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Comments:

I wish to comment on the Custer Gallatin National Forest (CGNF) Forest Management Plan for the Pryor Mountains.

The Pryors are unique due to their outstanding geology and diverse ecosystems, plant and animal diversity, cultural and historic sites and the opportunities to study natural processes. Everything that can be done must be done to preserve and protect this wondrous landscape.

At this writing - managing Big Pryor Mountain, Bear Canyon, Lost Water Canyon and Punch Bowl under a Recommended Wilderness designation - or as Back Country Areas - is the only tool the CGNF has to assure the health and sustainability of these distinct areas.

There are more valid reasons to manage these lands as Wilderness-Back Country than opportunities for non-motorized recreation. Managing these areas as Wilderness-Back Country will not deny the motorized recreationists their opportunities to access the Pryors.

The Back Country Area designation falls short of safeguarding the Pryors for future generations. If anything - this designation will perpetuate the fragmentation and eventual destruction of habitat and will diminish all of the public's options to use the Pryors.

Alternative D is the only obvious choice to manage all of the Recommended Wilderness Areas - and Back Country Areas - as Wilderness - until they are given the official Wilderness designation - and be protected and preserved as such.

Thank you for your commitment in caring for the public lands - good luck with that effort.