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Comments:

I am writing to comment about the Custer Gallatin National Forest Plan proposal. I am a born and raised Montanan and have been in the Bozeman area for over 21 years. In those 21 years I have spent many hours and days utilizing the vast public lands that we are so blessed to live near in Bozeman. I backpack, hike, rock climb, backcountry ski, cross country ski, truck camp and mountain bike in this area as often as I can when weather, work and life allow.

In an ideal world I wish that we could all share the lands and exclude no users that have been there for years. I am a member of Southwest Montana Mountain Bike Association and IMBA and would like a final plan to not remove bikes from areas where they have been already under the current rules. In my experience, trails where bikes are allowed are in some of the best shape compared to wilderness trails where I have backpacked. I believe that this is due to thousands of volunteer man hours that mountain bikers and horsemen have put in to maintain these trails. If the trails are taken away from bikes this volunteer group will most likely disappear as well.

I believe that the plan that allows bikes to remain in areas where they have been for decades should be considered. As a multi activity user I understand if a few compromises need to be made but access in the Lion Head, Bridger Range, South Cottonwood drainage and the Hylite Area (Emerald Lake and Hyalite Lake/Grotto Falls are) should remain to bikes. I think that through organizations like, Southwest Montana Mountain Bike Association, mountain bikers have proven themselves to be strong stewards of the land and trail systems that already exist. I am not asking for more access, just that the access that exists remains.

Thank you for listening