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Comments:

I first went out to the Greater Yellowstone Area in the summer of 1978 when I was 18 years old. I spent two months working at the Lake Yellowstone Hotel. During that summer I traveled down to Jackson Hole through the Grand Tetons and up to Bozeman. I took my backpacking trip in the Gallatin Mountains in the northwest corner of Yellowstone. I was inspired by the pristine beauty of the region. In later years I have returned numerous times to Wyoming and Yellowstone as well as other parts of the Rockies to backpack and spend a few days in quiet solitude. In that time I have become very aware of the different levels of federal protection on public lands and how they effect that environment. I have seen to damage done by off road vehicles and by large groups of pack animals to trails and campsites. I have camped in areas where large commercial groups have left garbage and the remains of their daily catch, waste that is attractive to bears and other dangerous animals and I have come to appreciate even more the serenity of a well managed forest. For this reason I support Alternative D of the Forest management plan to protect the Greater Yellowstone area as a designated Wilderness Area, with limited road access and with limitations on the number of pack animals allowed. Additionally I would like to see the entire Gallatin Range protected with this wilderness designation. Our wild places are disappearing quickly and once they are gone there is no way to bring them back. We must do all that we can to save the little bit that we have remaining. John Durand