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Comments: I support the current designated route of the PNT through the Yaak. I do not support the alternate south route that goes through Libby and Troy. I find that the argument that the trail through the Yaak would be detrimental to grizzly bears to be weak.

Grizzly bear recovery has been very successful in the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (Glacier National Park and the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex). That area experiences much higher visitation than we would see on the PNT through the Yaak. Additionally, travel on the PNT through the Yaak would be concentrated to one trail. Backcountry travel throughout the NCDE is spread out through a vast region covering some 3 million acres. GNP alone has 3 million visitors a year.

I find that the argument made against the route through the Yaak is likely self serving to those who live in that region. Of greater threat to grizzlies in the Yaak is the extensive use of motorized traffic in the backcountry.

Yaakvalley.org would be better served to lobby for a travel plan for the Kootenay National Forest, as was established in the Lewis and Clark National Forest, some years ago. That travel plan was very successful. PNT hiker travel through the Yaak may in fact lead to greater support for grizzly recovery in that region.

I believe grizzly recovery is doing well in northwest Montana. I do not support hunting grizzlies. There are enough grizzly mortalities annually. I appreciate that grizzly recovery in the Yaak has been a challenge but I believe the challenges for grizzlies in the Yaak ecosystem have little to do with hikers and more to do with motorized travel throughout the course of a year.

Thank you for allowing me to comment and best of luck with your efforts.