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Comments:

Hey folks,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Custer Gallatin Forest Plan Revision. I have been recreating in the area for 10+ years and strongly encourage you to keep the Lionhead trail system open for mountain bike use; in particular the CDT, Mile Creek and Sheep Creek trails of the Henrys Lake Mountains for the following reasons: 1) the Lionhead area is one of the last remaining wild places available for adventure mountain bike riding; 2) I believe that mountain bikes are in line with Wilderness Area usage; and 3) allowing mountain bikers access to Wilderness Areas will actually provide significant benefits to wilderness with no additional adverse impacts. Considering that our Forests are supposed to be multiple-use, it seems inappropriate to deny access to this human-powered activity in Wilderness Areas. Data does not support that allowing mountain bikes in Wilderness Areas compromises the wilderness integrity any more than any of the other user groups. In Canada, mountain bikes are allowed in Wilderness Areas and they have even started to open trails in National Parks to mountain bikes because they have seen firsthand that mountain bikes do not adversely affect wilderness more than any other group and can actually help with wilderness stewardship and help support local economies. Lionhead is a prime example of this where user conflict and increased impacts to wilderness are non-existent. I believe that it is time for the USFS to embrace mountain bikers as a valid Wilderness Area user group and as such to keep all trails open to mountain bikes in Wilderness Areas including Lionhead, especially as Forest Plans are being revised. Mountain bikers would be significant wilderness stewardship partners as demonstrated by their support of trails open to mountain bikes across the West. I ask that the Forest Service consider all of the benefits of allowing this group of non-motorized users into Wilderness Areas.