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Comments:

I am in writing about the future of wild lands in the Custer Gallatin National Forest.

I am in favor of Alternative D of the draft forest plan, with improvements suggested below, which would offer the best protection for the Gallatin Range and other critical wildlife habitat across the Custer Gallatin National Forest.

- Alternative D of the Revised Draft Forest Plan is good; however, it should include adding the entire 230,000 wild, roadless acres of the Gallatin Range as Recommend Wilderness in the final forest plan.

The following also expand on the importance for the wild Gallatin Range:

- The plan should prohibit all motorized and mechanized uses, and any other activities not consistent with wilderness protection, in the Recommended Wilderness areas. This is necessary to preserve their wilderness qualities until Congress acts on the wilderness recommendations.

- The draft plan doesn't have much direction for administering the Absaroka-Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses. Current wilderness management plans allow destructively large groups of up to 25 head of stock (horses and mules) and 15 people in most areas. Research shows that impacts increase significantly when group-sizes exceed eight head of stock and 12 people. The Forest Service should reduce group size limits in order to protect all Wildernesses on the forest from harm. The forest plan should also end ecologically destructive fish stocking in naturally fishless wilderness lakes, which significantly alters the areas' natural conditions.

- The plan must address the issue of human and pack animal feces contamination of lakes and streams on the Beartooth Plateau in the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness. Eliminating fish stocking would likely go a long way toward solving this problem, but additional measures must be included if needed.

Please implement Alternative D with the suggested revisions. The wilderness depends on it.