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Comments:

I support the wilderness recommendations in Alternative D of the Revised Draft Forest Plan. But the plan must be improved by adding the entire 230,000 wild, roadless acres of the Gallatin Range as Recommended Wilderness in the final forest plan.

The draft plan has little direction for administering the Absaroka-Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses. The current wilderness management plans allow destructively large groups of up to 25 head of stock (horses and mules) and 15 people in most areas. Impacts increase significantly when group-sizes exceed eight head of stock and 12 people, so the Forest Service should reduce group size limits accordingly in order to protect all Wildernesses on the forest from harm. Additionally, the forest plan should put an end to ecologically destructive fish stocking in naturally fishless wilderness lakes, which significantly alters the areas' natural conditions.

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

The plan needs to 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.

No trail construction or reconstruction in the current areas that are without trails of the Absaroka Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses. This provides remote areas for wildlife as well as premier areas for solitude.

Vacant grazing allotments in the Wildernesses should be closed so these areas can return to a wild condition.