

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/3/2022 1:09:36 AM

First name: Leslie

Last name: Stoltz

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Hello,

My comments below include some of the others made but those I feel are valid and well said.

The East Crazy Inspiration Divide Land Exchange proposal will consolidate private land in the lower elevations, opening the door to private development on the east side of the range.

My 30+ years in Big Sky witnessed the Yellowstone club, an example of the wealthiest on our planet, worm their way into owning and developing some of the most vulnerable of undesignated wilderness in the west. Those of us who had been there long before were locked out of wilderness access. Now they want more.

Without conservation easements in place on all the sections going from public to private ownership, there is no guarantee that wildlife habitats in the lower elevations will stay intact. Permanent conservation easements were an important component of the previously completed South Crazy Land Exchange, and belong in this agreement as well.

Some of the lands close to present-day YC that will be traded to the Forest Service (steep talus slopes on Eglise) already have Conservation easements with Mt Land Reliance. These are not lands of any value to the FS as they have easements already and they are not valuable habitats.

A. They already have easements securing no development

B. It is not viable wildlife habitat and is not developable as steep rocky mountainside land

Why does the FS want that kind of land?

Even with easements, the folks investing in the Crossharbor lands are often times allowed to build in places that are not suitable, based on donations and favors.....

Also,

The proposal to relocate Sweet Trunk Trail No. 274 in the East Crazy Mountains so it crosses through public land almost entirely does not make sense. Construction of the new path would result in a 22-mile relocation of the original trail. How realistic is it that someone could add 20 miles, one way, of walking to access a place they want to go? The public would be able to hike on an approximately 40-mile non-motorized and non-mechanized loop trail, using it to access other trails throughout the mountain range.

In addition, this will impact previously secure habitats. This could have terrible effects on wildlife. "The Crazies are an island range, particularly susceptible to fragmentation. Yet these impacts are barely mentioned in existing USFS documents. In fact, the opposite is implied in regards to the project's impact on grizzly bears, wolverine and lynx, all species of great concern.

While the current plan touts the restriction of "motorized" recreation in sensitive areas and on newly created trails, that is something very different from restricting "mechanized" recreational use which could include both mountain bikes as well as e-bikes. Both are proving to be of serious environmental and even social concern as conflicts between hikers/horsemen/runners with fast moving cyclists has become ubiquitous around the West. It is strongly recommended that any new trails reflect restrictions that would be required in designated Wilderness."

These sections tend to be steeper terrain, while the sections that will be traded to private landowners may expected to trust that the Yellowstone Club dollars can be entrusted to this unreplaceable landscape. Their attitude is "thanks for the comments but we are rich and the public can screw off. "

Why do we, the public, continue to lose what we value the most to the wealthiest who want it all and to lock us out of places we have found as OUR spiritual retreats? The argument that they will open it to some of the tribal

members who claim this as part of their history, well that should be the case anyway. We don't need a land swap to allow Crow people to their ancient lands. That is a no-brainer. That should happen land swap or no land swap.

Please keep the best interest of the general public who thrive as a result of access to these lands in mind. To cave to the wealthiest in the world is giving up any kind of integrity and best use of public lands that we were born into.

Respectfully and as a citizen of the country,
Leslie Stoltz