

To: Custer Gallatin National Forest
Forest Plan Revision Team
PO Box 130
Bozeman, MT 59711

From: Susan Hillstrom

June 5, 2019

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Re: Comments on Custer Gallatin National Forest (CGF)
Forest Plan Revision

Alternative D is the best option overall and for reaching the desired condition of viable, self-sustaining populations of American bison, grizzly bear, and bighorn sheep on the national forests, for these reasons:

- 1) Wild American bison are a species of concern; their survival into the future is questionable. The CGF (part of the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA) and Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE)) is located on historic native bison range. Migratory bison use big game winter range and spring calving areas on the CGF today.
- 2) The fate of wild migratory American bison, grizzly bears, and bighorn sheep is at a crossroads for at least two reasons: climate change and the power of policy makers and agencies who are intolerant of bison and bears. Due to mass extinctions caused by climate change it is critical to provide, improve, and protect habitat for all wildlife and plant species in CGF ecosystems and communities.
- 3) Current management practices are shamefully barbaric, politically motivated to favor the cattle industry, and leading to the demise and domestication of the last remaining migratory bison.
- 4) Buffalo, grizzly bears, and bighorn sheep are "popular species" that contribute to the economic sustainability of communities

To:

Custer Gallatin National Forest
Forest Plan Revision Team
PO Box 150
Bozeman, MT 59711

From:

Joann Hillstrom
PO Box 553
Custer, MT 59422
June 2, 2019

Re:

Comments on Custer Gallatin National Forest (CGF)
Forest Plan Revision

Alternative D is the best option overall and for reaching the desired condition of viable, self-sustaining populations of American bison, grizzly bear and bighorn sheep on the national forest, for these reasons:

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- 3) Current management practices are shamefully barbaric, politically motivated to favor the cattle industry, and leading to the decline and domestication of the last remaining migratory bison.
- 4) Botta's, grizzly bear, and bighorn sheep are "popular species" that contribute to the economic sustainability of communities

in the GYA through ecotourism, wildlife viewing, photography, art, hunting and fishing.

5) Scientific research proves the American bison is a keystone species that play significant beneficial roles in ecosystems where they roam. Bureau of Land Management studies conducted over a ten year period on the American Prairie Reserve show improved rangeland conditions under bison grazing after cattle were removed.

6) Genetic research confirms that elk are the transmitters of brucellosis to cattle. (U.S. Geologic Survey and Partners, May 11, 2016) Control measures in bison are unlikely to affect the dynamics of a self-sustaining brucellosis reservoir in nearby elk populations. "Transmission of Brucellosis from Elk to Cattle and Bison, Greater Yellowstone Area, USA, 2002-2012" investigated 17 transmission events from wildlife to livestock and concluded that the herds were infected with brucellosis due to transmission from elk in the GYA.

7) The CGF has a duty to provide suitable habitat for bison on public national forest lands. The CGF must base its forest plan on the best available scientific information and adapt wildlife management to these new scientific findings and changing public desires toward making stronger efforts to save our wildlife.

The forest plan must set standards, that go above and beyond mere guidelines, for wildlife that will enable goals to be accomplished by establishing measurable objectives to track and monitor progress toward desired conditions that will restore habitat connectivity for bison, grizzly bears, and bighorn sheep.

- Do not renew cattle grazing permits in key American bison range. Set standards to reduce permits.
- Conserve viability of bighorn sheep populations by not permitting domestic sheep grazing in bighorn sheep range.
- Protect, improve, and provide linkage corridors, habitat connectivity, and food security for grizzly bears and bison. *
- All grazing permits should require "let-down" wildlife friendly fencing and removal of barriers that limit migration of native species.
- Construct wildlife safe passages on highways in migration and animal travel corridors.

* Adopt Standards, establish Objectives, and design projects to accomplish the Desired Condition of viable self-sustaining wildlife populations.

Alternative D is the best environmentally sound choice for the future health of our priceless forest, GYA, NCDE, and earth.

Do not renew cattle grazing permits in key American Bison range. Set standards to reduce permits.

Consensus viability of bighorn sheep populations by not permitting domestic sheep grazing in bighorn sheep range.

Protect, improve, and provide linkage corridors, habitat connectivity, and food security for grizzly bears and bison. *

All grazing permits should reduce "let-down" wildlife friendly fencing and removal of barriers that limit migration of native species.

Construct wildlife safe passages on highways in migration and animal travel corridors.

* Adopt standards, establish objectives, and design projects to accomplish the desired condition of viable self-sustaining wildlife populations.

Alternative D is the best environmentally sound choice for the future health of our grizzly forest, GYA, NCE, and earth.