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Comments:

I am writing in support of Alternative D for the Custer Gallatin National Forest. The various proposed wilderness designations are essential for the long term ecological value and health of the Custer Gallatin. Wilderness will help ensure that wildlife have adequate habitat and travel corridors. This is extremely important considering the fact that much of the Custer Gallatin is within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. This is one of the most intact and unique ecosystems in the entire world. We cannot allow these areas to be further degraded. Grizzly bears, lynx, wolves and wolverine all depend on wilderness designation for their long term survival. With wilderness being less than 3% of the land in the lower 48 states, we cannot afford to allow these pristine areas to be overrun by every form of recreation. Growing up in the Midwest I fully understand the consequences in the lack of wilderness designation. You cannot go into the woods and be out of sound of a road, you cannot stumble upon native predators, and you cannot be humbled by the land. These are invaluable characteristics of wild country, and I hope we can maintain and preserve these qualities in the CFNF. As a mountain biker I can honestly say that there is already a plethora of places to ride in this country. We must not succumb to the narrow self interests of a small minority of recreationists. The wild character of Montana is what separates it from every other state. Places like Colorado and California are pretty, but the woods there are tamed and civilized. They lack apex predators and mystique. This is what defines Montana, and we must preserve this. I am concerned because there is no reference to the Lance Craighead study on Wilderness and Wildlife in the Gallatin Range in the Forest Service's Report--I feel as though only the recreational values of the Forest are being taken into account. I believe the ecological integrity of the CGNF should be the number one priority and that is why I am in support of Alternative D.