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Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Custer Gallatin Forest Plan Revision.

In my opinion, Alternative A (leave things as they are) is the only alternative which should be considered here. I feel that the terrain that is available now is very well allocated to motorized and non motorized use and I like Alternative A because it keeps things the way they are. I don't understand why we need more and more restriction when it comes to motorized recreation. The National Forest was set up for multiple use, yet every time there is a forest revision, motorized access areas continue to shrink. With all of the current acres of wilderness that currently exist, why must the non-motorized recreationalist insist on more and more wilderness?

All of the time and effort to comment on these needless revisions is another issue I have. Why can we not all get along? I make room for non_motorized users whenever I come across them, but in a large part, the courtesy is not returned. And why is non-motorized travel deemed more important than motorized travel? Every few years there is another revision to the forest plan and we lose more and more areas for motorized recreation. I comment on these revisions to no avail. There is enough locked up land already! I would like to see my children and grandchildren be able to enjoy some of the places that I enjoyed with my Dad when I was growing up, but these places are being placed off limits for most for the pleasure of a few.

Snowmobiling for me is more than a sport or a hobby. It is my passion and it transports me to the deepest places in the backcountry where I can escape the stresses of life and leave it all behind. It makes me feel empowered and strong while providing an inner peace and happiness that comes from being out there. I have enjoyed snowmobiling and sled/skiing/snowboarding with my family and friends in this area for many years as well as summer motorized and non-motorized recreation. I hope that we can continue to enjoy all forms of motorized recreation in the Custer Gallatin Forest for many years to come. Please do not take away our rights to recreate with motorized equipment.

Don't get me wrong, I also enjoy non-motorized recreation. I even own horses. Closed roads unfairly target the elderly and disabled and folks like me who don't care to travel long distances on icy roads. Closed roads and snowmobile areas mean fewer opportunities for the father working two jobs, to take his kids camping to that one spot grandpa used to know. Closed roads benefit no one except for the people who close them. The last round of snowmobile restrictions and road closures just about killed the economy for the town of Lincoln Montana, they certainly don't need any more restrictions. We certainly do not need any more wilderness areas. There are enough roadless and wilderness study areas to go around. I put in a 9 mile hike into the Cherry Creek Lakes in the Pioneer Mountains last summer on a motorized trail that was open to motorized vehicles, but was too dangerous to travel. There has been no maintenance on that trail in the 40 years since the last time I traveled it. The bridges are all broken, the trail is a mess, and the Forest Service cannot care for what it has. Selling trees instead of burning them would be a good start.

Specific examples of continued attempts to restrict motorized access :

Backcountry Areas (BA) of over 125,000 acres are proposed

This includes the Buffalo Horn BA, that has 4 single track trails that will be threatened to be closed to motorized and mechanized travel up Porcupine Cr. These include trails 34, 66, 160, 199.

This also threatens both access and maintenance of the Big Sky snowmobile trail that is part of the National Historic Register.

These also overlap the (HPBH) Hyalite, Porcupine, Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area (WSA) historic summer and winter trials and play areas that are only partially open and or closed by a Special Order Closure since the FS has limit Travel Plan within the WSA.

Cowboy Heaven- threatened to limited chainsaws for trail maintenance.

Recommended Wilderness Areas (RWA)

This also threatens both access and maintenance of the Big Sky snowmobile trail that is part of the National Historic Register.

These also overlap the (HPBH) Hyalite, Porcupine, Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area (WSA) historic summer and winter trials and play areas that are only partially open and or closed by a Special Order Closure since the FS has limit Travel Plan within the WSA. This includes Rock cr, Tom Miner, Sunlight, Crest Trail, Windy Pass, Big Creek, Cliff Cr, and Lewis Cr.

Communications towers on Eaglehead, and other surrounding areas would be eliminated. Competitive events historically held would also be banned.

Pryors trails in the BA 2095 and 2091 are under threat of being closed.
Proactive Bison support may also threaten winter motorized access to winter trailheads along highway 191.

Gallatin Key Linkage threatens summer and winter recreation in the Bear Canyon area.

Stillwater Complex, 102,045 acres maintains allocation of minerals

Alternative C

Mostly positive proposals of Recreational Emphasis (RE) on 8 areas that include, The Main Boulder, Cooke City, Rock Cr -Red Lodge, Yellowstone River, Hyalite, Hebgen area that maintain motorized, and mechanized uses.

Gallatin River Day Use recreational emphasis puts campgrounds dispersed camping and overnight stock camping in jeopardy of being eliminated.

Backcountry areas

Backcountry Areas (BA) of over 208,000 acres are proposed

This includes the Buffalo Horn BA, that has 4 single track trails that will be threatened to be closed to motorized and mechanized travel up Porcupine Cr. These include trails 34, 66, 160, 199.

West Pine BA

Threatens motorized recreation, maintenance and grazing allotments including infrastructure for water tanks and pump water to mitigate stock water issues in riparian areas.

West Bridgers BA , this threatens both motorized Summer single track uses, and winter motorized uses.

Crazy Mountains BA, a threat to summer single track, ATV , and winter motorized uses in the Cottonwood and Rock cr drainages.

Proactive Bison support may also threaten winter motorized access to winter trailheads along highway 191.

Gallatin Key Linkage threatens summer and winter recreation in the Bear Canyon area.
Stillwater Complex, 102,045 acres maintains allocation of minerals

Recommended Wilderness Areas (RWA)

This also threatens both access and maintenance of the Big Sky snowmobile trail that is part of the National Historic Register.

These also overlap the (HPBH) Hyalite, Porcupine, Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area (WSA) historic summer and winter trails and play areas that are only partially open and or closed by a Special Order Closure since the FS has limit Travel Plan within the WSA. This includes Rock cr, Tom Miner, Sunlight, Crest Trail, Windy Pass, Big Creek, Cliff Cr, and Lewis Cr.

Communications towers on Eaglehead, and other surrounding areas would be eliminated. Competitive events historically held would also be banned.

Mechanized corridor through the existing Lionhead RWA on the Continental Divide trail.

Alternative D

This Alternative would be devastating to multiple use, all but closing public lands down to just a few.

RWA winter and summer restrictions would include most popular winter areas and summer trails within the Gallatin range, both current and within historic use inside the WSA. This includes RWA's of Buck Cr, Cabin Cr north, Cabin Cr South, Lionhead, Tepee cr, Chico peaks, Emigrant Gulch, Tie cr, Deer cr, West Bridgers, and the Crazy's.

All other RWA's would be restricted to maintenance standards of existings wilderness areas lowering trail standards.

Recreational Emphasis would be confined to the Gallatin & Yellowstone rivers, and force more people into the Hyalite RA.

Most proactive Bison expansion threaten motorized access in the Gallatin.

Alternative E

Gallatin Day use RA on portions of the Gallatin river will threaten campgrounds, and dispersed camping.

The Lionhead RWA would be replaced by a expanded Lionhead BA that would threaten winter motorized use.

HPBH WSA would be overlapped by a expanded HPBH BA. Backcountry Areas (BA)of over 173,000 acres are proposed.

This includes the Buffalo Horn BA, that has 4 single track trails that will be threatened to be closed to motorized and mechanized travel up Porcupine Cr. These include trails 34, 66,160, 199.

This also threatens both access and maintenance of the Big Sky snowmobile trail that is part of the National Historic Register.

These also overlap the (HPBH) Hyalite, Porcupine, Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area (WSA) historic summer and winter trails and play areas that are only partially open and or closed by a Special Order Closure since the FS has limit Travel Plan within the WSA.

This also threatens Communication towers in the Gallatin range, and Grazing leases in or next to the Buffalo Horn BA.

The Wild and Scenic designation on the East Rosebud River threatens existing campgrounds along the river.

I thank you for taking the time to review my ideas and I hope you will consider keeping our motorized terrain open and allowing recreational opportunities for snowmobiling and to motorized recreation to continue in our area. Let's do the right thing here and adopt Alternative A and leave things so that everyone can enjoy and recreate in the Custer Gallatin Forest .

John Ascherman - Townsend Montana