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Comments:

I am commenting to voice my strong opinion that recommended wilderness areas be managed to allow the use of bicycles. Areas such as the western Bridgers and South Cottonwood contain some of the best mountain biking in the Bozeman area. Thousands of residents, including myself, who have enjoyed these trails for years on their bikes are at risk of losing a massive source of utility if management alternatives C or D are put into place. Were these areas to exclude cyclists, thousands of mountain bikers would be forced into less desirable, front-country locations where they get far less enjoyment and interfere with the experiences of near-to-town recreationists. The vastness of the Custer-Gallatin and the opportunities it provides to so many people is an incredible feature of this part of Montana. Closing off over 250 miles of incredible mountain biking trails would be an affront to the scores of riders who enjoy these trails every year and to the thousands upon thousands of volunteer hours mountain bikers have contributed to ensure that this forest is accessible to all who wish to experience it. I consider myself to be a wilderness advocate. It is one of this country's very best ideas. However, when there is precedent for cyclists to be using these lands and there is no proven link between this use and significant ecological damage, the forest and the community will suffer when those lands are closed off. I hope that in the near future I can continue to take my bicycle out to Truman Gulch and ride deep into the forest. I hope that I will still be able to roll to the headwaters of South Cottonwood Creek, with Alex Lowe Peak and Mount Blackmore towering around me while the breeze hits my face and I come across no one else. Thank you for taking this comment.