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Comments:

Thank you so much for the opportunity for the community to share its thoughts about the use and protection of these wild lands and spaces. This is a lot of information to read, digest and consider. There are so many different uses, causes, and effects this land has on the southwest corner of our state.

For me, I first and foremost want to see two things in 20, 50, 100 years time. I want these spaces to still exist in the way I know them today. I also want the public to have access to them. Sometimes these can be conflicting and cause disagreement about land use. But the second one is just as important to me because the access and experiences I have had in the Custer Gallatin Forests is what has made me into someone whose core values encompass being a steward of the land. Had I not been able to run up the Bangtails by myself and be basically alone in such an incredible wilderness space I might not be writing these words or consider all the forests and natural areas I've explored in the US with this same idea of stewardship in mind. I think that while I always appreciated and longed to be in nature it wasn't until I got to be up close and personal with it in the way that Montana allows that I really understood how much we need to protect it while also giving others the same access I have been able to experience. Here are my thoughts on the proposed plan:

I support the Gallatin Forest Partnership Agreement and would like to see it adopted into the final plan. It's my consensus that there is a rather large general support for this agreement and that it would be good to fully adopt it in your final plan.

I support the Wilderness recommendations in Alternative C. My only exception is the Lionhead. I think this should be managed as a non-motorized Backcountry area. I would also like to see the roadless lands from Chico Peak to Dome Mountain become Wilderness areas. I think given their current use and with the continued growth in this area that this is a forward planning step for preservation.

I support designating the Recreation Emphasis Areas identified in Alternative E with 2 modifications. The Bridger Winter Recreation Emphasis Area should be expanded north to Fairy Lake. Most of my friends are in love with this area for backcountry skiing. I think this makes sense for the value of our area. I also support the Hyalite Recreation Emphasis Area as described in Alternative C. This seems like a great way to manage should a high use area with the needs of recreators.

I got this idea from the Winter Wildlands Alliance but I think it is a great one. Southwest Montana is growing so rapidly. I feel when I hike the M now and no matter the day of the week if the weather is remotely nice the parking lot is filled with people by 7. We have to start planning ahead of the growth and not after it happens. Motorized use of lands is a really really critical one. So having an actual plan I think is essential to protecting the environment but also to ensuring future responsible access to it. I agree with the Wildlands Alliance that: "the revised plan should include an objective to begin winter travel planning on the Custer portion of the forest within 1 year of completing forest plan revision. The winter ROS maps in the final forest plan must show desired future conditions reflecting where over-snow vehicles are ecologically, socially, and physically suitable, and not simply map where snowmobiles are currently allowed."

Lastly, I believe in protecting the wildlife on these lands and that an increase in monitoring of the wildlife is becoming necessary as we continue to grow and these lands are used more and more. I grew up in much more densely populated areas where we took over the wildlife and their needs were secondary to the needs of

humans. I hope we can do better. I hope we can be stewards to our wildlife populations and through proper monitoring be willing to adjust the the recreation, access and use of lands as needed to protect the wildlife that make these forests their homes.

And I guess I have one more thing to say. Have we taken into consideration in a meaningful way the Native populations thoughts about these lands? I think their opinions should be of higher priority than mine.

Thank you again for taking our thoughts into consideration!