

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/18/2026 9:45:21 PM

First name: John

Last name: Smillie

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear District Ranger Hansen,

The Chalk Buttes are a special part of the Custer Gallatin National Forest. Given the Butte's special status as a Backcountry Management Area, it is important that this project enhance, and not detract from, the unique backcountry character of the Chalk Buttes. I support non-commercial thinning and prescribed fire elements of the project, but I believe that the amount of commercial logging, and the associated 4.5 miles of temporary road construction, will have significant, negative impact on the undeveloped character and ecosystem integrity of the Chalk Buttes. In particular, I am concerned about the spread of invasive weeds, the potential for temporary roads and improvements to administrative roads to increase unauthorized motor vehicle use, and impacts wildlife and rare plant species. To reduce these impacts, commercial harvest units should be limited to the bare minimum of what is necessary to achieve ecological restoration goals. Temporary roads should likewise be limited, and constructed in a manner such that they can be fully reclaimed and revegetated immediately following the completion of commercial harvest. The Chalk Buttes currently have few noxious weeds due to the minimal amount of roads and lack of trails in this area. To limit the spread of invasive weeds following this project, the Forest Service should require multi-year weed treatment and monitoring as part of any contract(s) associated with this project. The final EA should also include a noxious weed monitoring plan.

Sincerely,

John Smillie