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First name: Maurie

Last name: Petterson

Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1: Kate

Address2: Mabry

City:

State: MS

Province/Region:

Zip/Postal Code:

Country: United States

Email: kate_marbry@bellsouth.net

Phone:

Comments:

Public Comments on the Custer Gallatin National Forest Revised Management Plan:

1. Maintain the existing 22,800 acres of recommended Wilderness in the Lionhead, reflected in the no-action Alternative A. We would also like to see this area managed to allow foot and horse travel only, so that it may one day be eligible for congressional Wilderness designation.

2. Support the Gallatin Forest Partnership agreement, which is reflected in Alternative C.

The agreement asks the Forest Service to recommend Wilderness for 102,000 contiguous acres between Yellowstone National Park and Hyalite Peak, ensuring north-south connectivity. The proposed area encompasses the entire Big Creek drainage, Rock Creek, and Tom Miner basins - all of which include a diversity of lower elevation habitat and significant densities of grizzly bears.

The GFP agreement also urges the Forest Service to recommend Cowboy Heaven and Quake Lake in the Madison Range as additions to the Lee Metcalf Wilderness Area. In total, we are asking the Forest Service to recommend Wilderness for over 124,000 acres in the Gallatin and Madison Ranges.

Let the Forest Service know you support the Gallatin Forest Partnership agreement.

3. Recommend? the Forest Service manage the Crazies to protect their wilderness values and cultural significance. We would like to see no new expansion of motorized or mechanized trails. We also urge the Forest Service to manage the area in close consultation with the Crow Nation in order to protect and honor Crow reserved treaty rights and traditional cultural practices.

4. Recommend ?that Forest Service protect the wild character and cultural significance of Bear Canyon, Big Pryor, and the Punch Bowl areas in the Pryor Mountains by managing them as recommended Wilderness, as reflected in Alternative D. We would also like to see the existing Lost Water Canyon Recommended Wilderness area expanded to 13,000 acres, also reflected in Alternative D. These four areas are not suitable for motorized recreation and mechanized recreation, both of which degrade the wilderness quality of the areas and threaten irreplaceable cultural values. There are multiple other places in the Pryors where ATVs and mountains bikes are allowed and appropriate.

5. Recommend that the Forest Service manage the following places as recommended Wilderness as reflected in Alternative D: Line Creek Plateau (the entirety of the plateau), Red Lodge Creek-Hellroaring Plateau, North Fork, Strawberry Creek, Chico Peak, Emigrant Peak, and Dome Mountain. We also support managing Bad Canyon as a Backcountry area with no mechanized and motorized recreation as proposed in Alternative B.

6. Recommend ?that? Tongue River Breaks, King Mountain, and Cook Mountain all remain off-limits to motorized recreation, while still allowing ranchers the option to use ATVs to administer essential components of their permits, as reflected in Alternative C. These areas are not appropriate for mountain biking and should be managed to reflect that. Alternative C designates these places as "backcountry areas," prohibiting motorized and mechanized recreation. This alternative reflects the current use and realities of the area.

7. Sioux Ranger Dist./Chalk Buttes - Recommend that this place be managed as a "backcountry area" prohibiting motorized and mechanized recreation, as reflected in Alternative D. Since little demand for mountain biking or OHV use exists in Chalk Buttes, the Forest Service has no reason to allow these types of recreation in this area.

8. Recommended Wilderness areas (RWAs) should be managed to protect their wilderness character and improve the chances that Congress will one day consider these areas for Wilderness designation. RWA management can also be used to improve the wilderness character of an otherwise outstanding area, so that it may qualify for future designation. This means allowing foot and horse travel only. Recreational uses that do not conform with the Wilderness Act -- such as mountain biking, snowmobiling, OHV riding, and other mechanized and motorized uses -- are not allowed.

MWA recommends that the forest service adopt clear standards that prohibit non-conforming uses in RWAs.