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Comments: I strongly oppose the proposed Crazy Mountain land exchange for the following reasons:

Private property owners stand to gain far more in this deal than those of us hoping to enjoy our public lands. Appraisals need to be made of each of the parcels to be swapped if a plan that's fair and equitable to the public is going to be made.

Existing historic trails-and access to them-should not be forfeited. This sets a precedent-not just for the Crazy Mountains-but for all of Montana and for pubic lands throughout the nation.

Public lands along Sweetgrass Creek (parcels 8 and 10) contain valuable riparian areas useful to hunters, anglers and recreationalists. These are being traded away with no stipulations as to future use: development of this important habitat is a possibility, and the general public will no longer have access to it. I have not had a chance to visit this drainage, but I would very much like to. Not everybody wants-or is able-to hike in the high country. Important lowland public parcels-especially ones in riparian areas-should not be up for trade. Multiple uses of our public lands should be both encouraged and protected.

Mineral rights are not secured for the majority of parcels that would be acquired by the public, but they are granted to private property owners along with the parcels they would receive in the deal.

Water rights convey on 100% of the parcels traded to private land owners, but they are being forfeited on some of the parcels that will become public land.

A single access point for trailheads on the east side of the Crazies will increase both vehicular and foot traffic in the Big Timber Canyon area. This will be detrimental to the surrounding neighborhood, the environment (run-off, etc.), and to the wildlife that frequents the area. I was shocked by how crowded the Big Timber Canyon area was when I hiked it several years ago. Increasing traffic in this area is a poor idea.

There's no discussion in this proposal of difficult to access Trail #43-the Swamp Lake Trail-which is also located on the east side of the Crazy Mountains. This important trail leads to a gorgeous, fishable lake in excellent mountain goat habitat. Currently, a locked gate prevents entry, and getting permission to use what ought to be a prescriptive easement is tough. My son was told that he couldn't camp at Swamp Lake when he asked for permission to hike there last summer. Private property owners-or the folks who work for them-should not be controlling the way we use our public lands.

There have got to be better alternatives than this exchange as it stands. Lucrative land swaps initiated by exclusive clubs are probably not going to be in the public's best interest. Yes, it's time to come up with a plan-but please, let's not approve this one.