

Hello,

Please note that I am commenting on behalf of the Montana Bicycle Guild (MBG), a 501c nonprofit based in Helena, Montana and the over 300 members we represent. MBG promotes Montana's mountain biking community and to helps develop and maintain trails for everyone to enjoy. Many of MBG's members recreate regularly on trails that may have grizzly habitat and recognize the need for caution and alertness when bicycling National Forests, BLM, and other public and private lands.

MBG is concerned with the red text found in item 16 d. suggesting that temporary trail closures and special use permits be impacted by grizzly activity.

**16 d. Recreation use on our public lands is rapidly increasing. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should coordinate with public land managers to develop plans to address the impacts from recreational use and prevent conflicts between grizzly bears and people on the landscape. This should include a mix of actionable items (i.e. temporary trail closures, special use permits) and consistent and comprehensive outreach and education.**

Mountain bikers in Montana are well aware of the wildlife that surrounds them, whether they are on close to home trails around Helena, which is frequented by mountain lions and the occasional moose, or biking in outlying areas where all sorts of wildlife can be seen. Bikers, like hunters, trail runners, and equestrians, understand that bears and other wildlife are part and parcel with experiencing public lands in Montana. Many bikers take precautions such as making noise, riding in groups, using bells, and carrying bear spray. We do not believe temporary trail closures are the solution. Indeed, one would need to close entire regions to human presence which is not effective or practical, and is contrary to the multiple use mandate of the Forest Service and similar mandates of other public land managers.

In normal years MBG also hosts the Montana Enduro Series, which includes races at Big Sky Resort, Whitefish Resort, Grand Targhee Resort and Jackson Hole Resort - all areas in Grizzly country. We work to ensure the safety of participants by monitoring activity and coordinating with the resorts and Forest Service through permitting to minimize conflict between all wildlife and racers. Preventing permitting and shutting down races is not the answer and will harm local economies and the ability of MBG to maintain trails. Currently at our races, we have had and will continue to conduct temporary course closures whenever wildlife is present (deer, moose, elk, bear, cows, etc.) Racing in the area stops until the wildlife moves away at their own discretion (no hazing) before reopening the race. This most recently occurred at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort when a sow black bear and two cubs decided to travel along a section of the course.

Education and knowledge are useful tools, and we would be glad to share information provided by FWP and other sources. Shutting down trails and not issuing permits is not the answer.

Further, MBG notes that there does not appear to be representation from bicyclists or trail runners (human powered recreation) that may be negatively impacted by decisions made by the Governor's Grizzly Bear Advisory Committee.

Thank you,

Jeff Bradley  
Montana Bicycle Guild