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First name: Shannon

Last name: Taylor

Organization:

Title:

Comments: December 18,2022

US Forest Service,

I am a Montana resident public lands hunter and angler. I have been active in sportsman groups since 1979. I was a tenured Professor in the College of Business, Montana State University for 37 years starting in 1979. Much of my professional work there involved the study of the business and economic value of wildlife.

I am writing you to express my concerns with the East Crazies land exchange as it is currently structured. I have followed closely all of the access issues in the Crazies for decades, and I appreciate the time and effort that has gone into this current proposal. However, I'm not certain the public lands, DIY hunters and anglers are getting the best deal they should.

We resident public lands Montana hunters and anglers want the same ground to hunt and fish as the homesteaders did when they first settled here. And where the Native American tribes settled before that. Specifically, we want access to the bottom lands. The riparian habitat along the rivers and streams and the lush meadows that adjoin them.

And if we can't publicly own and use this ecosystem, we want to at least use historical trails that allow us to enjoy it as we travel through. Therefore, we want trades that get us access to "bottom" land and do not give up historical trails that we have a right to travel.

Building a new trail will be okay as long as we don't give up our claim to the current historical trails. Giving up my claim to the historical trails is not what I want. Also, the Yellowstone Club money should be used to buy more land and access for the public. Let the new trail be built with public money.

Furthermore, if we do give up this prime real estate and associated trails, we want conservation easements and deed restrictions that keep this habitat so it will continue to produce huntable and fishable wildlife populations, even if we can't access it. We do not want it developed in any way that will hurt our wildlife.

Parcel 4 in Section 14 should remain with the public. This is a valuable piece of real estate and should not be up for trade since there is no piece of equal value that is being offered. The land we get in exchange should be of equal or better quality from hunting, fishing and access points of view.

I am not interested in trails that take me up the side of the mountains. They are not nearly as fun, especially on horseback, as trails that follow the creeks and rivers. The exchange should clearly provide the public equal or higher quality hunting, fishing and access.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Shannon Taylor, PhD  
862 Cougar Drive  
Bozeman, MT 5971