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Comments:

Hi,

Thanks for the opportunity to comment and for taking the time to read each comment.

I recognize that the Custer- Gallatin is continuing to see more users and it is necessary to figure out a way to manage user groups.

I am a mountain biker, trail runner/hiker, backcountry skier, nordic skier and snowmobiler. I appreciate easy front country access where it seems the majority of the users are venturing, but also most importantly value the opportunity to recreate in remote backcountry settings using the most appropriate and enjoyable method.

I would love the opportunity to continue to ride my mountain bike throughout the Lionhead area. I have been running, biking and snowmobiling the trails in the Lionhead area for the last 15 years and have not noticed any significant increase in users nor have I noticed any user conflicts. I enjoy the opportunity to ride my mountain bike to high mountain lakes such as up Sheep creek to Sheep lake and then hike up to a ridgeline or peak.

Most often biking around Lionhead I see more wildlife than other users and the other users tend to be psyched to see one another and cheer each other on. The Lionhead area provides great high country rugged mountain biking and it would be a huge loss to mountain bikers to see any bike access restricted in this area. I have not seen any trail damage as a result of bikers, nor have I seen a decrease in wildlife or any other adverse impacts. Please do not close the Lionhead area to mountain bikes!!!

I recognize that areas such as the West Bridgers and the popular trails up Hyalite have seen an increase in users. The vast majority of the users seem to use the first few miles of the trails and the more backcountry rugged trails still seem relatively quiet. The challenge seems to be to figure out a way to provide recreational opportunities for those who only want to travel a short distance without cutting off access for users such as mountain bikes who want to pass through the first few miles to access the more remote country. I truly do not believe that closing more trails to mountain bikes is the answer. The more trails that are closed the more bikes will be confined to fewer areas and this seems to only increase the likelihood of user conflicts, such as has happened at user conflicts. The timeshare that is currently in place seems to be a good way to manage the trails that are popular for a variety of user groups. This continues to allow trail users who do not want to interact with mechanized or motorized users certain days that they can use the trail without other distractions. This also continues to give mountain bikers access to trails and the options to connect high country trails.

In most ways alternative E is the most open minded and favorable option. Please do not close more access to mountain bikes this will only cause more congestion and conflict on existing trails as the user groups continue to grow. Ideally building new trails that connect to existing backcountry trails would be ideal but I recognize that takes a lot of money and paperwork. As we continue to have new people moving to the area educating users about responsible and respectful trail use could go a long way to reducing conflict and maintaining our existing trails. I would think most users are out recreating in our national forest to enjoy the beauty and peacefulness and do not want to be destructive or cause conflict. I do think with some education and some time shares we can all share the trails and enjoy them however we desire to travel on them.