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Comments:

Hello,

I am writing to express my support for the wilderness recommendations in Alternative D of the Revised Draft Forest Plan. However, please improve Alternative D by:

- 1) adding the entire 230,000 wild, roadless acres of the Gallatin Range as Recommend Wilderness in the final forest plan.
- 2) prohibiting 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.
- 3) providing clear 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. 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.
- 4) putting an end to ecologically destructive fish stocking in naturally fishless wilderness lakes, which significantly alters the areas' natural conditions.
- 5) addressing 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.

As you know, according to a study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, we are facing the earth's sixth mass extinction - the study found that the massive loss of wildlife represented a "biological annihilation" that is a "frightening assault on the foundations of human civilization".

Also, according to a study published in the journal PLOS ONE, the dramatic decrease in insects could have disastrous consequences for agriculture, as well as ecosystems as a whole. "We face an ecological Armageddon. It sounds melodramatic but it's true," said Dave Goulson, one of the lead researchers for the study. "We need to do something and it's urgent, it's not something we can ponder for a few more years."

Protecting as much wilderness areas as possible has become critical for our long-term survival. Please do everything possible to protect this critical wildlife habitat.

Sincerely,
Lea Dutton