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Comments:

We submit these comments in support of Alternative D, the environmentally-preferred alternative in the Custer Gallatin National Forest Plan Revision ("the Custer Gallatin"). Alternative D relies on the best available scientific information, with this caveat: it must include the adoption of strong, enforceable, forest-wide standards for American bison, bighorn sheep, and threatened grizzly bears, as well as strong standards for wilderness, linkage corridors, habitat connectivity, and water.

I. The Goal: adoption of forest-wide standards for American bison, to include:

- * Conservation of American bison viability and diversity;
- * Freedom for American bison to roam National Forest habitat; and
- * Restoring of habitat connectivity for American bison.

To accomplish Goal I, to restore connectivity and conserve the viability and diversity of American bison's genetically distinct sub-populations, the Custer Gallatin must adopt a standard to close current and not permit future cattle- grazing allotments in American bison range.

Further, we support Regional Forester Leanne M. Marten listing the American bison as a "species of conservation concern" in Region 1.

II. The Goal: adoption of forest-wide standards for native bighorn sheep that ensures conservation of the population's viability and diversity.

To accomplish Goal II, the Custer Gallatin must adopt a standard to not permit domestic sheep grazing in bighorn sheep range. The best available scientific information shows that bighorn sheep contract and are threatened by diseases introduced by domestic sheep grazing on bighorn sheep range.

III: The Goal: adoption of forest-wide standards for grizzly bears.

To accomplish Goal III, the best available scientific information supports including enforceable forest-wide standards to protect key linkage areas, habitat connectivity, and food security for grizzly bears, a threatened species.

IV. The Goal: adoption of additional forest-wide standards, to include:

- * All grazing permits must require "let-down" fencing and removal of all barriers that impede migration of native species;

- * Leadership in the development of wildlife-safe passages and measures on highways constructed in migration corridors on the National Forest;

- * Adoption of strong standards and more yearly projects restoring wetlands, creek banks, pond edges, and riparian habitat, to benefit American bison and native species diversity; and finally,

* The Custer Gallatin has a duty to fulfill its responsibilities and trust obligations safeguarding treaty rights, sacred species, sacred sites, and traditional cultural places of significance to aboriginal people.

We request that Forest Supervisor Mary C. Erickson adopt Alternative D, with our recommended improvements as indicated above.

Thank you for this opportunity to suggest important improvements to the Custer Gallatin National Forest Plan Revision. We trust that you will give these comments and recommendations your most sincere and thoughtful consideration.