



Public Land/Water Access Association
PO Box 80987
Billings, MT 59108
www.plwa.org

Mary Erickson, Forest Supervisor
Custer Gallatin Nation Forest
10 East Babcock Ave.
Bozeman, MT 59715

Dear Mary,

This letter provides input from the Public Land/Water Access Association (PLWA) on the private land owners' proposed land exchange on the east side of the Crazy Mountains that has been subject of consideration by the Crazy Mountain Stakeholders Group. While PLWA is not a member of that group, promoters of the land exchange (Jeff Peterson and Tom Glass) shared information about it with a few PLWA board/staff members at a January 21, 2020 meeting in Billings. Our preliminary input herein is based on the conceptual proposal discussed at that meeting. We look forward to offering additional input once a formal proposal is advanced through the USFS review process and subject of public comment.

We agree that a land exchange can reduce access conflicts to both the private property and the public lands. The proposal set forth does appear to solve the access issue relative to the East Trunk Trail. The plans to construct the trail with private money and to have permanent easements granted by the private landowners offer very positive steps in solving the access issue.

The public has expressed concern for several years about the lack of access from the county road to the public lands in Sweet Grass Creek. We expressed PLWA's concern about this lack of access to Jeff Peterson and Tom Glass at our January 2020 meeting. This proposal includes trading Forest Service Sections 12, W1/2 Section 7, Section 8, Section 10 and portions of Section 12, T 4 N., Range 12 E. to private land owners, but it does not address this public access issue. Have any conversations about the proposal included discussions concerning this access issue in Sweet Grass Creek? If not, we urge all involved parties to do so.

In conclusion, we believe the proposal has merit with respect to the East Trunk Trail new construction and the parts of the land exchange specific to that trail construction. The proposal is lacking, however, with respect to addressing public access needs/conflicts in the Sweet Grass Creek drainage. Before we could consider supporting the total proposal, it needs to be improved to help solve the access issue from the county road up Sweet Grass Creek.

Sincerely yours,

Bernard W. Lea, President
Public Land/Water Access Association

cc: Tom Glass
1760 High Street
Denver, CO 80218

cc: Jess Peterson
100 North 27th Street, Suite 500
Billings, MT 59101