

Mark,

I have been studying up on the proposal to make a bike trail south of Como Lake. Thanks again for the GIS files. My intent is to better understand what the current status of roads and trails is in the area and what your proposal is.

Please understand that my comments below are mine alone. Larry and I intend to put the bike trail on the agenda for the February Ravalli County Collaborative with my hope we can reach consensus on a written comment letter back to FS.

In order to do that, I need to be fairly familiar with the proposal.

So, with that I offer my personal comments back to you now so you can correct any glaring errors in my thinking.

A few concerns:

9 miles of new trails in an area that is already heavily roaded seems excessive.

Roads and trails on ridges disrupt wildlife use, particularly big game, and make hunting more difficult.

Further fragmentation of big game habitat in this area via new trails and increased human disturbance is detrimental to use by big game and other wildlife and makes hunting more difficult.

User created trails were/are illegal. People that created them must not be rewarded by making their trails permanent.

I note that some roads in this area have seasonal closures. Seems like the sign indicated the closure is to benefit calving elk?

I offer my alternative trail below in red. It still includes some new trail but much less. It creates a large loop trail using a mixture of existing roads and new trail connectors. I would like to see a new connection from road 550A to Bunkhouse Road. With this new connection, riders could make an even bigger loop down Bunkhouse Road to Old Darby Road to Como Lake Road and then to the Boat Ramp. Bunkhouse road comes very close to the FS boundary at Bunkhouse Creek as all online maps show. I understand that an easement may need to be purchased to facilitate this connection.

Steve Schmidt

