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Comments:

I support the wilderness recommendations in Alternative D of the Revised Draft Forest Plan if the entire 230,000 wild, roadless acres of the Gallatin Range are added. The plan should prohibit all motorized and mechanized uses, and any other activities not consistent with wilderness protection to preserve their wilderness qualities until Congress acts on the wilderness recommendations. Vacant grazing allotments in the Wildernesses should be closed so these areas can return to a wild condition. The draft plan has little direction for administering the Absaroka-Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses. The current wilderness management plans allow destructively large groups of up to 25 head of stock (horses and mules) and 15 people in most areas. Research shows that impacts increase significantly when group-sizes exceed eight head of stock and 12 people. The Forest Service should reduce group size limits accordingly so as to protect all Wildernesses on the forest from harm. Further, the forest plan should put an end to ecologically destructive fish stocking in naturally fishless wilderness lakes, which significantly alters the areas' natural conditions. The plan must address the contamination of waters on the Plateau and in the Wilderness by human and pack animal feces. This problem is greatly alleviated by eliminating fish stocking, but additional measures must be included if needed.