Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/15/2022 4:55:08 PM
First name: Dennis
Last name: Tighe
Organization:
Title:
Comments: I first recreated in the East side of the Crazy Mountains in the year Mt. St. Helens exploded and drifted volcanic ash over the landscape including the snowy ridges and valleys of the Crazies where my friends and I winter camped.
Since then, I have hiked and skied periodically with friends and my wife. Unfortunately, public access has always been a problem.

Although I generally support efforts to address the public and private checkerboarding and public access issues, I do not believe the proposed East Crazy Inspiration Divide Land Exchange will fairly accomplish that goal.

Century old trails and public access are being sacrificed because trails on the east side are transferred to private ownership. The proposal results in a net loss to the public of recreational opportunities and access. Additionally, the proposal attempts to cure this deficiency by offering non-enforceable "guarantees" about some access and trails but no guarantee that future development on newly acquired private land will not affect public access, recreational use or impacts on elk, lynx, riparian areas and wildlife habitat.

Because the proposal only lists two alternatives which offer a take it or leave it proposal, it is important to consider adding analysis and alternatives which condition the land exchange on requiring binding conservation easements on public lands going into private ownership. Without enforceable easements in place, there is no guarantee that existing low-elevation wildlife habitat will stay intact. Consolidation could end up harming wildlife by opening the door to private development within the existing Forest boundary. Please include easements as a condition of the exchange, as you did for the South Crazy Mountains Land Exchange.

In addition, the Forest Service should retain public and administrative access claims to sections 7, 8 and 10 in Sweetgrass drainage. Relinquishing these claims sets a dangerous precedent for access disputes and gets ahead of litigation that is currently under appeal.

Please keep me informed about further actions.