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Comments:

I am a board member of the non profit organization Friends of Hyalite. Friends of Hyalite works in partnership with the Custer Gallatin Forest to assist in providing access to and stewardship of the Hyalite area. One of the projects that I am doing to assist the management of the Hyalite area is collecting data on the vehicle traffic and the number people using Hyalite. On a recent weekend I counted the number of vehicles passing the entrance to Hyalite canyon. There were 128 vehicles and three bicycles moving up and down past that point in one hour and most vehicles had at least 2 people in them!!

This clearly shows the heavy use that our forest is experiencing and points to the need to select an alternative that will manage certain areas for the preservation of the natural qualities of the forest. Two areas in particular that I feel need special management are South Cottonwood canyon, adjacent to Hyalite, and the Crazy Mountains, which are seeing increasing use from both Billings and Bozeman.

I do believe strongly that preservation of the natural qualities is extremely important as the population in our area increases, but I also think we need some balance in how our forest is managed. Therefore, as much as I would like to see wilderness designation in as many areas as possible, as seen in Alternative D, I prefer Alternative C as the best overall alternative. Alternative C provides critical protection to South Cottonwood and the Crazies that is not found in Alternative B.