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Comments: I have reviewed the Preliminary Environmental Assessment for the East Crazy Inspiration Divide Land Exchange #63115. I have hiked, fished and backpacked in the Crazy Mountains since I was young, and believe that it is a truly special place that needs to be preserved. The checkerboard land ownership has made management and multiple uses difficult, and means that the core alpine areas of the Crazy Mountains remain vulnerable to development. I have the following comments and concerns.
1. Consolidating public land ownership in the Crazy Mountains is a good idea, and such actions should be encouraged and supported. I support the consolidation of public lands along the east side of the Crazy Mountains.
2. Public access to the Sweetgrass Creek drainage via Rein Lane/Sweetgrass Road 990 must be part of this exchange. I urge the US Forest Service to work on solidifying this access, which can be denied by the current landowners at any time.
3. I applaud the rerouting for the new 22 mile trail no. 274 to place it mostly on public land. However, without adequate vehicle access to Sweetgrass Creek, recreational and hunting use of the Sweetgrass drainage by the public will be severely limited. Water sources are also limited along this route.
4. I support the transfer of Smeller Lake into public ownership.
5. I urge the US Forest Service to continue work on consolidating public land ownership in the Crazy Mountains. Areas of chief concern include the upper Big Timber drainage including the Conical Peak, Crazy Peak and Granite Peak areas.