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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I'm writing to request maintenance of mountain bike access, and the opportunity to build new trails and connect existing trails, on Lolo NF.

Here are my perspectives:

I'm a professor at the University of Montana; my expertise is geomorphology (i.e., the study of processes that shape landforms). I study and teach about soil erosion, human effects, runoff, sediment impacts to rivers, and I think I can modestly state that I'm an expert on these topics, in western Montana and generally.

I'm an avid mountain biker, and I think carefully about how mountain biking affects the environment, how those effects compare to other land uses, and the contexts in which biking impacts are more or less significant, and where cycling is appropriate or not.

I am deeply committed to conservation of habitats / landscapes / ecosystems.

I firmly believe that conservation goals are compatible with maintenance of, and in some cases increases in, cycling access.

Specifically:

-I encourage maintenance of non-motorized mountain bike access along the Heart Lake Loop and nearly portions of the Stateline Trail; alignment of management between Nez Perce-Clearwater and Lolo NF.

-I support the recommendations for the Lolo Creek Geographic Area, with respect to effects on the Carlton Ridge to Mill Creek trails on Lolo Peak.

-Regarding the Cube Iron Silcox roadless complex, I support a backcountry designation in this area that will maintain primitive characteristics while allowing for bike access.

-I support the BCSA (Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act), a textbook case of a collaborative management effort; if we can't implement the outcome of a good-faith, collaborative effort forged over years of meetings, that is a sad statement about land management and the influence of opposition groups.

-In the greater Missoula area, I support improvement of access and connectivity, and I support transfer of the user-created trail system accessed via Dry Gulch to public ownership.

Thank you.

Andrew Wilcox