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Comments:

I am in favor of Alternative D that promotes ecological processes over recreation. I am not in favor of Alternative C or the Gallatin Forest Partnership as both of these increase access to mechanized users. I want the Forest Service to offer increased protection to our wildlands instead of considerably less by opening it up to more users. Increased access to these valuable wildlife corridors and wildlife use areas will increase animal/human conflict inevitably. It will also increase stress levels of the wildlife. There are many studies showing the increase stress to animals from increased backcountry skiing use and other backcountry sports.

I feel strongly that what we have now is all we will ever have, the wilderness will not increase and we should do everything we can to protect it. The best way we can protect wilderness and those process associated with it is by limiting access. Unfortunately there are too many people and these areas are being loved to death. Additionally there is not enough law enforcement to enforce the current rules. This means more people will ride their bikes and feel inclined to then continue to other places that they are not allowed to travel. It is sad but that is human nature.

The Gallatin Mountains have yet in tact flora in the alpine. The flora of the Gallatin will face enough threats with climate change and more people accessing these areas on foot. The increased access will introduce more weeds. As a resource manager for a different agency I know how difficult it is to treat (if not impossible) weeds once they have been introduced. I have seen many of the problem weeds at the trailheads that access the Gallatin Crest and it's likely just a matter of time before they make their way to high elevations. I still believe we should slow this process down. There is little success with restoration of the native flora once winter annuals such as cheatgrass and alyssum have been introduced or other perennial weeds that are easier to get rid of. I often here that cheatgrass and Alyssum need disturbance and cannot grow at high elevations. Both of these weeds have been document in Yellowstone National Park in areas without disturbance (spreading off trails) and at high elevations. Increasing mechanized traffic in the forest, will only increase the threat of these weeds to Forest Service Lands.

I value wilderness for the sake of wilderness, even if I will never see the areas, I feel strongly it should exist. I value quiet and find solace knowing I can walk to areas where I will not hear the chatter of people.