

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I will present some summary, plus specific points and questions.

While I am a neighbor to the CGNF, it belongs to all Americans, to future generations, and is a heritage to the rest of the world as well.

“...the forest service has the responsibility and opportunity to assure a national natural resource conservation posture that will meet our citizens’ needs in perpetuity (National Forest Management Act of 1976, Summary).

Wilderness:

Of the proposals, I support plan D, because it maintains the most wilderness areas. Including more wilderness areas would be much better. Once a wilderness is gone, it cannot be recreated. There is no need to spend all of our wilderness equity now. Some specific examples for greater wilderness inclusion are below.

- Maintain the Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area. The proposal to convert the Porcupine Area to greater recreation, particularly mountain bikes, will destroy the landscape, interrupt a migration corridor, and in some cases, effectively remove wildlife from this region (see below).
- Respect the traditions of the Native Peoples for whom the Crazy Mountains are sacred places. https://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/news/environment/crow-environmentalists-push-for-protections-of-crazy-mountains/article_8b93bd99-ae61-5593-adf1-2c175a1a984d.html
- Preserve as much as possible of the wilderness of the Absaroka-Beartooth and the Pryor Mountains, as well as other areas. The Pryor Mountains also contain sacred landscapes for Native Americans.
- Water. Wilderness maintains essential water supplies for human. Protected wilderness prevents degradation of fresh water for fish and wildlife.

Wildlife:

Wildlife is an essential feature of the CGNF, which is part of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE). Unique wildlife populations are the most important attraction for visitors to the region. Maintaining access to migration corridors within and beyond the CGNF can prevent animal populations from becoming isolated and will help them to thrive. The presence of healthy, unique wildlife populations boosts the economy.

The wilderness areas support the wildlife and also can mitigate the effect of climate changes.

<https://mountainjournal.org/scientists-say-mountain-biking-negatively-impacts-bears>

- Preserve migration corridors.
- Consider adding a wildlife bridge near Bozeman Pass. Native Americans have done this very successfully.
- Restore/repair other migration corridors that have been damaged by development or recreation.
- Local wildlife species are not included in the plans. The sentinel species should include bison, bears and wolverines, as well as the elk and mountain sheep populations.

Recreation:

Alternative D provides ample recreational opportunities in the CGNF. Together with the rest of Montana and adjacent states, we have a feast of recreational opportunities within easy reach. Of grave concern is that with the growth of the population and visitors to the CGNF region, there is already a level of recreation that is becoming “industrial strength recreation” (T. Wilkinson, Mountain Journal, March 6 & 20, 2019), damaging the forests for people and wildlife alike. In particular, mountain bikes degrade trails, but more important, degrade the habitat for animals. That mountain bikes are quiet and fast, make them particularly dangerous for bears. We do not wish to lose our bear populations. While mountain bikes provide enjoyable recreation, they may be replaced by electric bikes (even quieter and faster) or some other fad. Snowmobiles are not quiet, but their speed also makes them threatening to wildlife. There needs to be healthy separation of these activities and the wildlife populations.

<https://mountainjournal.org/can-wildlife-survive-industrial-strength-recreation>
<https://mountainjournal.org/scientists-say-mountain-biking-negatively-impacts-bears>
<https://wildmontana.org/wild-word/this-time-its-personal-custer-gallatin>

Of the proposed plans for the CGNF revision, “Alternative D” provides for the most wilderness tracts, and provides ample provision for recreation. However, a new alternative plan that includes more wilderness would be best.

There is no need to spend all of our wilderness equity now. Let’s leave some choices to the next generation(s) as well.

Questions:

- Why are there so few species of conservation concern? Why are important local species such as bison, grizzly bears, wolverines, mountain sheep not included?
- Why are birds not included among the species of conservation concern? The evening grosbeak is important in these coniferous forests, and is a sentinel of disease.
- Why isn’t water a driving issue?
- Why cannot more wilderness areas be designated?
- Have standards been developed to evaluate success of the final plan?