

Date submitted (Mountain Standard Time): 5/12/2019 9:16:38 PM

First name: Guy

Last name: Merckx

Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1: 520 E. 77th St., Apt. 1939

Address2:

City: New York

State: NY

Province/Region:

Zip/Postal Code: 10162-0020

Country: United States

Email: guymrx@yahoo.com

Phone: 2125357777

Comments:

I am in support of the wilderness recommendations in Alternative D of the Revised Draft Forest Plan, but the final forest plan must be enhanced by adding the full 230,000 wild, roadless acres of the Gallatin Range as Recommended Wilderness in it.

The next three additional items should also be an important aspect of that enhancement of the forest plan for the wild Gallatin Range, and should be included in it:

(1) all motorized and mechanized uses, as well as any other activities not consistent with wilderness protection, should be prohibited in the Recommended Wilderness areas so as to maintain their wilderness qualities until Congress acts on the wilderness recommendations;

(2) specific directions for administering the Absaroka-Beartooth and Lee Metcalfe Wildernesses should be added; this should include reducing the 25 head of stock (horses and mules) and 15 people allowed under the current wilderness management plans for most areas to no more than eight head of stock and 12 people, which research has shown is the threshold above which impacts increase significantly; it should also reduce group size limits such that all Wildernesses on the forest shall be protected from harm; and, it should end ecologically destructive fish stocking in naturally fishless wilderness lakes, which can significantly alter the areas' natural conditions;

(3) the issue of human and pack animal feces contamination of lakes and streams on the Beartooth Plateau in the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness needs to be addressed; eliminating fish stocking would likely go a long way toward solving this problem, but additional measures must be included if needed.

Thank you for taking my comments under considerations.