

Swan View Coalition Nature and Human Nature on the Same Path



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Flathead National Forest
Att: Plan Revision
650 Wolfpack Way
Kalispell, MT 59901

Dear Forest Planning Folks;

We urge you to refine and implement Alternative C, which recommends almost all roadless areas for wilderness designation [1], but to also finish providing the grizzly bear security promised elsewhere on the Forest under the current Forest Plan (Alternative A) [2]. This not only honors past promises you have made to the American public, fish and wildlife, it also recognizes that wilderness is the best protection for wildlands in the face of increasing human populations, mechanized recreation and global temperatures.

By reducing the timber sale program, Alternative C saves taxpayers \$2.2 million per year in habitat-destroying logging subsidies [3] and leaves more carbon stored in trees. This money could instead be spent conducting the ecosystem restoration work promised in the current Forest Plan, largely by decommissioning 520 miles of old logging roads that are still damaging fish and wildlife habitat and by better maintaining the 1,400 miles of roads that would remain open to motor vehicles [4].

Alt. C would also provide long-promised security in the wildlife-rich Krause Basin by prohibiting ATVs from all but the main Peters Ridge and Strawberry Lake roads [5]. This would contribute to wildlife security promised in the current Forest Plan and honor the promise that the old off-road ATV trails “will NOT” be marked on the ground [6].

Unfortunately, Alternatives B and D in the DEIS are premised on removing Endangered Species Act protection from grizzly bears [7], relaxing habitat protections [8] and adding industrial-strength recreation (in part via Focused Recreation Areas including Krause Basin) to industrial-strength logging [9].

Conscientiously refining and combining Alternatives A and C would continue, rather than abandon, current habitat protection programs federal agencies say are increasing grizzly bear numbers so they can expand beyond the 1% of their former range still occupied. This would be enhanced by providing greater habitat security and connectivity

via recommended wilderness, by prohibiting mountain bikes and motor vehicles from recommended wilderness, by prohibiting springtime snowmobiling in areas where it is currently allowed, and by extending protections beyond inadequate recovery zones. [10]

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith". The letters are cursive and slightly slanted to the right.

Keith J. Hammer
Chair

Endnotes

1. Vol. 2 DEIS, page 4-21.
2. Vol. 1 DEIS, pages 22-23.
3. Vol. 2 DEIS, page 115.
4. Vol. 1 DEIS, pages 22-23.
5. Vol. 1 DEIS, page 26.
6. Vol. 1 DEIS, pages 408-412.
See also http://www.swanview.org/articles/whats-new/krause_basin_needs_your_help_right_now/209 .
7. Vol. 1 DEIS, page 399.
8. See http://www.swanview.org/reports/SVC_HBRC_Oral_160707.pdf .
9. Draft Revised Forest Plan, page 116-118.
10. Vol. 1 DEIS, pages 26-28 and Vol. 2 DEIS, Appendix 1, Figure/Map 1-03.