewer places to do this. Do not take this away from me in the Crazies. 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 am a mountain biker. However, there are lots of places for me to ride my bike. There are much fewer places to enjoy wilderness. Do not make this a mountain biking area too. 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 Buttes are rough and not very suitable for biking. Please don't open this area to that type of recreation and create user conflict with hikers and horsemen. I mountain bike but there are much fewer places to have a wilderness experience than to mountain bike. 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. It is important to protect both the Punch Bowl and Big Pryor. The amount of wilderness is becoming less and less. Do not slowly chip away wilderness designations from various areas. The Pryors are a great area of remote wildness. By stripping wilderness protections you will be opening these invaluable areas to many uses that are not in concert with 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. The Lionhead area is in close proximity to Bozeman. It is one of the few truly wild areas available to Bozeman citizens in close proximity. Please keep this area as wilderness and do not allow mountain biking, and other uses that will destroy its wilderness quality.. 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. South Cottonwood and Mt Blackmore are important areas for outdoor recreation. This is especially important when Covid 19 prevents a lot of other recreation activities. It is crucial to protect these areas from logging and road building so that they retain their wild nature. If roads and logging are allowed these areas will become just like most of the USFS lands that anyone can drive into and abuse. Please protect these areas. 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.

The arid conditions mean that timber growth is limited. Thus, logging is not productive as in the Pacific Northwest. I have a degree in forestry and worked in Oregon and Washington. Please don't allow more roads and logging in wild areas of MT. I moved here because MT is the last best place. I am concerned that constant chipping away of the wild nature of USFS lands will have a great cumulative effect. The first step is usually allowing mountain biking. Then, the area is no longer suitable as wilderness and followed by recommendations to open the lands to roads and logging. I am 72 years old and enjoy hiking in remote areas. I don't want to see these areas opened to crowds of people on bikes, ATVs, and SUVs because they are too lazy to walk. Please protect our wild areas they are the only ones we have left!!

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.