

Date submitted (Mountain Standard Time): 6/3/2019 1:37:11 PM

First name: Michael

Last name: LaGassey

Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1: 907 E. Cayuga St.

Address2:

City: Tampa

State:

Province/Region: Florida

Zip/Postal Code: 33603

Country: United States

Email: mickeynow@gmail.com

Phone: 8132956851

Comments:

The draft plan for administering the Absaroka-Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses has little direction for keeping these areas free from intrusive, motorized, and mechanized transportation. 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. 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 so as to protect all Wildernesses on the forest from harm. Further, the forest plan should put an end to ecologically destructive fish stocking in naturally fishless wilderness lakes, which significantly alters the areas' natural conditions. 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 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. There should be no trail construction or reconstruction in the currently trailless areas of the Absaroka Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses. This would provide 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, those recommendations must be improved by adding the entire 230,000 wild, roadless acres of the Gallatin Range as Recommended Wilderness in the final forest plan. The following three points also expand on the importance for the wild Gallatin Range. As previously stated, 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 attention to this matter.