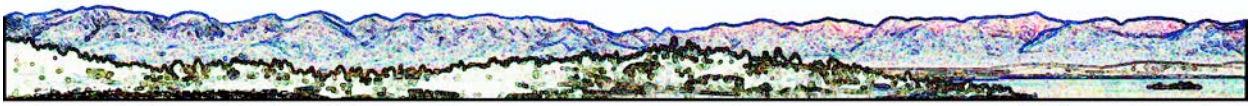
Swan View Coalition *Nature and Human Nature on the Same Path*



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October 30, 2012

Richard Kehr - Swan Lake District Ranger
200 Ranger Station Road
Bigfork, MT 59911

Re: Removal of Bike Features on Beardance and Crane Creek Trails

Dear Rich;

Thank you for hiking the Beardance Trail and a portion of Crane Creek Trail with your recreation staff, Ron Cron and I on October 16, and for your October 17 follow-up letter. We greatly appreciate your intention to return the upper Beardance trail-head to Road #10222 from Road #9755, which will benefit hikers, horseback riders and mountain bikers. We also greatly appreciate your intent to remove bike "challenge features" that are not consistent with trail management objectives. We agree the trail is challenging enough and feel that non-essential structures also violate the ethics of "Leave no Trace."

We ask you to clarify, however, which features you intend to retain because they "provide trail passage over wet areas" and which features you intend to remove. Attached to this letter are photos of 19 features on Beardance Trail #76 and 2 features on Crane Creek Trail #373 (photos B1-B19 and C1-C2, in order of ascending from Hwy 35).

Please respond in writing as soon as possible and indicate for each photo whether you intend to remove that feature or retain it. For each you intend to retain, please explain why. As we expressed during our hike, we find only 2 or 3 features actually serve as appropriate bridges over wet areas. Many others are entirely unnecessary eyesores and safety risks that parallel trail tread that has been adequately relocated or drained in wet areas (as we explain in notes with our photos).

Our intent is to not let this issue fester over the winter and perhaps find ourselves back in disagreement next spring. We appreciate in advance you providing clarification now.

Sincerely,

Keith

Keith J. Hammer
Chair

B1: This ramp has already been removed.

B2: This ramp has already been removed.

B3: This jump has already been removed.

B4: This ramp was to be removed in 2011 but was not.

B5: This ramp was to be removed in 2011 but was not.

B6: These logs are not legitimate necessary bridges as the trail tread is well repaired and adequately drained with rock “culvert” and armor work.

B7: This log serves as a legitimate bridge over a small stream and should be retained. (We lack a photo of a similar short bridge on the upper reach of Beardance Trail that we indicated during our hike should be retained.)

B8: A non-essential "challenge feature" that should be removed.

B9: These logs are not legitimate necessary bridges as the trail tread is well repaired and adequately drained with rock “culvert” and armor work.

B10: These logs are not legitimate necessary bridges as the trail tread is well repaired and adequately drained with rock “culvert” and armor work.

B11: This ramp has already been removed.

B12: The log cribbing for this jump was to be removed but wasn't.

B13: A non-essential and rotting “challenge feature” that should be removed.

B14: A non-essential “challenge feature” that should be removed.

B15: The log cribbing for this unauthorized jump should be removed.

B16: A non-essential “challenge feature” that should be removed.

B17: A non-essential “challenge feature” that should be removed.

B18: A non-essential “challenge feature” that blocks the trail and should be removed.

B19: A non-essential “challenge feature” that blocks the trail and should be removed.

C1: With the Crane Creek Trail adequately relocated out of the wet area, the logs are not needed, not a legitimate bridge, invite activity in the wet seep, and should be removed.

C2: While longer than necessary, this log does provide a bridge over a wet area.

We support restoring Bear Dance trail to this trail-head. Thank you.

Road #9755 provides a less desirable trail-head and replaces a couple miles of historic trail . . .

. . . with an unpleasant trek down an old road infested with noxious weeds and not cleared of deadfall.