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Some thoughts on the Yellowstone Grizzly and Wilderness

Dear Mary C. Erickson, and the Forest Plan Revision Team. I am a resident of Montana. I live in the Tom Miner Basin.

When I bought property, and subsequently built a house, in 1980, the twenty-acre site was in the Grizzly Meadows development. There is an abundance of wildlife that traverses my property. And though I haven't seen the Yellowstone Grizzly, I know they have been in the area, if not directly on the land I occupy. I'm writing you to take an active roll in protecting the grizzly.

Yes, it's complicated. The system they live in is growing smaller and more restrictive each season. Their search for food is more and more tenuous given climate change, pushing them into land populated by folks like myself. The Yellowstone Grizzly is trapped in an island. They need our help in establishing diverse corridors that will literally expand their world while relieving the pressures of encroachment we are headlong in establishing.

I'm not telling you anything you are not familiar with. I simply want to add my voice to others requesting their protection, and for smarter ways of dealing with the complications of wilderness and human growth.

What brought me to Montana was it's uniqueness as a refuge. We are custodians met with the task of honoring the wilderness, the animals that reside therein and the multitude of interests that are often in conflict with one another: the reality of population growth, rancher and farmer's agendas, conserving and preserving our waters, rivers, and streams, constructive stewardship of the public lands coupled with private and governmental interests, and the kaleidoscope of natural wonders that bring tourism to Montana and the greater Yellowstone region. For those of us fortunate to live here, there is an obligation to give a thoughtful and thorough commitment as to what Montana exemplifies, not only to our love of the lifestyle provided to us, but to the lens of the world that is increasingly focused on the treasures of the wilderness and wildlife that make up our world. Its preservation is of paramount importance.

The Yellowstone Grizzly is a critical part of the ensuing endeavors that will reflect who we are and what we represent with respect to our collective future.

Thank you for your time.

Bill Payne

Sent from my iPhone