

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/6/2024 4:21:21 PM

First name: Sierra

Last name: LaBonte

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Goodmorning,

I am writing to strongly encourage the Lolo National Forest to maintain the Recommended Wilderness Area designation for the Great Burn (Hoodoo Roadless Area). Additionally, I strongly support the recommendation of the Cube Iron Roadless Area, String of Pearls Area and the Stony Mountain Roadless Area. Furthermore, we need to be pressuring Congress to take action in the case of Recommended Wilderness Areas.

I support these measures for a multitude of reasons. 1. If the Recommended Wilderness Designation is removed from the Hoodoo Roadless Area, it exponentially increases the difficulty of re-designation in the future. 2. Habitat retention and connectivity for wildlife 3. The experience of wilderness character and solitude for recreationalists .

I have worked in some of the state's largest wilderness areas for the past 10 years. I am very familiar with the conflict between user groups: mountain bikers, stock users, rock climbers, hikers, skiers, snow machinists, etc. Everyone wants the best and most access for their user group. Understandable. But not all groups have the same effects on the land. If these areas are opened up to mountain bikes, snow machines, access becomes easier. Easier access means more people. More people means more impact on the ecosystem. These areas are rugged terrain. Access is not meant to be easy. Additionally, these conversations tend to wreak of entitlement. Recreation is put above the value of protecting land for the sake of the land/wildlife/ecosystems themselves. Montana is special because of our protected, undeveloped and untrammeled landscape. We need to remember this.