



March 29, 2021

Ken Coffin, District Ranger
Custer Gallatin National Forest
6811 Highway 212 South
Red Lodge, MT 59068

Dear Ken,

This letter is in response to your letter of February 22nd, 2021, and our recent telephone conversation.

The Public Land/Water Access Association still has serious concerns about the United States allowing a private landowner, from which a right of way easement has been acquired, to charge a fee to a person who is using an easement to access to public land. We understand fees need to be charged for improvements constructed to serve the public, but it does not seem appropriate to charge a fee simply for using an existing easement.

There seems to be a lack of logical balance in the argument presented. If the permittee is stating that access presents a safety issue due to the primary use type of the majority of users, in this case skiers, it might make more sense to limit the individuals wishing access. Yet if there is a fee being levied for said access, then this negates the safety issue and it becomes a usage and access issue. In this case, it appears that if the individual is willing to pay the fee, the safety issue goes away.

We hope this issue can be resolved in a manner that is more in line with normal easement acquisitions by the government for public access, and look forward to working with you to resolve the issue.

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President, PLWA

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