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Comments:

Greetings!

I am a retired Natural and Cultural Resource Manager who worked for the National Park Service, US Forest Service and BLM for over 30 years.

This draft plan has MUCH too limited direction and public input for adequately administering the Absaroka-Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses.

The current wilderness management plans allows INAPPROPRIATELY destructive OVERSIZED groups of up to 25 head of stock (horses and mules) and 15 people in most areas. Seems like you are bowing to the outfitters and politics and not to the DIRECTION OF CONGRESS IN THE WILDERNESS ACT! That needs to change!

Existing multiple resource studies verify that 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 and adversely affects and destroys native species, again proven by numerous resource studies!

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 to preserve the natural wilderness characteristics and ecological health of this area.

Vacant grazing allotments in the Wildernesses should be closed so these areas can return to a wild condition.

No trail construction or reconstruction in the currently trailless areas of the Absaroka Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses is appropriate. This provides remote areas for wildlife as well as premier areas for solitude, both REGULATORY SPECIFICATIONS OF THE WILDERNESS ACT.

I STRONGLY support the wilderness recommendations in Alternative D of the Revised Draft Forest Plan; however, they must be improved by:

- Adding the entire 230,000 wild, roadless acres of the Gallatin Range as Recommend 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 INCLUDING MOUNTAIN BIKES, and ANY AND ALL other activities not consistent with wilderness protections and conditions, in the Recommended Wilderness areas so as to preserve their wilderness qualities until Congress acts on the wilderness recommendations.

These changes need to be made because they are the correct actions that follow policy and regulation AND aren't inappropriately INFLUENCED by POLITICS! That's YOUR JOB AS RESOURCE MANAGERS FOR THE US FOREST SERVICE!

Thanks!