

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/5/2020 12:13:52 AM

First name: Heidi

Last name: Anderson

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am submitting comments for the Custer Gallatin National Forest Final Plan or the Custer Gallatin Forest Plan Revision. My concerns are synthesized concisely into less wilderness, more mechanized use. With more mechanized use you almost certainly have more users (unless this is being limited) and with more uses comes more conflict, more resource degradation, and certainly more weeds. All of these things are concerns for watersheds. Particularly more human waste near waterways. More weeds always means less valuable habitat for wildlife. Wildlife in Montana and Wyoming is part of the rich hunting culture.

My specific objections to the plan revisions are as follows:

The proposed 79,631-acre Gallatin Crest Wilderness Area. The Hyalite Porcupine Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area currently comprises approximately 155,000 acres, which were originally set aside for their wilderness character and potential. That area deserves full wilderness designation with regard to its importance to the clean air, cold water and abundant wildlife habitat it provides to the northern Yellowstone ecosystem.

Allowing mechanized use in the proposed backcountry area in the Crazy Mountains. We believe allowing mechanized use outside of the areas where it is currently allowed will lead to habitat degradation and future user conflict.

The small size of the proposed Crazy Mountain backcountry area, which is a fraction of the current inventoried roadless area in the Crazies. We insist that the CGNF manage the range in accordance with its current wild state.

The plan's proposed management for grizzly bears falls short of what the species needs for recovery, limiting the area where protections are implemented to the current recovery zone and where else is "socially acceptable." The CGNF will likely serve as the connector between the Greater Yellowstone and the northern continental divide ecosystem bear populations, and needs to take more proactive measures to protect the species.

I participated in many of the meetings and discussions and felt a primary concern of everyone was that bikers do not mix with hikers or horse back riding or vice versa. The plan should have incorporated this concern in by having certain days or hours for bikers, certain days or hours only hikers etc.

I also do not feel this plan adequately addresses the concerns for retaining wilderness, in tact flora or habitat for wolverines, lynx, wolves, grizzly bears etc. In the Tetons, studies have shown wolverines were jeopardized by the tremendous amount of backcountry travel on skis. How will these animals fair with snow machines?

This plan does not address concerns for climate change. With increased use of water in all surrounding areas, water will be a precious commodity. Increasing activities that cause erosion and introduce more people (more human waste) will impact these watersheds.

In Cinnabar basin an area that has remained non motorized for years, will be opened to mechanized travel. That area is currently nice native stands of Elymus spicatus and Festuca idahoensis and Artemisia. Sage steppe is rapidly being taken over by cheatgrass and alyssum and opening this area to mechanized use will only hasten that process. In nearby areas in Cinnabar where there has been off trail mechanized travel, the roads used by UTVs are solid swaths of knapweed, cheatgrass, sweet clover, and Alyssum. The proposed area at Cinnabar that is currently non-mechanized is very valuable for wildlife. It will not remain valuable forage if it is opened up.

Thank you for consideration of my comments.