

Date submitted (Mountain Standard Time): 5/20/2019 7:51:13 PM

First name: Hannah

Last name: Downey

Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1: 3715 Galloway St

Address2: D312

City: Bozeman

State: MT

Province/Region:

Zip/Postal Code: 59718

Country: United States

Email: handowney@gmail.com

Phone:

Comments:

The beauty of the Custer Gallatin National Forest is that it provides a range of opportunities for public benefit and use. This treasured landscape provides recreation opportunities, clean water, wildlife habitat, and natural resources and our economies rely on. It is important that we uphold the principles of multiple use and sustained yield in revising the Custer Gallatin National Forest Plan.

I have deep ties to the Custer Gallatin National Forest. Though I grew up in Minneapolis, I celebrated my first birthday back at Crow Lake in the Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness in 1994. Growing up backpacking in the Beartooths tied my family together. In high school, I worked on a ranch that relied on U.S. Forest Service grazing permits in the West Rosebud valley. I finally was able to move to Montana for college in 2011, and have been in Bozeman ever since. Today I spend every available moment hiking, skiing, mountain biking, snowmobiling, and riding atvs in the Custer Gallatin. Coming from a city without these incredible public lands opportunities, please know just how special this area is.

As you move forward in deciding this revised forest management plan, I encourage you to consider the many different users that treasure this area and also the unique mission of the U.S. Forest Service. We have many different public land designations for a reason, and your agency is able to balance a wide variety of demands. Though a challenge, it is important to continue to provide responsible mechanized and motorized uses. To prevent the pushing out of mechanized and motorized users, I'd encourage you to NOT enact alternatives C or D.

Mountain bikers and motorized riders are an important part of the outdoor community. Bikers and Southwestern Montana Mountain Biking Association contribute very generously to our public trail systems - especially in the Lionhead area. Preserving mountain bike access to the Lionhead and recommended wilderness areas will help ensure public stewardship of our shared landscapes. Likewise, motorized users are a major sector of the outdoor recreation economy and contribute important funding for trail maintenance that is enjoyed by all other recreationists.

These users have already experienced access restrictions in the form of timeshare trails and wilderness study areas. Removing mechanized and motorized access to the Bridger Mountains under plan D would be especially bad. The Bridgers already have any timeshare trails that help reduce user conflict. To further exclude mountain bikers and motorized users would remove many responsible recreationists from their public lands. Please do not adopt a forest plan that restricts our mechanized and motorized options.

With this in mind, I still support existing areas that have restricted public access to protect landscapes, watersheds, and wildlife. Our wilderness areas are worth upholding. Timeshare trails promote peaceful co-use. And, above all, it is up to us as public land owners and stewards to ensure we recreate responsibly.

Thank you for your consideration.