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Comments:

Dear commissioners,

I am writing in regards to the Custer-Gallatin National Forest plan revision. I live, work and recreate in and around the Forest near West Yellowstone, Montana as well as many of the other Custer-Gallatin National Forest areas. My voice and opinions need to be heard louder and given more consideration than others who do not even use these lands. I am in the Custer Gallatin National Forest on almost a daily basis. I have been to many of the areas within this forest. I use the forest for many different uses including but not limited to: hunting, camping, bicycling, hiking, driving highway legal vehicles on roads to destinations, trail heads and parking areas, ride ATV, motorcycle and snowmobiles in all allowed areas. Ultimately I would like to see less Wilderness and WSA's as it only shuts the public out of their public lands. I would like to see more areas opened up to these activities I participate in. There are already far too many "quiet" areas where other users can recreate that I am not allowed to use for most of my activities. Any loss of current usable land to my activities will not be tolerated.

Hiking:

I am happy with our current plan on regards to hiking. I feel that there is plenty of hiking opportunity. Hikers are allowed in all user areas, giving them far more land use than any other user group. I would not like to see any more areas closed to other usages in regards for hiking proposes. Many hiking areas cater to an elitist few who are capable of accessing the backcountry on foot. I feel this is unfair to other user groups, especially snowmobilers, who could use these areas when hikers don't.

Camping:

I would like to see more available campsites in all areas. I would also like to see the public be allowed to establish new campsites if certain guidelines were drawn up and followed. I would like to see more campgrounds that are larger and more spread apart than most current offerings. I would like to see many day use areas become available to camp in. I have seen campgrounds and campsites destroyed and blocked off in the Little Belts, specifically on the South Fork of the Judith River for false and unjustified reasons. It is completely unacceptable to destroy current offerings or even block them off. The Forest Service should be ashamed of the many camping opportunities they have taken away. More and more people are camping every year. The opportunities need to expand to meet the demand. Allowing tents to camp anywhere in the back country will help alleviate the pressure although many are turning to RVs and campers. I am dissatisfied with the current plan agenda to close camping areas. I am also dissatisfied by the current plan regulations that do not allow camping within a certain distance from Highway 191 near Big Sky. I would like to see more day use only areas turned into usable camping areas as long as the sites are not visible from the Highway.

Bicycling and other mechanized:

I would like all bicycles and other mechanized travel to be allowed on all trails. I am appalled by how many trails/areas do not allow bicycles and mechanized travel. To allow horses and not bikes is absurd. Horses damage established trails while bikes have little to no impact on trails. Bicycles and mechanized travel should be allowed in any Wilderness and WSA. Bicycles should be held to the current rules for on road use.

Gathering and harvesting food:

I would like anything edible, allowed to be harvested for non-commercial use, from and in all areas. Commercial use should be on a case by case basis and depend upon demand and availability. I am ok with the current plan regulations.

Hunting:

I would like to see hunting allowed on all public lands with the exception of game preserves, campgrounds, picnic areas, and other major attractions. I would like hunting to be allowed in any Wilderness and WSA/Recommended Wilderness. I am satisfied with the current plan regulations.

Logging and cutting of firewood:

I would like to see a well managed Forest. I believe that starts with selective logging. There are many areas of the Custer-Gallatin National Forest that are overgrown. Trees in overgrown areas cannot fully develop. Overgrown areas need to be thinned to allow trees to mature into large enough trees for lumber. Once trees are removed for lumber, they should be reseeded. Wood is a renewable resource and needs to be responsibly managed as a renewable resource. Do not take every tree but please, thin the overgrown places or allow it to be sold for timber harvest and timber production. Allow the general public to cut firewood for personal use from dead standing, fallen trees and slash piles. Areas of overgrowth that need to be addressed include but are not limited to: South Plateau to Idaho border, West of West Yellowstone an approximate mile North and South of Highway 20 from town to the South Fork of the Madison River, Horse Butte development area (Hebgen Lake Estates) to Highway 191 from Madison River to intersection with Highway 287, area within the corners of Whit's Lake road to Fir Ridge Trail head to Yellowstone Park boundary to TeePee Creek near end of TeePee Creek Road. I am mostly satisfied with current plan regulations.

Mining:

I think Montana has many mineable resources. I cannot say how to manage mining but I would like to see it allowed with good ethics and management.

Highway legal vehicles:

I would like highway legal vehicles to have access to all currently usable roads. I would also like to see more of the old roads that are currently closed be reopened. These roads are permanent paths that when closed, are continued to be used by animals and humans by any other allowed usages. Please reopen many of the roads that are currently closed, continue to allow access on currently open roads and if possible, create new roads to give access to those who are otherwise incapable of accessing the backcountry. I would like to see opportunities expanded from the current plan regulations.

ATV's:

I would like ATV's to continue being allowed on all current trails. I would like to see a small expanse to include a few small trail side areas where off trail ATV and motorcycle riding is allowed. I would like ATV's to be allowed on roads open to highway legal vehicles if ATV has been made street legal. I believe side by side ATV's that fit between 50" gate posts should be classified and treated the same as regular ATV's. The only trail expanse I would ask for ATV trails, would be an extended trail further into the Lionhead area towards the Sheep Wilderness Study Area, in cooperation with the Idaho side. A deeper loop trail in the Lionhead area could exit via the Targhee Creek drainage if cooperation from Idaho is secured and permitted. Desired trail could also exit via the Sheep Creek drainage and give access to what could be epic riding. I had mentioned reopening of closed forest roads in my highway legal vehicle section, if these roads are reopened, I would like to see ATV's and motorcycles allowed in those areas as well. I also believe ATV's within the 50" regulation should be allowed on horse trails of appropriate width. I would like ATV's to be able to operate on trails abroad, including on any currently non-motorized trails within Wilderness, WSA or otherwise restricted areas that they could fit on. Otherwise I am mostly ok with current plan regulations and offerings for ATV use.

Motorcycles:

I would like to see motorcycles allowed on all forest roads, trails and single tracks. Motorcycles have a very low impact on all types of trails. Motorcycle erosion naturally maintains a steady constantly stable path on established single track trails in most areas. Motorcycles should not be critiqued for erosion on established paths, trails and roads. Off road motorcycles emit generally low noise levels in a rearward direction, therefore causing little if any disturbance and should not be critiqued for noise levels. Motorcycle emissions come at a fraction of what highway vehicles produce and at a highly reduced rate of traffic in comparison and therefore should not be critiqued for their emissions. Motorcycles should have heightened privileges from ATV and highway legal vehicles. I would like to see motorcycles allowed on most trails within Wilderness, WSA and

other restricted areas. A great example of where motorcycles should be allowed where they currently are not, is the trails near Lizard Lakes. The Lizard Lakes trail is so isolated that I have not seen any other users of any type on, in or near these areas. I would like motorcycle use to be allowed on the Continental Divide Trail System, which I find is used very little by foot, horse and mechanized users near the West Yellowstone area of the trail. I believe there is an old trail that connects Beaver Creek and Cabin Creek that I would like to see opened or created for motorcycle use. I am not willing to give up my rights to continue motorcycling along Kirkwood Trail, Red Canyon Trail, Cabin Creek Trail, Taylor's Fork Trail, TeePee Road Trail, Cinnamon Trail, Buck Ridge Trail or any Connecting Routes. Motorcycle trails should tolerate foot traffic, bicycles and mechanized travel. Motorcycles should maintain the right of way while other forms of travel yield to the motorcycle.

Snowmobile:

I would like snowmobiles to be allowed on all currently usable trails. I would like to see snowmobiles allowed off trail in all currently usable areas as well as expanded to more available off trail riding areas. I am very upset with proposed snowmobile travel plans. I am not willing to give up one acre of the current allowed area. There is already far too many restricted areas to snowmobiling. I ride almost every currently available location in the Custer-Gallatin National Forest. I can tell you that none of these areas are used by wildlife or other public use groups in the Winter as the areas snowmobilers want to ride are inaccessible to other uses and wildlife. There are many Wilderness areas and other closed areas that are not used by any other users during the Winter. Snowmobiles travel on snow above ground level thus causing no erosion. Snowmobiles usually emit noise directed towards or into the snow. Snow acts like insulation and muffles sounds when exhaust is in or near snow. Snowmobiles are held to fairly high emission standards and manufactures strive to continually improve these emissions, even in categories that don't have as tight of emission regulations. There are also far fewer snowmobiles operated then there is highway legal vehicles which have larger engines and create more emissions per vehicle. Snowmobiles should not be discriminatively critiqued in regards to erosion, noise levels or emissions. I would like to see specifically the Hilgard section of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness, the Lionhead/Sheep WSA and the Wilderness surrounding Cooke City while connecting over the snow access to the Boulder Canyon South of Big Timber be opened up. Basically allow snowmobiles to access existing Wilderness, WSA and other restricted areas to their use. Restricted areas I would like to see opened up to snowmobiles and over the snow travel include the entire East slope of the Crazy Mountains, the remainder of the West slope of the Crazy Mountains, the Montana side accessible from the Beartooth Pass, and the low areas between Quake and Hebgen Lakes. The thought of losing the connecting routes from Cabin Creek to Taylor's Fork is an outrage. I cannot promise cooperation and discontinued use of this route/area if snowmobile or motorcycle use is restricted in our next Forest plan. The area offers phenomenal off trail snowmobiling opportunities due to the size, location, terrain and consistent snow quality and depth. The Cabin Creek and Sage Basin including TeePee Basin is not used by any other Winter use groups or wildlife in the Winter. The Forest Service has a responsibility to continue to offer this area for allowing snowmobile and over the snow travel. The Lionhead area and entire Henry's Lake Mountains cannot compromise any currently available use areas due to specific routes that would be restricted in all usage plan options other than what is currently implemented. I did see in one plan option that it would open the Sheep Creek drainage, which would be great, but not at the compromise of any current routes or usage area. The Buck Ridge snowmobiling area is fundamental in providing the ever growing snowmobiling community from Bozeman, an opportunity to ride desired locations and alleviates concentration to other high use snowmobile areas. Closing any of the current Buck Ridge snowmobile area is not an option. While the Bridger Mountains see more diverse Winter use groups, there needs to be an opportunity provided to snowmobilers here as snow quality here can be unmatched. Most of all, I do not want to see any land lost to snowmobile access in the Crazy Mountains. I have a passion for riding Trespass Creek, Rapid Creek and Cottonwood Creek on the West side of the Crazy Mountains and would like my ashes to be spread there after my passing. I want to continue using this area and showing it to younger generations as well as sharing it with my family and other snowmobilers who have not been there. The current snowmobile area around Cooke City appears to be unchanged in all plan options and I hope this to be true. The area currently allowing snowmobile use near Cooke City must not compromise any land use. In fact the area near Cooke City should be expanded, especially into the Wilderness North and East of the Mushroom Hills near Round Lake. If snowmobile opportunities are not maintained and expanded, I would like to continue with the same usage plan currently in place.

Living next to and working in the Custer-Gallatin National Forest as a backcountry snowmobile guide has given me a special understanding of a huge area around West Yellowstone. I use these public lands often and observe how the land is used. The current Forest plan is working fairly well. From what I see, there could be many improvements made. Most of these improvements are in regards to there being too many regulations and

restrictions. Do not create any Wilderness. Please release any WSA. Please lift the strict restrictions and regulations. The Custer-Gallatin National Forest should not block the public out of using our public land the way we are currently using it. Please do not close any more public lands in any way.

Take my word as I am one of few who has used public lands and this National Forest in many ways, seeing a vast majority of the Western portions of the Custer-Gallatin. Please weigh my opinions heavily. Everyone deserves to use the National Forest in a way that suits their personal needs, taking into consideration the elderly and those with physical impairments. Most desirable areas within our forest are difficult to access and should be made more accessible. Wilderness, Recommended Wilderness Areas, and other restricted use areas only impair accessibility. I can't live with a Forest I cannot access and use.

I hope that you will have time to review my last minute comment. The only excuse I have for my lack of punctuality is because I've been out trying to enjoy, what could be, the last few moments I can enjoy activities I enjoy in certain areas of my forest that could be closing if the wrong forest usage plan is selected.