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Comments:

This letter contains my comments regarding the Chalk Buttes area of the Sioux District of the Custer Gallatin National Forest.

I grew in Ohio, but have lived most of my adult life in the western United States. I have enjoyed the magnificent scenery and vistas throughout the American west. However, every time I think I have seen the most amazing view of my life. I come across another one that tops the previous one.

This happened to me again with a recent visit and hike through the Chalk Buttes near Ekalaka, Montana. As I approached the area, the white sandstone buttes seemed to rise out of nowhere. I eventually stopped and hiked with a group of people, led by a local resident familiar with the Buttes. We spent a lot of time scrambling up and down saddles and over high plateaus. We hiked along the plateau's eastern edge. We saw magnificent horizons that seemed endless. Looking east toward South Dakota one could believe the world is flat, although with a little imagination, I thought I could see the curve of the earth. It was absolutely amazing.

Although relatively few people visit this area, it is a region worth protecting. Those wilderness characteristics that still remain here must be preserved. Features such as Fighting Buttes and the surrounding landscape are simply unforgettable. One has to be very deliberate to go to the Chalk Buttes, but it is a trip worth taking. I hope to get back soon. However, even if I never get the opportunity to return, it is important that the Chalk Buttes area's wilderness characteristics are preserved for future generations. It would be good to know that there are still remote areas one can go to and appreciate.

Therefore I would like to see that the Chalk Buttes be managed as a "backcountry area." Prohibiting motorized and mechanized recreation, as reflected in Alternative D would be wise since little demand for mountain biking or OHV use exists in Chalk Buttes. There is no good reason for the Forest Service to allow these types of recreation in this area.

Thank you for allowing me to submit these comments.