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Comments:

Dear USFS,

Concerning the protection of the Custer Gallatin NP:

I hope you incorporate as much protection of wild spaces as possible. I favor the Wilderness recommendations in Alternative D of the draft forest plan, with the suggested improvements outlined below. This would offer the best protection for the Gallatin Range and other critical wildlife habitat across the Custer Gallatin National Forest.

1. The Alternative D of the Revised Draft Forest Plan should be improved by adding the entire 230,000 wild, roadless acres of the Gallatin Range as Recommend Wilderness in the final forest plan.
2. The plan should prohibit all motorized and mechanized uses, and any other activities not consistent with wilderness protection, so as to preserve their wilderness qualities until Congress acts on the wilderness recommendations.
3. The draft plan has little direction for administering the Absaroka-Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses. Protect these areas as much as possible.
4. Reduce group size limits in these wilderness areas. 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.
5. The forest plan should also put an end to ecologically destructive fish stocking in naturally fishless wilderness lakes, which significantly alters the areas' natural conditions.
6. Finally, 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.

Thank you for listening and creating effective legislation. It is always difficult to please all interests, but in the very least we need to be proper stewards of the land, especially wild areas, by restricting human use and impact as much as possible.

From, Robinson Kurth