



Custer Gallatin National Forest

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News Release

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Public Comment Sought on Making Temporary Hyalite Target Shooting Prohibition Permanent

Bozeman, MT – In April of this year, the Custer Gallatin National Forest issued a special order temporarily prohibiting discharge of a firearm, air rifle, or gas gun for the purpose of target shooting within the Hyalite drainage south of Bozeman, Montana. The Forest Service is now proposing to make this prohibition permanent and is seeking public comment. The temporary restriction remains in place until an environmental analysis process is complete and a decision is reached, likely January 2017.

The primary purpose of the temporary target shooting restriction was to address public safety issues. The Hyalite drainage receives more than 40,000 visitors monthly in the summer and over 20,000 visitors monthly in the winter. It is the most heavily recreated drainage on National Forest System lands in the state of Montana. It is a narrow glaciated valley with a huge number of developed and dispersed recreation sites, 65 miles of road and about 70 miles of trail. The density of development and volume of recreationists make it unsafe to target shoot. Target shooting is defined as any shooting other than in pursuit of game and includes paint ball guns.

“We recognize the real safety issues and concerns resulting from the large amount of target shooting in this drainage,” said Lisa Stoeffler, Bozeman District Ranger. “Since the temporary closure of the drainage in April to target shooting the Forest and Friends of Hyalite have been working to clean up the tons of trash from these shooting areas and to listen to interested and concerned organizations and individuals.”

A broader, county-wide planning effort for target shooting may occur in the future and is not part of this proposal. Alternatives that address target shooting opportunities and/or restrictions on other national forest lands are not being considered at this time. The proposed restriction does not limit the ability to carry or possess a legal firearm within the Hyalite drainage.

Comments will be accepted until September 19, 2016 and

can be mailed Gallatin National Forest, attn: Steve Christiansen, P.O. Box 130, Bozeman, MT 59771.

Electronic comments can be emailed to comments-northern-gallatin@fs.fed.us, enter the phrase “Hyalite Shooting Restriction” in the subject line. Comments may also be faxed to (406) 587-6758. If you have questions please contact Steve Christiansen at (406) 587-6701 or Lisa Stoeffler, Bozeman District Ranger, at (406) 522-2520.