

Date submitted (Mountain Standard Time): 6/3/2019 5:33:39 PM

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Comments:

I write to support increased opportunities for mountain biking in Montana's Custer-Gallatin National Forest. As an avid mountain biker from Montana, with two children who are becoming Montana Mountain, who travels all over this great state to ride mountain bikes, I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in the forest plan revision. The Custer-Gallatin National Forest covers spectacular country, much of which is already off limits because of the large amount of designated Wilderness.

One of my favorite riding areas in the state is the Lionhead area, one of the truly alpine rides left in Montana. The ride from Mile to Sheep and the Targhee Pass area are some of the best high country rides around.

I support the Gallatin Forest Partnership agreement as well as the Outdoor Alliance Vision recommendation. In my view, the Lionhead area should be designated as a non-motorized Backcountry Area (ROS semi-primitive non-motorized in summer, primitive in winter), as an alternative to including it in the forest plan's current Recommended Wilderness. It is important to preserve the wild, undeveloped character of the Lionhead area while continuing to allow mountain bike use.

I also support a non-motorized Backcountry Area designation to preserve Porcupine-Buffalo Horn and West Pine for current and future mountain biking opportunities.

Although I support mountain biking, I do not support motorized use in these areas. The fact is, the impact from mountain bikes is similar to that of hikers and much less than motorized use and horses. Mountain bikers spend little time in any one area and their impact is limited to the trail. Most importantly, mountain bikers can always be counted on to do volunteer trail maintenance so land managers do not need to spend their precious limited resources on maintenance.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a comment. I hope that you will consider mountain biking in this and any future decisions regarding this Custer-Gallatin National Forest.

Sincerely,

Ryan T Heuwinkel