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Comments:

I greatly appreciate the work of Gallatin Forest Partnership, and especially the mountain bike representatives who deserve special recognition for the concessions they made. I generally support their plan, however, after a lot of thought I don't support allowing mountain bikes in the Buffalo horn-porcupine or the Lionhead area. That usage will increase conflicts with wildlife and also change the character of the place.

I've reached this decision after talking with several mountain bikers, and also experiencing negative effects from mountain bikes while hiking. In addition, mountain bike technology is still developing so any problems we are experiencing now will be far worse in the future as mountain bike performance improves and they become more affordable while at the same time our population continues to grow.

Based on my conversations with mountain bikers there is clearly a significant mechanical advantage. One told me that he could easily do a 20 mile loop in five hours. With such an advantage there will be a huge increase in usage of the backcountry compared to the usage we could expect without mountain bikes. Furthermore, it will get much worse as the population grows and technology improves. While they claim their individual impacts are small, cumulatively their impact will be far greater than hikers because it is so much easier to access these areas with a mountain bike rather than a multi-day backpacking trip, thus mountain it is reasonable to predict that bike users will greatly outnumber hikers and horseback riders in the most critical backcountry areas.

I am also experiencing more and more unpleasant encounters with mountain bikers around town. It won't be long before I will stop using many of the local trails because of them, and some of my friends have already stopped riding their horses on these trails. Even if they can educate 90% of the bikers, given the volume of mountain bikers I would still have bad encounters the majority of the time I hike on a popular mountain bike trail.

Finally, the mountain bike users are quick to claim that, for example, hunters scare more grizzly bears and elk than they do (without evidence). Even if true, this overlooks the fact that hunters will be using mountain bikes to access deep into the backcountry! Thus mountain bikes will make any perceived problems worse! Mountain bikes also use the trails throughout the year so conflicts can be expected throughout the year.