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Comments:

The wilderness recommendations in Alternative D of the Revised Draft Forest Plan have my full support. But it needs to be better by adding the entire 230,000 wild, roadless acres of the Gallatin Range as Recommended Wilderness in the final forest plan. Also, these three ideas highlight the importance for the wild Gallatin Range.

The plan must ban all motorized and mechanized uses, and any other activities not consistent with wilderness protection, in the Recommended Wilderness areas so as to preserve their wilderness qualities until Congress acts on the wilderness recommendations.

Since the draft plan has little guidance for administering the Absaroka-Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses, the current wilderness management plans permits harmfully large groups of up to 25 head of stock (horses and mules) and 15 people in most areas. Research shows that more than eight head of stock and 12 people greatly increase negative impacts. The Forest Service must reduce group size limits accordingly so as to protect all Wildernesses on the forest from harm.

Further, the forest plan should put an end to ecologically destructive fish stocking in naturally fishless wilderness lakes, which significantly alters the areas' natural conditions.

Lastly, the plan must address the issue of human and pack animal feces contamination of lakes and streams on the Beartooth Plateau in the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness. Eliminating fish stocking would likely go a long way toward solving this problem, but additional measures must be included if needed.