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Comments:

I am and have been for 55 years a hiker, backpacker, backcountry skier, and mountain biker in much of the area under consideration. I believe in preservation, ecological health, primitive, natural character, and recreation that is managed by the Forest Service and respects nature. I am not in favor of Wilderness Areas, which are not inclusive of all non-motorized forms of access, and by their nature are not managed with common sense and best practices by professional managers, and instead have fixed rules that often aren't the best use.

Whether people like it or not, the demand for recreation in this area is skyrocketing. The more people can access many different kinds of nature with by foot, horse, or bike, the more they will respect, embrace, and support keeping our wonderful environment healthy including the animal and plant inhabitants.

I respect the work done by the Gallatin Forest Partnership because it was a collaboration of different people and compromises were made. However, no new trails in the WSA is not a wise position. We need more avenues for access and exploration in these areas which are so close to a booming growth area. I've seen what happens to over restrictive access in other areas of the country and how people tend to ignore the rules when they are too rigid and don't allow reasonable recreational access by mountain bikes which are not harmful by the vast majority of participants. Hikers, horses, and backpackers/campers have a few harmful participants, but rules should deal with the vast respectful majority and policing should deal with the violators.

I believe most of this country should be managed as Backcountry Access areas allowing recreation on Forest Service approved trails and the Forest Service should work with responsible groups to develop well made new trails and to maintain them.

Lionshead and nearby areas north of Yellowstone Park allow mountain bikers to enjoy their unique nature whereas the National Park is totally prohibitive due to rigid rules. I believe Lionshead should be open to all non-motorized users and intelligent, well designed additional trails which allow more access, but have the least impact on wildlife should be permitted.

Lastly, there need to be more beginner/intermediate designed trails for both hiking and mountain biking to get more kids into these wonderful areas. I grew up living and exploring these mountains including hunting when I was young and it developed a lifelong appreciation and conservationist nature in me. I have done many man-months of trails maintenance work in my lifetime and have always been a leave no trace user as a result of the many people who guided me in my outdoors education.

Sincerely,
Hal Stanley