

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/8/2020 10:03:55 PM

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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. After doing some traveling in the West, seeing & reading about over the course of 40+ years, continued population growth and concomitant burgeoning development, I just feel very strongly that we need to maintain and even extend the breadth of wilderness in America, the North American Continent, and indeed, throughout the world, in order to conserve natural resources and preserve our world's biodiversity, the positive effects of which redound to us all. Please incorporate this important element of the Gallatin Forest Partnership Agreement by recommending Cowboy

Heaven for wilderness in the final plan.

Crazy Mountains:

The Crazy Mountains are equally important to be included in the recommended wilderness areas ; and I see no reason why any of it was or should be excluded.

Less is not more. More is more - 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. In my opinion, it is very important that large swaths of wilderness be set aside for foot- and hoof- stock recreation only, to minimize our collective human footprint. There are plenty of areas already, permitting mountain biking as well as hiking recreation. 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 Chalk Buttes should be maintained as a trail-less hiker's paradise as, across America, fewer and fewer trail-less wilderness areas exist.

We can not afford to lose - or compromise - these areas of true wilderness. 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. Please refer to my first comment. I just feel very strongly that we as a people and as a nation must preserve as much wilderness as possible. That which remains is being diminished by population growth and development. And it is up to us to do our best as stewards of this land to preserve all we can of the natural world, and the lives of all the native species which depend on it, and are an integral part of it. 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. PLEASE RETAIN all of the (5) recommended wilderness (RW) areas. SAVE these areas. Do not destroy that which can never be restored or replaced.. 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. Please protect these incredibly beautiful, irreplaceable areas from any and all development. They are unique and will never be the same once one road enters, once one tree is cut down.

Please save these areas as havens of natural resources for the native species which depend on them for their lives, and contribute to our lives also. 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.

Do not destroy that which can never be replaced or restored. Save our Wilderness as much of it as you can, as much as is humanly possible.

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.