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Comments:

Dear Custer Gallatin Forest Plan,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Forest Plan proposal. I have lived in Bozeman since 1969 and have frequently hiked and backpacked in the Gallatin, Crazy, Bridger, Absaroka and Beartooth mountain ranges and in adjoining Yellowstone National Park. I greatly value the wilderness character of these mostly wild, primitive and relatively undisturbed and untrammelled lands. For these and many other reasons, I strongly favor option D in the Forest Plan - for our country's collective future and that of our children. Wilderness brings us closer to nature and our beginnings, providing humanity a sense of place and origin uncluttered by technology, noise and encroachment.

My main concern is the designation and preservation of the Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn wilderness study area as permanent wilderness to be managed as wilderness. My reasons for this recommendation are many. I am familiar with the region, having hiked through most areas from Hyalite Peak south to Yellowstone Park (YP). The HPBH (Gallatin Crest) range is pristine, natural, undisturbed and exceedingly beautiful and of National Park character. In fact, the entire area is a geographical, ecological, wildlife and silvicultural northern extension of Yellowstone Park and it deserves protective management accordingly. It is a little known national treasure. Case in point, when hiking up Dailey Creek in YP, continuing over over Dailey Pass, passing by Buffalo Horn lakes and out Buffalo Horn Creek in the Gallatin Custer forest, it is impossible to know when you have left the Park and entered the forest were it not for the red/white boundary post. The land topography, forest, wildlife, views, mountains, smells and isolation do not change. It is the same as you continue north on the Crest trail to Hyalite Peak. The HPBH area is an integral part of the Yellowstone ecosystem and should be preserved without threat from mechanized and/or motorized intrusion.

Option D provides for timber management on 26% of the Custer Gallatin forest (3,039,000 acres) when compared to 23% (711,000 acres) of recommended wilderness study areas. This leaves 51% of the forest potentially accessible to additional multiple uses; to me a fair appropriation.

This long term forest plan should be true to its mission and seriously consider the longer term implications and rewards for future generations of Americans and our guests. Thank you.

PS I have purposely not mentioned water quality issues for rapidly expanding Bozeman nor enhanced CO2 uptake by forested areas and other related topics relying on others to discuss these concerns regarding the HPBH wilderness study area.