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Comments:

As part of the Forest Plan revision process, the Gallatin Range-stretching from Bozeman to Yellowstone National Park-including the HPBH WSA, is particularly at risk of being sacrificed as a motorized and mechanized recreational playground for the exploding populations of Big Sky and Bozeman.

Wilderness recommendations in Alternative D of the draft forest plan, with the suggested improvements outlined below, would offer the best protection for the Gallatin Range and other critical wildlife habitat across the Custer Gallatin National Forest.

Alternative D creates 39 Recommended Wilderness areas totaling over 711,000 acres, including the Gallatin Range, Lionhead, Crazy Mountains, Bridger Range, Cowboys Heaven, Deer Creeks, Line Creek Plateau, Emigrant Peak, West Fork Rock Creek, Red Lodge Creek, Pryor Mountains, and Tongue River Breaks.

Please speak up now! A public comment period is now open until June 6 for the public to weigh in on the future of wild lands in the Custer Gallatin National Forest.

I love Yellowstone and consider it the crown jewel of American wilderness, which is an essential part of our national identity. A big part of Yellowstone's identity and its gift to the U.S. is its wildlife, and that is being threatened by motorized and mechanized recreation in the Gallatin Range and in the Gallatin National Forest. People can joyride elsewhere (if they have to do that); preserve this area. 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.

All motorized and mechanized uses, and any other activities not consistent with wilderness protection should be prohibited in the Recommended Wilderness areas so as to preserve their wilderness qualities until Congress acts on the wilderness recommendations.

Much more attention should be paid to administering the Absaroka-Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses. Large groups of up to 25 head of stock (horses and mules) and 15 people are leaving animal and human feces in the water there, fouling pure waters. 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.

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

I look to you to protect these beautiful wilderness areas.