

Date submitted (Mountain Standard Time): 6/3/2019 3:42:01 PM

First name: Debra

Last name: Patla

Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1: PO Box 420

Address2:

City: MORAN

State: WY

Province/Region:

Zip/Postal Code: 83013-0420

Country: United States

Email: dpatla@hughes.net

Phone: 3075430975

Comments:

As a biologist and long-term resident of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, I strongly support the protection of wildlands and wildlife, and I believe this is best done with Wilderness designation. Alternative D is the best. I strongly support the creation of 39 Recommended Wilderness areas. But, for the final Plan, it is critical to ADD the entire 230,000 wild, roadless acres of the Gallatin Range as Recommended Wilderness. Human population growth, climate change, and many uncertainties about the future make Wilderness ever more important, as a source of scientific understanding, as a haven for wildlife, and as places for people to find solitude and peace.

I have observed that Recommended Wilderness is often poorly or even spitefully managed by USFS, allowing uses that may disqualify the area from Wilderness designation. It is vital to prevent motorized and mechanized uses and any other activities not consistent with wilderness protection in these areas, to preserve wilderness qualities. Please make sure to integrate protections and enforcement in all Recommended Wilderness areas.

Wilderness management plans for the Absaroka-Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses need improvements to safeguard these valuable area. The current allowance up to 25 head of stock and 15 people is excessive, and adversely affects wilderness qualities. This should be sharply reduced; e.g. 8 stock animals and 12 people.

I strongly oppose fish-stocking in Wilderness; it should be eliminated at naturally fishless wilderness lakes. Fish stocking affects the natural environment for invertebrates and amphibians, and it attracts too many people, leading to degradation of the area.

As Wilderness users, my family and I find encountering cattle and sheep the worst possible experience in Wilderness. The degradation of land and water for the benefit of one user, at absurd rates that do not come close to covering your management costs, is outrageous. Vacant allotments should be closed and the others phased out over time.

I strongly urge you to adopt a policy of no trail construction or reconstruction in the currently trailless areas of the Absaroka Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses. The negative impacts of more trails on wildlife are well established by research.

I support Alternative D's listing of the bison as a species of conservation concern.