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Title:

Comments: I am writing to support the access of backcountry trails by mountain bikes, and expanded trail access in areas closer to the Missoula Area across the valley. Access to these types of trails by bike is already low, and we certainly don't need to shrink it further. The three-miles of trail on Carlton Ridge to the Wilderness boundary on Lolo Peak is excellent backcountry mountain biking. There is no need to further restrict bike access on Lolo Peak or in the Bitterroot Range.

The Cube Iron Complex is another area prime for backcountry designation which will maintain primitive characteristics while allowing for bike access. The trails surrounding Cube Iron Mountain are among the few backcountry rides in the Lolo NF with excellent views and lush old-growth forest. Backcountry management designation ensures opportunities for solitude, resource protection, and recreation experience.

Please note that mountain bike enthusiasts are not simply looking for "more fun". Biking is a viable way to get to places that may be tiresome or tedious to reach entirely on foot. Sometimes foot travel alone is simply not an efficient method to reach the backcountry spaces available to everyone. Pedaling a bike is still hard work. I do not support motorized travel on any national forest trails.

Lastly, as a recreationist I appreciate and support improved access to trail systems around the Greater Missoula area; Rattlesnake, Deep Creek, Petty Mountain, Fish Creek and Rock Creek. The Missoula valley sees a tremendous amount of mixed recreational use in the popular trail systems close to town. The three main trailheads (Pattee Canyon, Blue Mountain, and Main Rattlesnake) see the overwhelming majority of this traffic. Expanded trail access in the surrounding Missoula area would certainly disperse some of this traffic and relieve strain on the most popular sites. The Missoula Front Country Project encompassing Deep Creek especially holds great potential to alleviate the pressure at existing trail networks and would help serve the rapid population growth in Missoula. Even parking at the main trailheads next to town is becoming a problem during the summer months.

Expanded access to lesser-known areas will benefit everyone who utilizes the Lolo NF for outdoor recreation. Thank you for understanding.