Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/16/2023 3:49:23 AM First name: Alyssa Last name: Daniels Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing in regards to BMWC-PW-06 which is a proposed wilderness area outside of Ovando, MT. I do not think it is a wise idea to add this piece of land to the Bob Marshall Wilderness because of climate change and the evolving severity of wildfires. The rules of a Wilderness designation limit our ability and flexibility to mitigate wild fire risk as well as fight fires when they start. I watched the Rice Ridge Fire rage across multiple drainages in an afternoon. When you witness the miles a wildfire can travel in a short amount of time, you want your town and valley to be able to manage the surrounding forests to reduce fuels and wildfire risk. In the Blackfoot Valley we have learned that educated land management tactics lead to healthy forests, healthy wildlife habitat, and support long term conservation. Wilderness has its place, and the Bob Marshall is an amazing place as is. We need to think of a new type of land designation that is a buffer between the Wilderness and the populated valleys. The new land designation needs to be managed with flexibility and local control, so we can make educated decisions about thinning and prescribed burns, as well as immediate decisions about fighting wildfires. The designation of more Wilderness will take away the flexibility we need to improve these lands. Another reason BMWC-PW-06 needs to be managed is because much of it was severely burned by the Rice Ridge Fire. There are problems with erosion that are affecting everything downstream. There are dangerous snag trees all over the landscape. That fire affected the land, the streams, and the wildlife in ways we may not even know about yet. Humans created the forests that burn lethally because of 100 years of fire suppression; we need the chance to fix the mistakes we made and learn how to manage forests and fires in a new era of changing weather patterns and climates. We need the ability to flexibly manage our national forests and not be burdened by the limitations of more Wilderness designations at this time.