

Date submitted (Mountain Standard Time): 6/6/2019 10:11:39 PM

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Comments:

I am grateful for the multiple-use mandate that governs our National Forest. I do not envy your job, as I can only imagine how difficult it is to balance the biological, economic and social needs of the Forest.

With that in mind, I would like to give my support to Alternative C, as I believe it is the most balanced of the alternatives. Here are some of the points I like about Alternative C.

-I am glad to see the Gallatin Crest as recommended wilderness, as that wildlife corridor is crucial for connecting key populations of multiple species (from Grizzlies to wolverines). As Bozeman continues to grow and the planet continues to warm, the protection of this corridor for wildlife will become more and more important. Limiting travel in that area to foot traffic will help.

-Bozeman needs to protect its watershed; if that means limiting motorized use or capping the amount of trails around Hyalite, I support that as well.

-That being said, I am glad that the public will still have access to the Windy Pass Cabin, and that the presence of that cabin doesn't deter from the surrounding area being considered recommended wilderness.

-I also appreciate the amount of forest suitable for timber harvest and timber production in that Alternative C. That supports jobs as well as wildfire mitigation in key drainages.

-I agree that the Stillwater Complex should have those acres allocated to it. That mine is important for Montana, for local communities, and the country.

-I like Alternative C's plan for Cowboy Heaven in the Madison Range, as that is another crucial space for elk in the late winter/early spring as well as Grizzly connectivity to the Gravelly Range and Tobacco Roots.

-I believe that the Bridgers should be managed primarily for recreation, and that all current motorized trails on the Bridgers should remain motorized. The motorized group doesn't have that many trails to choose from, so keeping those available is important for that growing population.

-I believe the Crazy Mountains should be managed as recommended wilderness and managed for their wild character. From my limited understanding, the Crazy Mountains are extremely important to the Crow Nation. We should respect and honor that spiritual connection. I feel the power of that place when I'm backpacking or hiking there; it's unlike any other range. There's something special about that place, and I think it's important to keep it as such. Also, it holds water for a very long time, which is crucial for the surrounding ag communities.

-I believe the final plan should reflect the current legislation to prevent mining around Yellowstone National Park and Emigrant Peak. These places are more precious than gold, and their pristine nature greatly impacts the surrounding communities.

All of that being said, I suggest that mountain bikes have continued access in the Lionhead area. I recognize that region as important wildlife habitat, and I also acknowledge the conflict that excessive mountain bikes and wildlife can have. But mountain bikes have been in that area for a long time, and the large mammal populations have continued to grow around it. If the Lionhead remains opened to mountain bikers, that concentrates that user group to an area they know and love, rather than forces them to spread out to other trails and potentially causing greater wildlife impact or user-conflict with horsemen. Strategically, I also believe that denying the Lionhead to that user group may have large implications in the future; it could further divide recreationists into various "camps," rather than uniting them together in support of public lands and access.