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Subject: Custer Gallatin National Forest Plan Revision

I have been a user of the Custer Gallatin National Forest since 1945, in particular the Gallatin Canyon from West Yellowstone North to the mouth of the canyon. I fished the river before the new highway 191 construction caused redirection of the river banks adjoining Sagebrush Point. In the 50's my parents and I enjoyed a Forest Service leased cabin below Lava Lake. In the summer of 1960 I participated in a man vs. horse race from West Yellowstone to Bozeman. (The horse won) Unfortunately, the cabin was sold while I was in the service from 1964-1969. Upon my return to Bozeman I was fortunate to find employment and in 1978 acquired lots 37-38 in the Castle Rock subdivision approved by the county in 1955. This area is generally shown on your various maps as Gallatin Riverside. My comments are colored by my past experience especially by my enjoyment of the area prior to the establishment of the Big Sky resort. Gallatin Riverside is essentially private land sandwiched between The Lee Metcalf Wilderness to the West the Forest service to the East divided by the Gallatin River. This area is a prime example of a wildland interface area.

Comments:

1. I would agree with Alternative D as the most conducive plan to retain the natural features of the Designated Areas and Recommended Wilderness. However, there needs to be a common understanding between the USFS, Gallatin County and the private land owners as to the use of Gallatin Riverside. Mother Nature doesn't care about legislative boundaries or ownership.

2. The Custer Gallatin National forest is a fixed natural asset with exponential population growth desiring to enjoy multiple recreational opportunities. Because of this growth the Custer Gallatin National Forest will soon experience a tipping point in which use will become abuse. These are my personal observation as I watched the fiasco with the Gallatin County Commissioner's handling of the highway 191 billboard issue over the last 10 years.

3. An example of the dysfunctionality in the relationship between the USFS, Gallatin County and home owners is as follows:

.On 11/23/1918 Diers the owners of what was to become Castle Rock subdivision created a USFS road easement with a reversion to the heirs and successors should the road ceased being use by Gallatin County and USFS. (Filed 11/26/1918, Right of Way Deed #8775, Record of Deeds, Vol.59 P341)

On 2/3/1941 a Right of Way deed was filed in Book 84 of Deeds, page 503, to the United States of America (USA) for an easement and right of way for highway purposes over and across the SE1/4SE1/4 of Section 33, Township 4 South, and Range 4 East. At some point in the 1950's the Squaw Creek Bridge was demolished.

On 2/4/1956 Beckman's filed a subdivision plat known as Castle Rock Tracts with Gallatin County Commissioners. This plat contains a public road designation and was partially represented as the USFS roadway. According to Eric Semerad the current Gallatin County Clerk and Recorder the plat was approved but not accepted by Allen Hargrove, Chairman of the Board on 4 Feb. 1956 with a similar short plat being filed on 1/18/1971.

On 11/18/71 as recorded in Book 33, page 209 Court order 19755 declared the Old USFS road was not a public road and ownership based on Diers original reversion declarations now rested with the grantors and their successors in interest. (Beckman's).

Other than the USA 2/3/1941 Right of way Deed the adjacent road property owners are apparently not aware of their ownership responsibilities in the road as indicated in the 11/18/71 court declaration. My 1979 and 1980 title insurance policies do not show these declarations or court orders. Apparently District Court orders are not

filed with the Gallatin County Clerk and Recorder. Who is responsible for notifying the Luhn Lane property owners they are responsible for the upkeep of the USFS road?

4. The Gallatin Gateway Fire department has acquired property for a fire station on Whittaker Lane in the Castle Rock subdivision less than a mile from the current USFS helipad and ranger station. With the increased commercialization and noxious weed growth is there an opportunity to create a joint USFS/Gallatin Gateway fire protection agreement that would make the station a reality and serve all parties between Big Sky and Gallatin Gateway?

5. On the East side of the Gallatin River land under Forest Service jurisdiction is designated on Gallatin County planning maps as part of the North Gallatin Canyon Zoning District. Posted signs on Storm Castle road indicate no overnight camping while on the Gallatin rivers West side under private ownership an outfitter lights bonfires for his overnight camping clients despite Forest Service seasonal fire restrictions. This also despite MCA 23-302 "Recreational use of surface water" restricting overnight camping within sight of an occupied dwelling or 500 yards without land owner's permission. Does the USFS have any representation on the North Canyon Zoning advisory board?

Although these observations are limited to a specific area I hope the USFS and Gallatin County could work together with property owners to harmonize the use of the last best place.

Thank You.