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Comments:

Following are my comments on the Custer Gallatin National Forest plan revision draft Plan:

1. Maintain current boundaries of the Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness and add the following as designated Wilderness: Emigrant Peak, Dome Mountain, Chico Peak, Woodbine, Red Lodge Creek and East Rosebud to Stillwater. I support Alternative D for the Absaroka Beartooth Mountains Geographic Area. I have hiked in the A-B and the additional areas I recommend for Wilderness designation. These areas are all critical wildlife habitat and need protection to keep them that way. They all contain Wilderness characteristics and should have Wilderness designation reflecting what they clearly are: wild places, or Wilderness.

2. Manage recommended Wilderness areas as designated Wilderness, as required by law. This means that mechanized travel, including mountain biking and any form of motorized use cannot be allowed in such areas.

3. In the Suitability section 116, the proposed Plan talks about the "lack of suitability" for motorized and mechanized travel in Wilderness. That wording is vague. I recommend the wording, "Mechanized travel is not permissible." As a quiet trail user, my personal experience is that foot and horse travel allow for a true wild experience away from roads and mechanical conveyances. Mechanized travel in Wilderness would reduce that landscape to something less than it is.

4. I recommend adopting the Gallatin Forest Partnership agreement, which is reflected in Alternative C. The agreement calls for Wilderness designation for 102,000 contiguous acres between Yellowstone National Park and Hyalite Peak, ensuring north-south connectivity and a diverse habitat for grizzly bears.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.