

Date submitted (Mountain Standard Time): 5/10/2019 12:04:21 PM

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Comments:

Comment draft plan - CGNF

May 10, 2019

Forest Plan Revision Team

PO Box 130

Bozeman, MT 59718

Dear Revision Team,

RE: Custer Gallatin National Forest's Draft Management Plan.

My comment pertains to the Absaroka Beartooth and Madison, Henrys Lake, and Gallatin geographic areas. These areas provide critical wildlife habitat, headwater streams, and diverse recreational opportunities.

I support the full incorporation of the Gallatin Forest Partnership (GFP) Agreement into the plan for the Gallatin and Madison ranges. However, while alternative C incorporates parts of that agreement, it does not accurately reflect the GFP's recommendations for wildlife protections or recreation monitoring. Beyond the GFP agreement, it is also critical to protect and enhance other areas, including wildlife linkage areas and existing wilderness, and include enforceable climate change components.

I recommend the following revisions to the draft plan:

- Ensure wildlife connectivity in portions of the Madison, Henrys Lake, and Gallatin Geographic Area that aren't otherwise protected by the grizzly bear recovery zone. The Madisons are critical for wildlife movement to areas beyond the National Forest.
- Extend habitat protections for grizzly bears to anywhere population health is monitored and into areas important for connectivity. Grizzlies MUST be designated as a Species of Conservation Concern.
- Ensure that plan components support a year-round self-sustaining bison population within tolerance areas on National Forest System lands.
- Provide that West Pine and Porcupine Buffalo Horn backcountry areas mirror Cabin Creek Wildlife Management Area in wildlife protection and wild character plan components.
- Monitor recreational use extensively by area, and establish standards that ensure that all recreation is balanced with wildlife

protection.

--Manage existing wilderness areas in line with the 2020 Vision.

--Ensure that monitoring questions for vegetation, invasive species, aquatic resources, fire, etc., explicitly assess the effects of climate change and guide adaptive management as required by the 2012 planning rule (219.12(a)(5)(vi)).

--In addition to the 30 rivers recommended as eligible for Wild and Scenic designation, include Taylor Creek, Hellroaring Creek, and the South Fork of the Madison due to their outstanding wildlife values.

The Draft Plan and DEIS includes many strong points, and with some revisions the new management plan will be an important tool to guide decades of sustainable forest management.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Ms. Susan Gottfried
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