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Comments:

Adopt Alternative D and list American bison as a species of conservation concern

Custer-Gallatin National Forest Plan Revision

Custer-Gallatin National Forest

P.O. Box 130

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Bozeman, MT 59771

RE: Adopt Alternative D and list American bison as a species of conservation concern

Dear Forest Plan Revision Team

I support Forest Supervisor Mary C. Erickson adopting Alternative D, the environmentally preferred alternative in the Custer Gallatin National Forest plan.

I also support Regional Forester Leanne M. Marten listing American bison as a species of conservation concern in Region 1.

Please strengthen Alternative D by adopting the following standards and desired conditions:

- * The best available scientific information supports strengthening and adopting alternative D with enforceable standards for American bison, bighorn sheep, and threatened grizzly bears.

- * Conserving American bison viability and diversity should be a forest-wide standard.

- * Freedom for American bison to roam National Forest habitat should be a forest-wide standard.

- * Restoring habitat connectivity for American bison should be a forest-wide standard.

- * To restore connectivity, and conserve the viability and diversity of American bison's genetically distinct subpopulations, the Custer Gallatin needs to adopt a standard to close and not permit cattle grazing allotments in American bison range.

- * To restore connectivity, and conserve the viability and diversity of native bighorn sheep populations, the Custer Gallatin needs to adopt a standard to not permit domestic sheep grazing in bighorn sheep range.

- * The best available scientific information supports including enforceable forest-wide standards to protect key linkage areas, habitat connectivity, and food security for threatened grizzly bears.

- * The Custer Gallatin must adopt a forest-wide standard for all grazing permits requiring "let-down" fencing and remove barriers that impede migration of native species.

* Adopt a desired condition for the Custer Gallatin to be a leader in the development of wildlife safe passages and measures on highways constructed in migration corridors on the National Forest.

* Restore more wetlands, creek banks, pond edges, and riparian habitat through strong standards and more yearly projects to benefit American bison and native species diversity.

* The Custer Gallatin has a duty to fulfill its' responsibilities and trust obligations safeguarding treaty rights, sacred species, sacred sites, and traditional cultural places of significance to aboriginal people.

Relying on the best available scientific information, please select Alternative D and adopt strong standards for American bison, bighorn sheep, threatened grizzly bears, wilderness, linkage corridors, habitat connectivity, and water.

There is no way to avoid the fact that the American Bison is still a species of special concern based on its previous population and distribution in North America. Today, bison still have a role to play because Bison are an integral part of the ecological biota of the continent, formerly ranging from Mexico through the US to Canada. There is really no option but to allow for policies that will help restore habitat and range to a national American icon. I believe Alternative D is a step in that direction.

Thank you for your efforts on behalf of Custer-Gallatin National Forest Plan revision.

Regards

Bill Arbon

Sincerely,
William Arbon
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