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Comments:

Dear Mary Erickson,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Custer Gallatin Forest Plan Revision. I imagine this is a daunting task for you and your team and, as such, I will keep my comments brief.

I support Alternative D with a change. Simply put, Alternative D, as I read and understand it, offers us, as stewards of the forest and its resources, the best possible chance of conservation into the future. It offers the highest number and acres of recommended wilderness, the most proactive support for bison and grizzly bears and for bighorn sheep disease prevention, as well as the biggest impact for clean water and aquatic systems, to name a few.

At the same time, Alternative D affords spiritual and scenic value AND opportunity for recreation. Recreation is as important as work is to me. More than half of my year revolves around which public lands I will visit and explore in a way consistent with respecting those areas and minimizing my impact on them. My five year old is already setting goals for hiking mountain peaks, in large part, due to his experiences in the Custer-Gallatin National Forest.

I do have a suggestion for amending Alternative or improving Alternative D. For those trails deemed appropriate for maintaining, I believe they should be maintained to standard. And by that I mean maintained for foot travel. I have seen the damage that horse, bicycle and ATV travel can cause when the rider chooses to ride in unfit, wet and/or muddy, conditions. So, if horse, bike and ATV users can be convinced to ride only in good conditions, the work of maintaining to standard to should be made somewhat easier.

In the end, I am a visitor to the forest. While my health and well being depend on its conservation, the wildlife that lives there deserve the highest consideration. Please make your decisions with wildlife in mind.

Thank you.