

Date submitted (Mountain Standard Time): 4/24/2019 12:28:55 PM

First name: Elizabeth

Last name: Davis

Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1: 121 argus place

Address2:

City: sterling

State: VA

Province/Region: VA

Zip/Postal Code: 20164

Country: United States

Email: elizabeth-grace@juno.com

Phone: 7034049014

Comments:

Although I support the wilderness recommendations in Alternative D of the Revised Draft Forest Plan, they must be improved by including the entire 230,000 wild, roadless acres of the Gallatin Range as Recommend Wilderness in the final forest plan. It is important to keep roadless as many areas as possible, so that the wildlife already threatened by climate change can remain as protected as possible. People have legs; they can walk on their vacations.

The following three points expand on the importance for the wild Gallatin Range.

The plan should prohibit all motorized and mechanized uses, and any other activities not consistent with wilderness protection, in the Recommended Wilderness areas so as to preserve their wilderness qualities until Congress acts on the wilderness recommendations.

The draft plan has little direction for administering the Absaroka-Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses. The current wilderness management plans allows destructively large groups of up to 25 head of stock (horses and mules) and 15 people in most areas. This is not acceptable; people are visitors in the area, not masters of it. 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. People do not have a "right" to go fishing in areas that are usually void of fish. If they want to catch stocked fish, the place to go is a fish farm. The plan must also address the issue of human and pack animal feces contamination of lakes and streams on the Beartooth Plateau in the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness. Eliminating fish stocking would likely go a long way toward solving this problem, but additional measures must be included if needed. Ideally, there should be no human impact on the wilderness area; as visitors, we should, as children are advised to do, look but not touch. That includes leaving our feces behind us as an unacceptable activity.

Please implement these recommendations to provide the fullest protection to this magnificent wilderness.