

Date submitted (Mountain Standard Time): 4/27/2019 3:36:57 PM

First name: Marilyn

Last name: Costamagna

Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1: 2401 Acorn Way

Address2:

City: Medford

State:

Province/Region: OR

Zip/Postal Code: 97504

Country: United States

Email: gypsywind55@gmail.com

Phone:

Comments:

I support the Wilderness recommendations in Alternative D of the draft forest plan, with the inclusion of the suggested improvements described below. When combined, all of these recommendations and improvements would, in my opinion, offer the best protection for the Gallatin Range and other critical wildlife habitat across the Custer Gallatin National Forest.

Even though in general I support Alternative D, I am NOT in favor of the part of the Forest Plan revision, which stretches from Bozeman to Yellowstone Park that includes the HPBH WSA. That area is especially at risk of being sacrificed as a motorized and mechanized recreational playground for the exploding populations of Big Sky and Bozeman. Preserving the habitat and ecosystems indigenous to that region must come first and entry into those areas must be respected possibly even severely restricted.

Regarding that same area utmost protection and preservation consideration must be given to the more than three million acres encompassing the Custer Gallatin National Forest, which is a stronghold for iconic wildlife species like grizzly bears, gray wolves, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, and moose, which are very sensitive to human disturbance and development, and are teetering on the brink. Hence all the more reason to limit the entry of motorized or mechanized vehicles into the area.

The following are my additional suggestions for inclusion into Alternative D:

Improve Alternative D by adding the entire 230,000 wild, roadless acres of the Gallatin Range as Recommended Wilderness in the final forest plan. The following three points also expand on the importance for the wild Gallatin Range.

The plan should prohibit 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.

The draft plan has little direction for administering the Absaroka-Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses. The current wilderness management plans allows destructively large groups of up to 25 head of stock (horses and mules) and 15 people in most areas. Research shows that impacts increase significantly when group-sizes exceed eight head of stock and 12 people. The Forest Service should 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.

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.

Thanking you for considering these points and for striving to protect Montana's natural resources and indigenous wildlife in the most sagacious and conscientious manner,

Respectfully submitted,

