

Date submitted (Mountain Standard Time): 6/6/2019 9:52:10 AM

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Comments:

To Whom It May Concern,

Thank you for taking the time to consider comments on the revised management plan.

I am a resident of Flathead County and thus haven't spent nearly as much time in the Custer Gallatin as many of the people who are submitting comments. However, in my work coordinating and leading volunteer trail crews across the state, I have spent many hours training and working alongside Montanans whose passion for these landscapes has motivated them to give their time and energy assisting the USFS in maintaining these places. I feel it is important for me to speak up and validate these self-less, hardworking volunteers' connections to these landscapes.

Last summer, Montana Wilderness Association launched its Adopt-A-Trail program to mobilize volunteers to maintain trails in the Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn and Lee Metcalf Wilderness. The enthusiasm in the Bozeman community for this program was overwhelming. It was clear that people cared deeply for seeing these places remain accessible for others to connect with a landscape they love. Many of these volunteers spent time shaping and advocating for the Gallatin Forest Partnership agreement. I believe strongly that Custer Gallatin National Forest should implement the Gallatin Forest Partnership agreement. Not only is this agreement a well-intentioned effort to break stalemate amongst diverse user groups, it arrived at practical solutions that would benefit the landscape and the communities surrounding them. The people who participated in this process aren't simply armchair advocates; they are the same people who are willing to put sweat equity into the landscapes they seek to protect. I think that should count for something.

I've also seen great enthusiasm for other landscapes on your forest inspire volunteers to give back time and energy. The recommended Wilderness in the Absaroka Beartooth area and adjacent landscapes are wild landscapes worthy of permanent protection. People work tirelessly with the AB Wilderness Foundation in these areas because the land is integral to their identity. Volunteers have also been eager to contribute in the Pryor Mountains, where CGNF has the opportunity to protect ecosystems greatly underrepresented in the National Wilderness Preservation System. All of these landscapes objectively meet requirements for recommended Wilderness- I point out the efforts and enthusiasm of volunteers to show that such a decision would also have strong community support.

Finally, I'd like to advocate for protecting the Crazy Mountains in collaboration with the Crow Nation. I understand the deep value these mountains have to the Crow, and I believe it is our government's moral duty to find opportunities to do right by Native Americans where possible. Please take this forest planning process as an opportunity to continue strengthening agency relations with the Crow while protecting an important component of their heritage.