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Comments:

I am writing to express my opposition to the draft forest plan for the Custer Gallatin National Forest, which includes the Lionhead area as Recommended Wilderness. I oppose it as it would mean no more bikes, in an area that begs to be explored and enjoyed on a bike.

I live in Los Angeles, but often travel to go ride my mountain bike. I often travel as far as Florida and Mexico to ride. I also travel to Montana, Utah, and Idaho, although not as often. Thus, the draft plan impacts me and my travel plans.

I will not lengthen this letter by repeating the arguments by the various mountain biking advocacy groups, but I do agree with them. I also support their proposals.

I will add that in my experience, what gives a place value and makes it worth bettering is the ability to use and enjoy it. If I am excluded from an area by virtue of it being designated "wilderness" (at least under the current interpretation), it may as well be a toxic wasteland. Since funding is always limited, I would oppose funding for the betterment of anywhere I am prohibited from going in favor of funding places I am welcome. The same for travel plans. While this sounds selfish, the reality is that most people feel that way, even if they are unwilling to say so publicly. Take a moment to search your own feelings and consider whether you ever declined funding for your agency so that HUD would have more funding for housing for disabled veterans, etc.

If I can't ride Lionhead, I have no need to go there. Hiking is not a viable alternative as I'm not capable of more than a mile or two on foot. For a mile or two I may as well stay home. Of course, I'd actually go where my bike and I are welcome.

Finally, despite what certain advocacy groups -- who want access only for themselves -- say, alternative designations will not lead to the demise or development of Lionhead or other areas. Incidentally, I do not blame these groups for being selfish; it's in the nature of advocacy groups and I've said, I, too, am being selfish, though not exclusionary.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and for your consideration.