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Comments:

Dear Custer Gallatin Planning Team and Supervisor Erickson,

I'm writing to request Recommended Wilderness Area status for the Crazy Mountains.

These mountains are iconic, to southern Montanans, those who cross Montana on I-90 and to those who've seen photos of them used in films. Their dramatic rise from the plains as an island range is captured in photos and paintings. For those of us of a certain age, they are even mentioned lovingly in song (check out Jimmy Buffett's lyrics in Rancho Deluxe). That aside, the Crazy Mountains meet the requirements for Wilderness and deserve protection. They are a piece of a north south migration corridor between the Absaroka Beartooth and the Belts. The Crazies are revered by members of the Crow Nation and carry their cultural heritage. Chief Plenty Coups completed his vision quest there, as Apsaalooke young men had done for hundreds of years.

These mountains were recommended as wilderness by the Forest Service in 1994 (HR. 2473). At that time the checkerboard ownership was in place and that was not a deterrent for their wilderness status. It should not be a deterrent now.

The Crazies contain 129,343 acres of Inventoried Roadless Areas per 3.6.4 of the Draft Revised Forest Plan. I request that the Alternative C Crazy Mountain Backcountry Area acreage be designated an RWA.

I found this quote regarding wilderness and it certainly applies here.

"The rest of the country has been, to a large degree, conquered by farms and ranches and cities and roads and telephone wires," says Tom Heintz, a fifth-generation Montanan and a wilderness guide and outfitter. "That's why tourists want to come to Montana. In a way, they want to come here in order to touch the sacred. But people have to realize that roads are the kiss of death for wild lands. The people that now can find their way into those areas don't find what they went in there for. The values don't exist - the solitude, the tremendous wildlife populations. When an area is roaded or logged or developed - or, as the Forest Service likes to say, 'managed' - you transform the sacred into the mundane. It loses all its character and all its personality and all its power." NY Times 4/16/89

Thank you for considering this input.