

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/27/2023 3:03:19 PM

First name: Kathy

Last name: Nichols

Organization:

Title:

Comments: The Crazy Mountains are important to me. I value this unique island range for its wildlife habitat, its cultural and historical significance to the Apsaalooke people, and the opportunity it provides for solitude.

While I appreciate your efforts to address the public and private checkerboarding of the range, I request that, as a condition of the land exchange, conservation easements or other binding assurances are put on public lands going into private ownership. The current deed restrictions in Sweetgrass Canyon do not provide adequate assurance that the wild character will remain. Without meaningful conservation measures in place, there is no guarantee that existing low-elevation wildlife habitat will remain undeveloped and intact. Consolidation could end up harming wildlife by opening the door to private development within the existing Forest boundary. Please include full development restrictions as a condition of the exchange, as you did for the South Crazy Mountains Land Exchange.

There is already too much development changing Montana forever. We need more protections in undeveloped areas.

I also request that the Forest Service analyze potential environmental impacts from the proposal if lands going into private ownership were to be developed. This is a reasonably foreseeable outcome of the proposal and legally needs to be considered.