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Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the upcoming Forest Plan.

First, I have lived, worked and recreated in Montana for over 30 years. I visit the places you are considering in the Plan often, I know them well and the experience I gain from visiting the backcountry is integral to my life in SW Montana. I cannot imagine being excluded from the places that I have been enjoying for my whole adult life by a new travel use paradigm.

I SUPPORT MOUNTAIN BIKE ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS.

I support THE IDEALS that have gained COLLABORATIVE SUPPORT in our community.

I support policies that create EQUAL OPPORTUNITY for users, rather than provide exclusive access for one or two groups at the expense of other groups.

I support the idea that public lands can be managed to MAINTAIN WILDERNESS CHARACTER while still providing recreational access and wildlife management options.

I argue that public land management solutions need to be FLEXIBLE to effectively manage public land.

I argue that managing WSA's as Wilderness in to not manage at all. It is a "head in the sand" approach that does not allow for any response to THREATS FROM WILDFIRE, INVASIVE SPECIES, TRAIL MANAGEMNT CHALLENGES, CLIMATE CHANGE, or any other unforeseen events.

I argue that there is ALREADY ENOUGH WILDERNESS AND NATIONAL PARK land in our area, and that they are poorly maintained and underutilized.

I REJECT the idea that PEOPLE SHOULD JUST STAY OUT OF THE BACKCOUNTRY.

I feel that there is NOT ENOUGH REMOTE, HIGH ELEVATION AREAS that are NOT DESIGNATED WILDERNESS already, the REMAINING REMOTE HIGHCOUNTRY SHOULD NOT BE MANAGED OR TURNED INTO WILDERNESS.

I support designations that are based on SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE as to the impacts of different user groups.

I believe that limiting mountain bike access to certain areas will CONCENTRATE USE IN THE REMAINING AREAS, creating conflict in those areas due to overcrowding.

I know that RECREATION SUPPORTS JOBS, AND QUALITY OF LIFE and are important drivers for our thriving community and economy.

I REJECT the idea that different user groups cannot COEXIST ON OUR TRAILS. My backcountry encounters with other users are always cordial, and manageable. TRAIL USE CONFLICT IS A MYTH.

I support MOUNTAIN BIKE ACCESS in our Forest Plan, as a quiet human powered means of access that does not cause any more impact than other allowed user groups.

I propose that MOUNTIAN BIKES are an efficient way to maintain backcountry trails.

I REJECT the idea that MOUNTAIN BIKES ARE THE BOOGIE-MAN. We are members of your community, we live, work and play here and we deserve to access our public lands, too. We value the solitude and adventure of riding in the backcountry more than anyone else. (Why else are we usually the only ones out there?)

I am OPTIMISTIC that the Forest Service will opt to MANAGE public lands to provide for flexible, thoughtful policies that take science into account while allowing equal access to public lands, all the while preserving the wild nature of our backcountry and high-country areas.

I am OPTIMISTIC that the Forest Service will not bow to pressure from the EXTREME FRINGE that demands nothing but Wilderness as a management designation.

I am OPTIMISTIC that the Forest Service sees the value in COLLABORATIVE SOULUTIONS that have debunked the EXTREME FRINGE on all their arguments.

Living in Bozeman has provided me with an opportunity to enjoy our incredible environment, and in the summer that is usually while riding my bike. I don't own a horse, or the land to keep one. I can't walk 30 miles in a day. But I can quietly and lightly access these most amazing places on my bike. I rarely see others, and when I do, they are bikers, too. I barely leave a track, or a sound. The time I spend in the far backcountry, away from the crowded trails near town are a unique opportunity that I get only a few times a year, and are very special to me. If a tree falls in the forest. If a bike rolls down a trail..If you're not riding a bike, you should be.

Once again, thank for your courage to manage my public land in a way that maintains wilderness CHARACTER, and maintains EXISTING MAOUNTAIN BIKE ACCESS to the Gallatin, West Bridgers and Lionshead, and allows for FLEXABILITY for future forest managers. A thoughtful and bold approach is not divisive, but inclusive. It does not create "haves" and "have nots". This bold approach shows respect for the value that I place on my CONTINUED ACCESS to the most cherished places in my world.

Sincerely.

Packy Cronin