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Comments:

I am disappointed that the draft plan has little direction for administering the Absaroka-Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses. The current wilderness management plans allows destructively large groups of up to 25 head of stock (horses and mules) and 15 people in most areas. I believe research shows that impacts increase dramatically when group-sizes exceed eight head of stock and 12 people. The Forest Service should reduce group size limits accordingly so as to protect all Wildernesses on the forest from future harm and allow some healing.

The plan must also address the issue of human and pack animal feces contamination of lakes and streams on the Beartooth Plateau. Eliminating fish stocking would likely go a long way toward solving this problem, but additional measures must be included if needed.

Vacant grazing allotments in the Wildernesses should be closed so these areas can return to a wild condition and feed wildlife.

Very little or no trail construction or reconstruction in the currently trailless areas should be allowed. This provides remote areas for wildlife as well as premier areas for solitude.

I support the wilderness recommendations in Alternative D of the Revised Draft Forest Plan; however, they should be improved by adding the entire 230,000 wild, roadless acres of the Gallatin Range as Recommend Wilderness in the final forest plan.

Also, the plan should prohibit all motorized and mechanized uses, and any other activities not consistent with wilderness protection, in the Recommended Wilderness areas so as to preserve their wilderness qualities until Congress acts on the wilderness recommendations.