

Date submitted (Mountain Standard Time): 6/4/2019 8:13:57 AM

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Comments:

One thing I think we can all agree on is the Lolohead area of the Custer-Gallatin National Forest is a very special area deserving our attention and protection. These wild, open places are where I go to escape and recharge. A place to let my mind settle in a time where it races from activity in a chaotic world. I do this many ways, one of them being on my bike. The type of trails in the Lolohead appeal to a certain breed of mountain biker, we almost think of it as a different sport-mountain cycling. Its not the fast, flowy crank it out ride of a front country after work trail. High fives and full face helmets. These are a different kind of trail. They require commitment and respect to ride and maintain. They are technical and difficult to ride up and down. There will be pushing of my bike and self-reliance. If I have an injury or a mechanical on the trail its up to me or those I'm with to figure it out. WE need this in the world we live in when we have constant access to any information at our fingertips and disconnection from real life interactions.

Mountain bikers have ridden in, cared for and cherished the trails for decades. Ironically, you didn't even know we were there! I have tried to parse out and understand the rationale and justification of Wilderness advocates who want to shut me out of these areas. We all want to protect this area, but here in lies the grey area. From who? I'm human powered just like they are, I am quiet and thoughtful, respectful of other users (what other users? in areas like these they are few and far between) my footprint on the trail is light. There are other designations that protect these areas from real threats-roads, oil and gas development true degradations to the wild character of these open spaces. For these reasons I support the Gallatin Forest Partnership managing this area as a Backcountry Area (BCA) to serve the community as a whole. I believe managing these areas to exclude bikes (alternative C and D) is unacceptable.

You have the power to move forward with a future that includes me and my bike. I hope you take me into account.

Thank you for your time

Cassie Buhl