

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/10/2023 6:19:16 PM

First name: Pedro

Last name: Marques

Organization: Big Hole Watershed Committee

Title:

Comments: 1/13/2023

Re: Basin Creek-Butte Watershed Project #63295

Dear Tim Lahey

Butte District Ranger

1820 Meadowlark Ln

Butte, MT 59701

The Big Hole Watershed Committee (BHWC) is a collaborative conservation organization in Southwest Montana that has, since 1995, brought together stakeholders to achieve meaningful solutions for water management that provide for all water uses and users. Butte-Silver Bow's water supply team has been a member of our Governing Board for decades, given the importance of the Big Hole River to municipal water supplies.

The ability of the Basin Creek water treatment facility to supply water to the growing city of Butte has huge implications on water withdrawals from the Big Hole River. The proposed project, by mitigating against the potentially catastrophic effects of a wildfire in the watershed, is well worth the effort. The project will avoid downstream costs of cleanup, will reduce the probability of increased withdrawals from the Big Hole, and will lead to a more resilient and diversified forest above the Basin Creek Reservoir.

Every effort should be made to approve and implement this project with the sense of urgency it deserves. Our river simply cannot afford a major fire in this watershed. We support the fuels reduction activities as written.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Pedro Marques

Executive Director

Big Hole Watershed Committee

pmarques@bhwc.org