

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/17/2022 4:37:06 PM

First name: Nancy

Last name: Ostlie

Organization: Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Bozeman Broadband

Title: Volunteer Leader

Comments: As a volunteer leader for Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Bozeman, I am writing to object to the proposal to exchange lands per the Eat Crazy Inspiration Divide proposal. This is a complicated proposal, with potential benefits to the public as well as obvious benefits to certain private landowners. It is in those tradeoffs that my concern lies. When I consider the powerful commercial significance of the various entities around Big Sky, including the Yellowstone Club and others, I am immediately mistrustful of any proposal that originates from their involvement. Just recently I have heard a 'rumor' that the Yellowstone Club plans to double their recreational development with money coming from foreign interests such as Qatar. Over past years I have visited with Forest rangers who have relevant experience in the Big Sky area, and have been warned that proposals to open up additional ski development in the Madison range could compromise wild spaces that need protection. For example, one concern is that winter recreation will negatively impact threatened and endangered species like the Wolverine. I have just completed a review of a legal action being taken by Friends of the Clearwater and Earthjustice to ask that the US Fish and Wildlife Service intervene with Endangered Species Protection for the elusive wolverine. Current Forest Plan guidance is inadequate to protect the few wolverine depending on the Northern Rockies ecosystem. No actions are underway to measure the impact of increasing human development on this vulnerable species.

Furthermore, the impacts of increasing development at Big Sky and surrounding commercial enterprises are damaging our ecosystem in significant ways. The quality of Gallatin River water is officially impaired, and yet additional construction of housing and the attendant septic systems to divert sewage into the river continues, with inadequate review by the Montana State Department of Environmental Quality. The current review of the proposed Quarry Project is an example of how the agency is sidestepping a full consideration of the impacts to the environment, by approving actions in phases to avoid a complete and true evaluation of total impacts. There is in fact a limit to the amount of pollution that the watershed can handle, and it is being exceeded as measured by independent sources. I am also a member of Gallatin Wildlife Association, and thus I support the efforts underway in the courts to protect the Gallatin River from further degradation that results from proliferation of sources of nitrate and other pollution at the Big Sky area.

I am also concerned that the wildlife habitat in the Crazy Mountains will be negatively impacted by the creation of new trails in currently roadless areas. The lower elevation habitat is important to wildlife compared to high elevation terrain. Increasing development in that habitat will drive wildlife away from currently used areas, increasing stress on wildlife at a time when already climate change, drought and increasing human pressures are affecting their behavior. I don't see any evaluation of those potential changes, not in a scientific way. Where are the studies that show that impacts on grizzly bears, Canada Lynx and wolverine will be negligible?

With the dangerous and likely illegal levels of logging proposed by the Forest Service in Montana, habitat throughout the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is becoming more unavailable to wildlife. In my own neighborhood in Bozeman, I have seen bull moose searching my property for forage, for the first and only time in 23 years, after the State did disastrous logging in the Mt. Ellis area. That area had been regarded by some as the 'best moose habitat in the state of Montana' and now is completely dried up by the logging that took place on north facing slopes. I see the displacement of wildlife as a logical consequence of that logging.

I also have a general distrust of actions which seek to benefit private landowners who want to see less access by the public to public lands. At this time in Montana, we can see distinct actions taken by the State (the Gianforte administration) to accrue the benefit of public wildlife resources for the private exploitation of wealthy private landowners who double as private outfitters with access to FWP Commission leadership. These political considerations are not scientific concerns, but are far more significant in shaping events in the State than proper

consideration of the science affecting wildlife populations. I recall the history of the Crazy Mountains access disputes where a Montana Senator Steve Daines accompanied Ag secretary Sonny Perdue to Montana at one point to insist that local ranger Alex S. be fired for trying to protect historic easements across private lands that were being used by the public. I was gratified to see that after an investigation, Alex was reinstated in his job, but this sort of political interference is shameful and should be opposed by the public.

Please do not approve the land exchanges as proposed in the Crazy Mountains, to be cautious in protecting the needs of wildlife at this critical time, as mass extinction occurs due to human overdevelopment and climate-induced warming. Wildlife should take priority over human preferences.

Thank you.

Nancy Ostlie

Bozeman