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Comments: I'm writing to object to the Northern Route of the Pacific Northwest Trail because it would introduce a high traffic corridor of thousands of hikers through the heart of the grizzly's habitat. This northern route trail is highly problematic; 68 miles of the proposed PNT route currently pass through grizzly bear habitat in the Yaak and 44 of these miles are designated as grizzly bear core habitat. It would be dangerous to both hikers and bears and would be detrimental to the grizzlies and their critical habitat. Since the 1980 assessment, the number of grizzly bears in this area has decreased, not increased. The Yaak's grizzlies are an incredibly at-risk subpopulation of an already endangered species.

Multiple proposals exist that would reroute the trail, allowing hikers to still experience the region along the PNT but not impact the core grizzly habitat. The benefits of the Southern Route of the PNT through the Cabinet region are numerous for many regional stakeholders, including communities, businesses, forest management, hikers, and grizzlies. A win-win solution exists in the Southern Route of the PNT.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to comment.