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Comments:

I would like to comment on the Custer Gallatin National Forest Plan Revision.

I strongly support maintaining the existing non-motorized and non-mechanized areas. I recreate extensively on foot. The quiet and freedom from other fast paced travelers is very important to my experience. I also believe that research done at the USFS Starkey Experimental Forest clearly demonstrates the negative effects that mechanized and motorized travel have on wildlife. The wellbeing of the wildlife populations on the forest should be a major priority. That being said, I do think that Forest users that wish to recreate using mechanized or motorized equipment should have opportunities. It would be good if trails or roads removed from mechanized or motorized opportunities could be offset by equivalent added opportunities in other areas.

Bighorn sheep habitat and separation from domestic sheep and goats should be a high priority. I do not believe that domestic sheep should be allowed on the forest when there is any chance of interaction with wild sheep. A few years ago I was fortunate enough to see a bighorn ram in the Gallatins. We were very near an old domestic sheep trail. For me, there is no question, the wild sheep is the priority.

Increased opportunities for bison and improved connectivity for grizzly bears would improve the backcountry experience and improve habitat for other wildlife. I have seen bison in the backcountry on the Forest and it improved the experience. I have seen grizzlies as well, and they certainly belong in more area.

I would like to see increased timber harvest. It seems that responsible harvest could improve wildlife habitat, moderate wildfire risks, and provide economic opportunities. This would likely increase interest and support for the forest.

Enhanced maintenance of existing trails and roads should be a priority.

While not particular to this forest plan, I believe the USFS should emphasize educating the public about the opportunities that National Forests offer. It is absolutely incredible (and quite sad) the number of Americans who have no idea what a National Forest is.