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Comments:

I 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 Recommended Wilderness in the final forest plan. The following three points also expand on the importance for the wild Gallatin Range.

Americans deserve to have a place to go to escape the air and noise pollution from internal combustion engines. Maintaining and restoring our National Forests are the best way to combat the building concentration of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. Hiking the National Forests should be a chance to escape the noise and exhaust fumes from motorized vehicles. Motorized vehicles in our National Forests are a reminder for visitors about the cause of climate change, and the absence of motorized vehicles on our public lands would demonstrate hope for our younger generations that adults can stop causing the climate change to get worse, and can instead reduce unnecessary emissions within the forests and grasslands that we need to clear the air and clean and store our water. Therefore, the forest 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.

The draft plan has little direction for administering the Absaroka-Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses. The current wilderness management plan 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.