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Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Custer Gallatin National Forest Draft Management Plan. My comments focus on the areas that I most often frequent and which are dearest to my heart - the Gallatin, Madison and Crazy Mountains. These areas are threatened by our booming population growth and deserve protection to preserve their wild character, unique wildlife populations, pristine watersheds. The potential for degradation from overuse in the coming years can be prevented through careful and thoughtful management practices as an outcome of the revised Forest Plan.

I strongly support the recommendations from the Gallatin Forest Partnership. This plan will ensure that the 102,000 acres between Yellowstone National Park and Hyalite Peak are protected as Recommended Wilderness. In addition, I ask that areas designated as Recommended Wilderness be managed as Wilderness, in other words, no mechanized or motorized travel, no non-conforming uses be allowed. This exceptional area of wildness and quiet solitude brings peace of mind and an understanding that humans are only one small part of this important ecosystem. Wildlife, water, forests and clean air are equally important but fragile, and must not be taken for granted, or lost to human activity and development.

The Crazy Mountains present difficult challenges for management. Private landowners have real concerns about the future of their own lands however, solutions to the pattern of checkerboard private land and public land are not impossible and have been possible in many other Forest areas. I support recommended Wilderness designation for areas of the Crazy Mountains that will preserve the wild nature of the area and the cultural heritage of the Crow Tribe.

Thank you for the long, intensive research and work that has gone into the process for the revised Custer Gallatin Forest Plan. I have appreciated the many opportunities for meeting with Forest Service staff at public meetings and for the chance to offer comments.