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First name: Susan

Last name: Hinkins

Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1: 1122 S 5th Ave

Address2:

City: Bozeman

State: MT

Province/Region:

Zip/Postal Code: 59715

Country: United States

Email: hinkins@mcn.net

Phone: 406-586-6773

Comments:

When I was growing up in Wisconsin, we came out to Yellowstone Park or the Tetons for most of our summer vacations. My mother talked about going to Yellowstone with her family in the 1920s. Yellowstone Park and the greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is a national treasure, valued by people from all over the country. Much of the Custer Gallatin National Forest impacted by this National Forest plan is key to the Yellowstone Ecosystem. To protect and preserve this wonderful place, we must retain areas of true wilderness and therefore I support Alternative D which maximizes the acres in Wilderness, especially the Absaroka's (214,000) and the Bridger/Bangtail/Crazy (with approx 92,000 acres vs 0) and the Madison/Gallatin. These areas are critical to wildlife and they are also very vulnerable to excessive human pressure.

I first came to Bozeman Montana for graduate school and I came back to live here more than 40 years ago. I have hiked and camped extensively in all of the effected areas except for the Henry Lake, Sioux and Ashland areas. We've spent many wonderful days cross-country skiing in the Bridger and Gallatin areas.

While I am not likely to be able to hike or ski into the wild places any longer, I believe that it is critical to retain wilderness areas unaffected by motorized or mechanized travel. It is more important to protect these areas for the future than to make them accessible to all. The press of humanity is becoming more and more a cause for concern. We rarely go to Yellowstone now because it is being loved to death with cars and RVs. I've skied on the same trails as snowmobiles and my experience is that snowmobiles result in both intentional and unintentional harassment of wildlife. We definitely need parks and recreational areas that are accessible to all, but we also need wild places that are not entirely accessible to mankind.

We cannot create 'wilderness' so we must protect the remaining wild places. My parents taught me that we have a responsibility to protect the ecosystem and a responsibility to the future not just of mankind, but the future of all of the natural world. Therefore I urge you to retain 711,425 acres of wilderness with Alternative D.