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First name: Norma

Last name: Kline

Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1: 413 Martha Dr.

Address2:

City: Meadville

State: PA

Province/Region:

Zip/Postal Code: 16335

Country: United States

Email: normakline@windstream.net

Phone: 8143331013

Comments:

As a professional conservation ecologist and retired wildlife biologist for the U.S. DOI FWS National Wildlife Refuge System, I am familiar with the critical importance of maintaining the ecological integrity of wilderness for wildlife conservation, as well as the vast body of peer-reviewed wildlife science that addresses the negative effects of recreation on wildlife species and the greater wilderness areas that encompass their habitats. Based on my professional expertise, I strongly urge that these items be incorporated into Final EIS:

1. No trail construction or reconstruction in the currently trailless areas of the Absaroka Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses. This provides remote areas for wildlife as well as premier areas for solitude.

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

3. The plan should prohibit 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.