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Comments:

I am writing to support the wilderness recommendations in Alternative D of the Revised Draft Forest Plan; I believe, however, that they must be improved by adding the entire 230,000 wild, roadless acres of the Gallatin Range as Recommended Wilderness in the final forest plan.

I believe that the plan should prohibit all motorized and mechanized uses, and any other activities not consistent with wilderness protection, in the Recommended Wilderness areas so that their wilderness qualities are preserved until such times as Congress acts on the wilderness recommendations.

There is little direction in the draft plan for administering the Absaroka-Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses. Current wilderness management plans allow large groups of up to 25 head of stock (horses and mules) and 15 people in most areas, which would be destructive to the wilderness. Research has shown that impacts increase significantly when group-sizes exceed eight head of stock and 12 people. Group size should be limited accordingly to protect all Wildernesses on the forest from harm. In addition, the forest plan should put an end to ecologically destructive fish stocking in naturally fishless wilderness lakes, which significantly alters the natural conditions of the areas.

The plan must also 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 go a long way toward solving this problem, but additional measures must be included if they are needed.