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Comments:

To the Forest Service,

As an avid hiker / backpacker / tourist, I wanted to provide feedback regarding your Custer Gallatin Forest Plan Revision #50185.

After reviewing your information, I support the recommendations for wilderness in the "Alternative D" of the revision of the Draft Forest Plan, but urge the addition of the entire roadless and wild acres (approximately 230,000 acres) of the Gallatin Range to be Recommended Wilderness in the final plan.

In addition, there are key considerations which I urge you include in the plan to emphasize the importance of the wild Gallatin Range:

(1) The plan should include more details regarding the management of the Lee Metcalf and Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness Areas. Such details would include limits on the size of groups, which independent research has shown should be less than 12 people and less than 8 stock / horses per group. The Forest Service should limit group sizes / limits accordingly to protect the quality and majesty of God's wilderness.

(2) The plan should prohibit all motorized and mechanized vehicles from the wilderness areas to preserve the wilderness (until such a time that Congress can act on the recommendations for wilderness). This is a national treasure, and should be preserved as such.

(3) The forest plan should end the destructive practice of fish stocking of wilderness lakes which are naturally fishless. Stocking of fish alters the natural conditions and balance of those lakes, and thus is not consistent with the goals of wilderness.

(4) There are significant issues with human and pack animal feces contamination of the streams and lakes of the Beartooth Plateau section of the Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness area. Eliminating the fish stocking and limiting the size of groups (as I have described above) would reduce the volume of feces, and further requirements should be included in the plan to require proper burial or removal of the feces of users.

I respectfully appreciate your consideration of my input, and hope this magnificent wilderness area continues to be preserved for the gentle enjoyment of all.

Regards,

Grant Benjamin