Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/12/2023 8:00:24 PM
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Comments: The current Northern Route infringes on four of the six designated Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones, including the high-elevation, prime grizzly bear habitat in the Yaak region that prior to the trail proposal provided secure habitat within the Cabinet/Yaak Grizzly Bear Recovery Zone. There is clearly potential for grizzly bear displacement and/or human conflict along the proposed trail route. This problem could be easily mitigated by rerouting the proposed trail to an alternate Southern Route.

The Northern Route is impacting road density standards due to the grizzly recovery zones it traverses. If 20 parties per week are reached on this trail (local and non-local use), the Department of Agriculture will close down existing roads and trails to mitigate for the high use. This will "lock out" local and non-local recreation. If the advertised route is moved to the South, these issues will be resolved. The Southern Route will benefit hikers, wildlife, timber management, and economic vitality for the towns of Troy and Libby.

The PNT as proposed, unlike other long distance thru-hike trails, runs east and west versus north and south and spans a narrow range of latitudes, resulting in a shorter, more compressed season for thru-hiking. This season, roughly mid-June to mid-September, is congruent with high levels of grizzly bear activity in the Recovery Zones. Conflict is inevitable.