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Comments:

Dear Ms. Erickson,

Having attended a meeting about the forest plan revision and having read the Draft Revised Forest Plan fairly thoroughly, I thank you for all your work to decide on the direction of the Custer Gallatin National Forest.

Having lived in Big Sky and Bozeman since 1978, it is naturally the part of the forest with which I am most familiar. It has also been my playground. I have spent a great deal of time hiking, biking, and back country skiing in the surrounding mountains.

When I visit other places in the country to hike, bike, and ski, I am always struck by the feeling that nowhere else provides the same feeling of space and lack of crowds as the mountains around here.

And so, as the crowds are now moving here, I think it is very important to preserve as much of the forest as possible in a natural state. Wildlife habitat and corridors need to be preserved. I would urge you to consider which areas are best suited as wilderness and then make the decision to preserve those characteristics so Congress can make that official designation. Once an area loses the wild characteristics, it will never get them back. It is easy to see the effect of past decisions, and only your decision to protect these areas as recommended wilderness areas will give them a chance to become real wilderness areas. I would specifically urge you to designate as much of the Gallatin range as possible as recommended wilderness.

Thanks again for all your work on this plan.

Best Regards,

Peter Scherfig