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Comments:

While I am a big supporter of Wilderness, I am also someone who enjoys mountain biking--true mountain biking (not in a bike park)

I appreciate the Forest's role to add more Wilderness to the Gallatin. While I feel that some areas would be prime for Wilderness designation, I would really encourage the Forest to consider allowing some areas of this large vast expansive landscape to continue to allow mountain bikes, specifically the Lionhead region. If we keep closing areas to bikes and motorized, those users will have few pristine areas to recreate. Similarly, it won't take much to make all of those users begin to really dislike Wilderness and not support designation in the future.

It seems to me that there is enough suitable land to share all of the resources--designate already existing non motorized/non mechanized zones to wilderness but allow those zones already accessed by motorized and mechanized to allow them to enjoy their national forest on their own terms.

Let's be frank: No one--bikers, hikers, horses, motos--wants to see their land developed by oil/gas leasing, timber harvesting, and cattle grazing. These EXTRACTIVE industries should be what is prohibited. Perhaps designating some zones as Recreation zones, managing for wildlife and recreation while not allowing extractive industry, would basically allow the land to stay as wild as possible but would allow multiple recreation groups to still access the land. Bikes are not motorized and should not be put in the same group as a motorized. Lands can still be managed as wilderness and allow bikes and nothing would change.

While some wilderness advocates are anti mountain bike, I will note the following: Bikes do not pollute or make noise (like motors) They do not leave manure on the trails. They are less impact to the trails because they don't ride when it's muddy. Bikes are quiet sports. Horses make more impact than bikes do, so it's not fair to discriminate and remove bikes from the mountain experience.

I am speaking mainly to the Lionhead Region. This is an area I travel to several times over the summer to camp and ride mountain bikes. It is one of the premier mountain bikes trails in the western states. It has all the elements and is challenging and fun. It would be a sad day for my family and friends if we could not longer ride our bikes (quiet, non polluting bikes) through that area. It would be the one area in the Forest plan that I would really express my concern to keep that area open to mountain bikes. IT is very special and it should be the one area that can still be protected but allow quiet recreation. It's not fair to make the entire forest Wilderness and close bikes from enjoying a fun mountain experience in a zone they are currently allowed to access. You may opt to create other Wilderness areas, but I am writing to express my concern to keep the Lionhead region open to mountain biking.

I thank you for your time and for your consideration.