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Comments:

Dear Custer Gallatin National Forest:

This letter is to comment on your forest plan regarding the Custer Gallatin National Forest. We wanted to let you know that we feel very strongly that the lands in the Custer Gallatin National Forest should be protected. We think that protection of the Forest is very, very important.

Pat grew up in Oregon, so she has a strong connection to the land, the ocean and the sky. Roger grew up in Ohio, but has spent many years in the Western United States, so has come to love the western lands. When we moved to Montana in 1991, we learned that this state also has some valuable land and visual aspects, and that they should be protected. Having hiked into the Absaroka Beartooth wilderness along the Stillwater River, we find that area to be magnificent, and it should to be protected as wilderness. We also feel strongly about the need to protect West Woodbine, Red Lodge Creek and the East Rosebud Creek to the Stillwater. The areas around Chico Peak, Dome Mountain and Emigrant Peak should also be protected because they are unique and allowing the wilderness designation to be removed will ruin their intrinsic value to people for years to come. We don't get into the Absaroka Beartooth area as much as we would like, but it is a special place and should be honored, for its value as a historical and cultural land.

As for the Pryor mountains, we have been there far more often. The Wilderness Study areas need to be made officially into Wilderness. Bear Canyon is a unique area with a totally different climate than the rest of the area. The hike into that area is fabulous, along the creek, with the birds and trees. Pat will not soon forget that special day when last she was in that area. It needs to be protected and valued for its ecological and cultural value. The Lost Water area, Big Pryor Mountain and the Punch Bowl are equally special and need to be protected. Roger has spent a lot of time up in the Pryors and feels a strong connection to the land, the history and the ecology.

We ask that you manage the Wilderness areas like designated Wilderness, and don't allow mountain biking or motorized uses. They are unique, special places with landscape and ecology that isn't found anywhere else. They need to be protected, so that future generations of hikers, hunters and explorers can use these public lands.

Thank you for allowing my husband and I to express our opinions. We appreciate all you do for the public lands, for the government, and for the people.