



File Code: 1950-1

Date: June 9, 2008

Dear Friends of the Gallatin National Forest:

In December of 2006, the Forest Service (Gallatin National Forest) published a decision for a Forest Travel Management Plan. That decision prohibited motorcycles on segments of the Lower Deer Creek Trail #5, the Lodgepole Trail #124, and the Dry Fork Trail #13 in the Deer Creeks and East Boulder River drainages southeast of Big Timber, Montana. These motorcycle restrictions were made in part, because these trails cross over into the Meyers Creek drainage on the Custer National Forest, and they were proposing at the time to manage that drainage for non-motorized uses. In other words, the rationale for our decision was to ensure that routes adjacent to and connecting to the Custer National Forest were managed consistently across forests [GNF Travel Plan Record of Decision (ROD), page 45]. In June of 2008, the Custer National Forest released their ROD for the Beartooth Travel Management Plan and the selected alternative will manage the Lodgepole Trail #22 and the Meyers Creek Trail #27 for motorcycle use. Therefore, to be consistent with the management of those trails with the connecting Gallatin National Forest trail system, we are proposing to modify our Travel Management Plan as follows (see attached map):

- Open the section of the Dry Fork Trail #13, above Moccasin Lake (Sec. 16, T4S, R14E to its junction with Custer National Forest Trail #27) to motorcycles annually from June 16th to December 1st.
- Open the section of the Lodgepole Trail #124, east of Wepler Cabin (Sec. 26, T3S, R14E to its junction with Custer National Forest Trail #22) to motorcycles annually from June 16th to December 1st.
- Open the section of the Lower Deer Creek Trail #5, from the Deer Creek Cabin (Sec. 8, T3S, R14E to its junction with the Lodgepole Trail #124) to motorcycles annually from June 16th to December 1st.

To assist me in making my decision I am now soliciting public comment on these proposals.

Providing Comments

In addition to the public comments we receive, I will base my decision on the Gallatin National Forest Travel Management Plan FEIS (October 2006). This FEIS is posted on the Gallatin National Forest website at: http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin/travel_planning.

Comments will be accepted until July 18, 2008. To be most helpful, comments should be substantive and specific to the proposal to allow motorcycles on the trails identified above. They should include: (1) name, address, telephone number, and organization represented, if any; (2) title of the action (i.e. "East Boulder/Deer Creeks Trails"); (3) specific facts and supporting reasons for me to consider; and (4) signatures.



Written comments should be sent to:

Gallatin National Forest
Attn: Steve Christiansen
P.O. Box 130
Bozeman, MT 59771

Electronic comments can be e-mailed to: r1_gallatin_comments@fs.fed.us. Enter the phrase "East Boulder/Deer Creeks Trails" in the subject line. Comments may also be faxed to (406) 587-6758. If you have questions please contact Bill Avey, District Ranger, Big Timber Ranger District at (406) 932-5155.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied, the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address.

Sincerely,

/s/ Mary C. Erickson
MARY C. ERICKSON
Forest Supervisor