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Comments: I am writing to make known my scoping comments on the Pacific Northwest Trail.

Firstly, the trail should NOT go through the Yaak Valley of Montana because of the extremely fragile population of grizzly bears there. There are maybe three breeding females, and this trail bisects their summer habitat-- exactly when the hikers will pass through. Unlike Glacier National Park, where bears have hundreds of acres of alpine meadows for summer use, there are almost no meadows above treeline in Yaak, and the PNT presently passes through them.

These grizzly bears do not need to be displaced by hikers.

Secondly, has anyone been monitoring trail use in Yaak? Since the PNT goes through "bear recovery zones," there can only be so many hikers/users per week. I personally don't want any trails closed in Yaak, or limited by a permit system, so to avoid the grizzly recovery zones would be helpful.

The grizzly biologist Charles Jonkel pioneered a "southern route" for the PNT back in the 1980s that avoids Yaak. The Yaak Valley Forest Council has also ground-truthed a similar route.

My biggest suggestion is to move the trail from Yaak to this "southern route" as proposed decades ago by Dr. Jonkel because of the fragile population of grizzly bears in Yaak.

Thank you.

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