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First name: Eliza
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: Hey my name is Eliza Janney,
I am very opposed to the Gallatin Custer National Forest's East Crazy Inspiration Divide Land Exchange. The first and all encompassing reason that comes to my mind is the potential for large scale real estate development on the US Forest Service land that would be transferred under this proposal (without conservation easements). The Yellowstone Club (Crazy mountain Ranch) and David Leuschen(Switchback ranch) are major real estate developers and their involvement in this exchange is a red flag. The effect that the Yellowstone Club's luxury subdivision in Big Sky has had on the madisons, the gallatin watershed and the greater gallatin valley over the last 20+ has been tremendous and extremely nasty by any conservationists standards. I believe the private parties involved with this exchange intend to develop the USFS land to be exchanged because under the proposal the private parties will receive creek bottom sections (roads) and all USFS land ceded without conservation easements (100's of mansions)…The Northeast corner of section 14 and section 02 seem like obvious routes for a major road-very valuable real estate to a private land owner intent on developing or selling to a developer. So why would the USFS propose to exchange these or any of this land without conservation easements to prevent development? Smells fishy.

Relinquishing to private interests, the U.S. public's historic access easement to the gorgeous sweetgrass trail #122 seems to also heavily favor a luxury real estate developer who's investors will not want to mingle with the general public. ALSO, Considering the repetitive illegal blockage of the sweetgrass trailhead by the current owners has been widely publicized I believe the Custer Gallatin National Forest would set a terrible precedent by giving up this historic easement without fight or fair recompense. If the East Crazy Inspiration Divide Land Exchange goes through as proposed, I believe more private land owners with Forest Service easements through their property would be encouraged to also blockade public easements…by giving away public access to the sweetgrass trail the Custer Gallatin National Forest is showing the world that they don't maintain their public easements through private land and not only will the USFS not punish those private land owners who block these easements but they will reward the persistent illegal actions by eventually giving the easement to the law breaking private land owner.
Another problem that i have with this proposal is that the Custer Gallatin NF would be trading valuable wetland and creek bottom land (wildlife habitat, clean watershed) without conservation easements, for less valuable, steep, dry, high elavation land-creating a net loss of wildlife habitat, wetlands and clean water for the US public. As a public land trustee, hunter and river enthusiast this makes me angry.
I was also told that the private parties in this exchange will retain mineral rights to the lands they exchange and gain mineral rights to the land the FS exchanges under this proposal, creating a net loss of mineral rights for the US Public-this also angers me.
To conclude, i would rather forever forfeit my access to the Crazy Mountains than see them defaced, their eastern watershed fouled and their wildlife displaced by luxury real estate developers.
Yours Truly,
Eliza Janney