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First name: Joe

Last name: Wojciechowski

Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1: 211 West Peach Street

Address2:

City: Bozeman

State: MT

Province/Region:

Zip/Postal Code: 59715

Country: United States

Email: joewoj@gmail.com

Phone: 4065995831

Comments:

Hello Gallatin National Forest Folks,

I am writing to you in regards to the Custer-Gallatin National Forest Plan Revision. I have lived in the Gallatin Valley for almost 20 years and I enjoy spending much of my free time in the CGNF. I am an avid backcountry skier and mountain biker. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time exploring many of the trails in this part of Montana.

I am writing you today to express my extreme desire to see the Lionhead area and the Line Creek Plateau kept open for mountain bike use. These two areas include the Mile Creek, Sheep Creek, Watkins Creek and Line Creek trails. I love these wild area with all my heart, both for their majesty and their remote and rugged nature. Nothing can compare with the feeling one gets while pushing up past past the Continental Divide above Mile Creek or finally getting the clear view of Whitetail Peak and the Lake Fork of Rock Creek. Mountain biking in these areas is a major reason why I love being in Montana. Losing mountain bike access to these areas would be a drastic blow to many of us who cherish these areas.

With this new revision of the travel plan, I would personally like to see these areas become a Backcountry Area or a National Recreation Area. I fully support keeping any motorized use or extractive industry use prohibited in these areas. However, if the Forest Service must change these areas into Recommended Wilderness, the trails themselves should remain an open corridor for mountain biking use. In the Lionhead are in particular, mountain bikers have become a vital resource in keeping the trails maintained and improving the trail qualities.

I would also like to voice my support for the Gallatin Forest Partnership. They have the best agenda for the greatest number of users. I urge the CGNF decision makers to work with this group in setting guidelines for forest management. They provide a reasonable and sensible position.

I also support a decision that would lift the blanket ban that Region 1 of the USFS enforces on mountain biking in Recommended Wilderness. Only Congress can designate an area as Wilderness. This blanket ban pretty much de facto makes Recommended Wilderness into Wilderness without so much as a discussion from Congress, and thus a discussion from the American people.

I really do hope that the CGNF can see to a reasonable forest plan revision that respects the desires of mountain bikers to enjoy and be excellent stewards of the national forest!