

**File Code:** 1950

**Date:** September 27, 2023

Dear Interested Parties:

The Custer Gallatin National Forest has released a draft Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) along with an updated Environmental Assessment for the East Crazy Inspiration Divide Land Exchange Project.

The documents can be found on the project webpage:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/custergallatin/?project=63115>.

Many people care deeply about the lands and landscapes involved in this land exchange proposal. The comment period on the Preliminary Environmental Assessment ended last December. I appreciate the thoughtful comments we received. We have spent the last nine months on continued negotiations and refinements of the project. I heard concerns about the importance of conservation of parcels that leave the public estate, about protecting wetlands, and preserving access, especially in the Buck Ridge area and the Sweet Grass drainage.

To address these issues, Alternative 1, the modified proposed action was created. Alternative 1 includes elements of the proposed action and incorporates durable conservation tools such as conservation easements and protective covenants to limit development on key parcels. It also includes wetland protection through modified federal parcel boundaries and deed restrictions. We addressed stream access and dispersed recreation in the Sweet Grass Drainage, and retention of snowmobile riding opportunities in Buck Ridge through boundary modifications.

My decision is to select Alternative 1. My rationale and findings are laid out in the Draft Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact, which are available on the [project website](#).

Individuals or organizations who submitted specific written comments in response to scoping or comment periods provided for the Environmental Assessment may file an objection to this project. The notice of objection must meet the content requirements at 36 CFR 218.8.

Objections, including attachments, must be filed within 45 days following the publication date of the legal notice in the Bozeman Daily Chronicle (Bozeman, Montana), the newspaper of record. The publication date of the legal notice in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection. We expect the legal notice to be published on September 27, 2023.



**Electronic objections are preferred:**

<https://cara.fs2c.usda.gov/Public//CommentInput?Project=63115>

Please view the legal notice or Draft Decision Notice and FONSI for complete objection instructions. Thank you for your time and interest in the management of your public lands.

Sincerely,

MARY C. ERICKSON  
Forest Supervisor  
Custer Gallatin National Forest

cc: Lauren Oswald  
Kathryn Nash  
Amanda Williams