

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/7/2046 12:00:00 AM

First name: Rita

Last name: A

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Please accept these comments on the Draft EA for the "Buffalo Creek Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout (YCT) Conservation Project." The lakes and streams in Buffalo Creek watershed were all naturally fishless and should not be managed as an artificial "fishery". Buffalo Creek and lakes in its watershed are rich aquatic ecosystems filled with life. The native aquatic biota are harmed by introduced fish and many would be killed by the poison. While the FS and FWP refer to the project as "restoration," it isn't restoring any condition that ever existed in Buffalo Creek or the lakes scheduled to be poisoned. If the State wants to remove the introduced fish, it should do so in a manner consistent with Wilderness. The State plan includes activities prohibited by the Wilderness Act, including helicopter flights to haul in poisons and other equipment, plus an undisclosed number of helicopter flights to transport personnel, a motorboat for poisoning the lakes, and use of power generators and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness. These activities would continue over at least several years. This project has nothing to do with wilderness preservation, and the FS must reject the State's proposal as submitted. The Forest Service should complete an environmental impact statement for a project of this size in Wilderness. The EIS needs to analyze the impacts to the entire aquatic ecosystem and consider alternatives to the State's massive ecosystem manipulation and motorized use plan. I urge the Forest Service to say NO to Montana's proposal to invade Buffalo Creek with helicopters, motorboats, and poisons. The appropriate wilderness response to the presence of previously-introduced fish in these waters is to let nature takes its course as the Wilderness Act prescribes. If efforts are made to remove the fish, they must be done without motors and poisons. Under no conditions should other fish be stocked in this historically fishless area. Thank you for considering my comments.