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Comments:

I write this in support of strengthening Alternative D for American bison by setting strong standards to achieve the "desired condition" of viable, self-sustaining populations of American bison on the National Forest.

I advocate listing American bison as a species of conservation concern, reintroducing fire as a natural force in expanding habitat, removing barriers to migration, securing habitat connectivity, and given the range of American Indian Nation ties to and knowledge of the aboriginal territories on the Custer Gallatin, and each Treaty and public trust responsibility the National Forest is legally mandated to fulfill, the Custer Gallatin has the authority to build relationships to support such an endeavor.

Given the National Forests are governed by separate Treaties reserving rights for at least eighteen American Indian Tribes, aboriginal leaders are in the best position to provide direction, guidance, and involvement in the preservation of American bison diversity and recovery of the species' habitat.

The American bison is an icon of our country's history, but also integral to the western prairie ecosystem. It is a creature that lived for millennia, but was almost brought to extinction by the 20th century. Extinction is forever.