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First name: Dorine

Last name: Kramer

Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1: 3373 Patricia Avenue

Address2:

City: Los Angeles

State:

Province/Region: CA

Zip/Postal Code: 90064-4838

Country: United States

Email: dgkramermd@aol.com

Phone:

Comments:

I believe the wilderness recommendations in Alternative D of the Revised Draft Forest Plan to be best and also should include the entire 230,000 wild, roadless acres of the Gallatin Range as Recommend Wilderness in the final forest plan. The following three points also should be considered as critical for the wild Gallatin Range.

1. In order to preserve the wilderness qualities in the Recommended Wilderness areas, the plan should prohibit all motorized and mechanized uses, and any other activities not consistent with wilderness protection.

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

3. The plan must 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.