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First name: Anne

Last name: Banks

Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1: 7 Hill St

Address2:

City: Bozeman

State: MT

Province/Region:

Zip/Postal Code: 59715

Country: United States

Email: anban@bresnan.net

Phone: 406-587-7629

Comments:

Alternative D is the best choice for many reasons: It provides the largest amount of recommended Wilderness, providing habitat and connectivity for the many species of animals and plants in the Forest, and a refugium for species as climate change affects the Forest.

Adding the Cowboy Heaven area to Wilderness is an important connection both with the BLM Beartrap Wilderness and with the Lee Metcalf Wilderness to the south. Protection of the Crazies and the Pryors as Wilderness is important both for Native American values and cultural significance and for biological significance, especially the unique flora of the Priors. (Comments by Gretchen Rupp and Peter Lesica on behalf of the Montana Native Plant Society identify particular species.) Established public access to the Crazies across private land must be maintained. Protecting the Lionhead recommended Wilderness is important, too.

In the 48 years I've lived in Bozeman, I have hiked, backpacked and cross country skied in much of the forest, particularly the Bridgers and the Hyalites and Gallatin Crest, so am familiar with conditions on the ground and its qualities and beauties. The area is certainly deserving of Wilderness protection. Grizzlies, wolves, and wolverines, not to mention deer, elk, moose, antelope need its protected habitat. Management as Wilderness will also help to retain water quality and prevent invasion by noxious weeds.

Recommended Wilderness must be managed like Wilderness, to maintain its Wilderness character. No motorized or mechanized use must be allowed. The Porcupine and Buffalo Horn drainages are part of the HPBH WSA; it is particularly important both for legal reasons -- I believe you are compelled by court order to manage them to retain their eligibility for Wilderness designation -- and for ecological reasons -- they are important grizzly habitat and elk winger range. Mountain bikes and motorcycles should be strictly forbidden there. Although the Big Sky snowmobile trail crosses them, snowmobiling should not be allowed, either. (I believe the terrain is difficult enough that they're not popular with snowmobilers.)

I hope you will agree that selection of Alternative D is best both for forest health and the survival of its inhabitants and for public use. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.