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First name: Kelsey

Last name: Gunther

Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1: 1221 Chestnut St

Address2:

City: Helena

State: MT

Province/Region:

Zip/Postal Code: 59601

Country: United States

Email: kelsey.gunther21@gmail.com

Phone: 406-431-7483

Comments:

Dear USFS review team:

I am writing to express my thoughts about the upcoming Custer-Gallatin National Forest (CGNF) Plan Revision.

The time that I get to spend in the forest is special to me and I prefer to enjoy it while riding my mountain bike. Having the ability to get outside and enjoy our amazing wild areas in a non-destructive and peaceful way cannot be replaced. My hope is that the review team for the CFNF plan will recognize the holistic merits of mountain biking in the woods and will revise the forest plan in a manner that continues to provide for continued bike access to the trails that have been ridden and maintained by bikers for decades.

While I am not in favor of ANY trail closures to bikes, I support the Gallatin Forest Partnership Agreement (GFP) as I recognize it is the result of collaboration and hard work amongst multiple user groups including the Southwest Montana Mountain Bike Alliance (SWMMBA). It seems likely that the GFP agreement is the best hope for bikes in the CGNF even though I would advocate for even more access.

I implore you to continue to manage Recommended Wilderness Areas to allow bicycle use. Mountain bikers have just as much right as anyone to access the forest, particularly when considering the disproportionate amount of trail work that the bike community does when compared to other user groups.

I advocate for the Lionhead area to be managed as a Backcountry Area (BCA) as described in Alternative E. This designation provides significant protection while allowing for historical user groups to continue to access this special place by the non-motorized method of their choice. True backcountry rides like this are more special than any other and cannot be replicated by front country trails. The ruggedness, remoteness, abundance of wildlife, and natural feel of the trails in the Lionhead are irreplaceable to bikers. Climbing above the treeline and soaking in all the majestic beauty that we have just outside our doorstep in Montana is a truly unparalleled feeling. Please designate the Lionhead as a BCA to ensure that fair access is provided to all non-motorized user groups.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read and consider my comments on the forest plan revision.

Sincerely,  
Kelsey Gunther