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Comments:

I have a friend who retired to live near Yellowstone a few years ago, and as a result, I have become an annual visitor to this area.

The current wilderness management plans allows destructively large groups of up to 25 head of stock (horses/mules) and 15 people in most areas. Research shows that impacts increase significantly when group-sizes exceed eight head of stock and 12 people. The Forest Service should reduce group size limits accordingly -- to protect all Wildernesses on the forest from harm.

In addition, the forest plan should put an end to ecologically destructive fish stocking in naturally fishless wilderness lakes, which significantly alters the areas' natural conditions.

Also, the plan must address the issue of human and pack animal feces contamination of lakes and streams on the Beartooth Plateau in the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness. Eliminating fish stocking would likely solve much of this problem, but additional measures must be included if necessary.

Please close vacant grazing allotments in the Wildernesses so these areas can return to a wild condition.

Make no trail construction or reconstruction in the currently trail-less areas of the Absaroka Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses. This provides remote areas for wildlife as well as human areas for solitude.

I strongly support the wilderness recommendations in Alternative D of the Revised Draft Forest Plan.

However, they must be improved by adding the entire 230,000 wild, roadless acres of the Gallatin Range as Recommend Wilderness in the final forest plan.

The following also expand on the importance for the wild Gallatin Range:

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.

Thank you for your careful management of these amazing wilderness areas.