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Comments:

Dear Forest Plan Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. I'm a public lands owner, taxpayer, and resident of Bozeman, MT.

I am concerned by the recent UN report that cites that 1 million species are nearing extinction and only 5% of the planet is truly "wild." More than ever before, we need to ensure that wild places stay wild to ensure protection of the sensitive wildlife species live in our wildlands. Montana itself contains only 4% official Wilderness.

As our human population continues to grow, we humans also need the solace of knowing that wild places exist, whether we recreate and restore our spirits in them or not. These wild places will continue to provide wildlife habitat and corridors, clean water, and respiring trees to offset global climate change.

We are yet again at a crossroads as humans facing the 6th mass extinction. We can choose to protect what truly wild places we have left in our neck of the woods or not. Different user groups will argue about access. I argue that if we really face the truths of climate change and mass extinctions, we really have no choice but to protect our remaining wild places as Recommended Wilderness. Congress will then have the opportunity to designate "Wilderness," the gold standard of wildlands protection in our toolbox.

Please select Alternative D to restore, value, and conserve wildlands for humans and nonhumans alike as we move into the next era of human domination of our planet.

With Gratitude,
Ashley Martens