

Date submitted (Mountain Standard Time): 6/4/2019 8:52:02 AM

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Comments:

Dear Custer Gallatin National Forest Managers:

As one who is concerned about the future of wild lands in the Custer Gallatin National Forest, I offer the following comments for the plan revision:

1. The draft plan has lacks sufficient direction for administering the Absaroka-Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses. The current wilderness management plans allow 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 8 head of stock and 12 people. The Forest Service should reduce group size limits accordingly so as to protect all Wilderness areas from harm.

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

3. 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.

4. Vacant grazing allotments in the Wilderness areas should be closed so these areas can return to a wild condition.

5. While I support the wilderness recommendations in Alternative D of the Revised Draft Forest Plan, 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.

6. Finally, 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 considering my comments.