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Comments:

Hello,

Thank you for your work to create a comprehensive plan to ensure a sustainable future for public lands of the CGNF. The long term sustainability of the land resource and the socioeconomic development of surrounding communities will undoubtedly rely on recreation management in decades to come.

The former 1987 plan decision was not in a position to predict the recreation impacts and new technologies that would proliferate with a growing local population and increased tourism. The Custer Gallatin NF remains in the heart of one of Montana's chief recreation destinations - crucial to our burgeoning outdoor recreation economy but also under threat of over or misuse. Therefore, I feel that it is important for land managers on the CGNF to create a plan that prioritizes recreation management that is adaptable and enforceable. It is important for this reason to protect the social will for the CG NF's Recommended Wilderness by prohibiting non-conforming uses. Allowing such uses will undoubtedly degrade the social will for future designation of Wilderness-worthy landscapes. It is your duty to properly manage these landscapes to preserve not only their unique ecology but also their possibility for future designation as Wilderness - which at this juncture is just as reliant on the wild character of a given landscape as it is on the political will for congress to act. With this planning process, the CGNF has possibly the last opportunity in a forest planning process to make a significant wilderness recommendation. Many Wilderness worthy lands from 30 years ago are no longer eligible for social or ecological purposes to realistically gain Wilderness protection someday. Within the next 30 years and with growing pressures of use from a growing population, it is reasonable to expect that opportunity to offer RW designation to roadless areas will once again be degraded. I urge you to seize the opportunity to recommend worthy areas in the CGNF as Wilderness and manage them as such.

I also urge you to work with the Crow tribe, private landowners and other stakeholders to define and enforce a protected future for the crazy mountains. A collaborative process around this beloved, special and wild landscape will be essential to its preservation.

Also, I urge you to consider and uphold the collaborative recommendations of the Gallatin Forest Partnership. This collaborative community group is diverse, well rounded, and unified. They represent a middle of the road approach and have already had the difficult conversations and made the difficult decisions so you don't have to.

Finally, I urge you to support and explore opportunities for shared stewardship projects and working creatively with stewardship contractors to carry out not only forest management projects but also recreation projects or other improvements as this makes sense. Stewardship projects can offer a lot of flexibility that has the potential to streamline work on the ground and save money in the process.

Oh one last thing - thank you for having a volunteer coordinator on the forest. I urge you to continue to seek ways that public-private partnerships and utilizing volunteers can help you accomplish your management or monitoring goals.

Thank you for reading my comments,

Grete