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Comments:

The draft doesn't seem to have much direction for administering the Absaroka-Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses. The current management plans allows foolishly large groups of up to 25 head of stock (horses and mules) and 15 people in most areas. Research shows that destruction is significantly worse when group-sizes exceed 8 head of stock and 12 people. The Forest Service should reduce group size limits so as to protect all Wildernesses on the forest. Further, the forest plan should end ecologically destructive fish stocking in naturally fishless wilderness lakes; this significantly alters the areas' natural conditions.

The plan must also address human and pack animal feces contamination of waters on the Beartooth Plateau in the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness. Eliminating fish stocking would go a long way toward solving this problem, but additional measures must be included if needed.

Vacant grazing allotments in the Wildernesses should be closed so these areas can revert to wilderness.

There should be no trail construction or reconstruction in the currently trailless areas of the Absaroka Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses. There needs to be remote areas for wildlife as well as areas for human solitude.

I support the wilderness recommendations in Alternative D of the Revised Draft Forest Plan, but they must be improved by adding the entire 230,000 wild, roadless acres of the Gallatin Range as Recommended Wilderness in the final forest plan. The following three points also expand on the importance for the wild Gallatin Range.

The plan should prohibit all motorized and mechanized uses, and any other activities not consistent with wilderness protection, in the Recommended Wilderness areas so as to preserve their wilderness qualities until Congress acts on the wilderness recommendations.