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Comments:

To: Custer Gallatin National Forest (CGNF) Revision Plan

From: Alex Russell

Re: Comments on Revision Plan

May 17, 2017

I strongly support Alternative D which offers the best protection for wildlife and habitat in the CGNF. Most importantly, Alternative D protects critical lower elevation habitat in the Porcupine-Buffalo Horn (PBH) drainages of the Gallatin Range. Elk, moose, wolverine and apex predator species such as our iconic grizzly bears and wolves are just some of the valued native wildlife that require roadless undeveloped habitat such as the 155,000-acre PBH. In addition, the PBH could also be outstanding conflict-free habitat for bison where they will eventually be allowed. Any travel other than foot and horse in this area is wholly inappropriate and takes away from our future generations. Alternative D is the most cost effective and efficient way to manage any landscape. The "no management" alternative of D saves taxpayer dollars and improves recreation by improving hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing and sustaining the local small businesses that depend on these user groups. All other alternatives, A, B and C allow supervisor discretion to build temporary roads and perform "vegetation treatments" in wildlife management areas adding to taxpayer burden, harming user experience, and harming the small businesses that depend on a users' positive forest experience.

Alternative D protects 230,000 acres of the vbest wildlife habitat in the Gallatin Range allowing for a 40-mile-long unbroken link for Montanan's valued native wildlife species to migrate to other large undeveloped tracts of the highest quality habitat. Establishing links to other isolated populations of wildlife is necessary for the genetic integrity of all wildlife species. The more roadless and wilderness areas we can protect, the more these magnificent species will be available to our future generations. It is important to secure all 711,00 acres of proposed wilderness in the CGNF when the rewards will be that our children and grandchildren will be able to hunt, fish, and wildlife view in the greatest, most diverse wildlife habitat in the eastern hemisphere.

I also support efforts to phase out or buyout grazing leases on CGNF land where they conflict with wildlife and game populations.

I encourage CGNF to designate the I-90 corridor between Bozeman and Livingston as a permeable barrier to wildlife. Providing safe passage to migrating animals will assure their genetic diversity as well as save people's lives with reduced collisions.

Finally, it makes economic sense to protect the most possible acreage. Peer reviewed research indicates that business investment and high skill labor are attracted to areas with natural amenities, specifically protected roadless and wilderness areas. These communities are wealthier and more economically diverse than communities that rely on public lands for extractive purposes such as mining, grazing, logging, vegetation treatments. For extractive forest users, the benefits are narrowly concentrated while the costs are very high to all other forest users. Alternative D is a wise management plan that will provide a balanced approach representing all user groups and the small local businesses that depend on them.