

Date submitted (Mountain Standard Time): 6/3/2019 9:05:40 PM

First name: Michael

Last name: Enk

Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1: PO Box 1408

Address2:

City: Great Falls

State: MT

Province/Region:

Zip/Postal Code: 59403

Country: United States

Email: trout@q.com

Phone: 406-453-6834

Comments:

I recreate on the Custer Gallatin National Forest, regularly enjoying backcountry hiking, fishing and skiing. As pressures on public wildlands increase from human developments, population growth and climate change, it is especially important that the revised forest plan provide a higher level of protection for wildlife and the wild places that remain unspoiled in our over-developed world. These places offer us solitude and reconnect us to the natural world that sustains us with clean water and air and provides us with many other ecosystem services that enhance our quality of life. Once opened to mechanized or motorized uses or other development, our backcountry areas will never be fully wild again.

I would like the Forest Service to preserve the outstanding wilderness values of the Crazy Mountains, and to consult with the Crow Nation in managing the area. The Crazies offer a unique sense of remoteness and ruggedness for urban-weary hikers seeking solitude and relief from the pressures of everyday life.

I urge the Forest Service to protect four key roadless areas in the Pryor Mountains as recommended wilderness: Lost Water, Big Pryor, Punch Bowl and Bear Canyon. Please also maintain the boundaries of the current recommended Wilderness in the Lionhead.

I strongly support retaining the current Wilderness recommendations in the Absaroka Beartooth Area and would like additional recommended Wilderness for Dome Mountain, Emigrant Peak, Chico Peak, Woodbine, East Rosebud to Stillwater and Red Lodge Creek.

I have found the Tongue River Breaks, King Mountain, and Cook Mountain areas on the Ashland District to be especially appealing with unique natural characteristics and urge you to also manage them as recommended Wilderness.

It is very important to manage all these recommended Wilderness areas as if they were designated Wilderness by allowing only foot and horse travel. To do otherwise would seriously compromise their wild character.

I ask the Forest Service to implement the Gallatin Forest Partnership Agreement as much as possible through the forest plan revision. This collaborative effort offers the best hope for resolving multiple use conflicts.

Overall, I am most supportive of Alternative D because I feel it best upholds the public trust doctrine that national forests provide high quality habitats for self-sustaining populations of native wildlife. However, I feel strongly that American bison should be a Species of Conservation Concern on the CGNF and that strong enforceable standards are needed to restore connectivity, and conserve viability and diversity of the American bison's genetically distinct subpopulations. Restoring habitat connectivity is the key to viable populations of wild bison because their historic migration corridors have all been eliminated. I would like a reasoned response from the Regional Forester regarding the evidence that has been presented by the public in support of listing American bison as a Species of Conservation Concern.

On millions of acres of public rangelands, there surely must be areas where the Forest Service can give preference to American bison over domestic cattle grazing allotments. To that end, the CGNF revised plan needs to adopt a forest-wide standard for let-down fencing on grazing allotments to remove barriers that impede migration of bison and other native species. As a neighbor to Yellowstone National Park and a key

component of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, the CGNF is the best place to provide habitat for recovering American bison. The Forest Service should not surrender the American bison to state regulatory schemes that call for their removal and eradication from federal lands held in public trust.

Beyond bison, the best available scientific information suggests that Alternative D also needs stronger enforceable forest-wide standards for other at-risk wildlife. To restore connectivity, and conserve viability and diversity of native bighorn sheep populations, the Custer Gallatin National Forest needs to adopt a standard to phase out domestic sheep grazing allotments within bighorn sheep range. Likewise, the best available scientific information supports including enforceable standards to protect key linkage areas, habitat connectivity and food security for threatened grizzly bears.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Plan and DEIS.