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Comments:

Custer Gallatin National Forest comment

May 29, 2019

Forest Plan Revision Team

PO Box 130

Bozeman, MT 59718

Dear Revision Team,

This comment pertains to the Absaroka Beartooth and Madison, Henrys Lake, and Gallatin geographic areas.

Booming urban growth, advances in recreation technology, and changing weather due to climate change are putting pressure on our public lands.

It is critical that the new management plan get ahead of these threats by implementing strategies to better understand and adapt to a changing climate, protecting the environment and wildlife populations

The Gallatin Forest Partnership (GFP) Agreement should be full incorporated into the plan for the Gallatin and Madison ranges. Although Alternative C fails to accurately reflect the GFP's recommendations for wildlife protections or recreation monitoring. Looking outside the GFP agreement, it is critical that we protect and enhance existing wilderness areas, including wildlife migration routes and enforceable climate change stipulations.

Please consider the following revisions to the draft plan:

\*Ensure wildlife connectivity in portions of the Madison, Henrys Lake, and Gallatin Geographic Area that aren't otherwise protected by the grizzly bear recovery zone. The Madisons are critical for wildlife movement to areas beyond the National Forest.

\*Habitat protections for grizzly bears must extend wherever population health is monitored and into areas important for connectivity. Grizzlies must also be designated as a Species of Conservation Concern.

\*Plan components must support a year-round self-sustaining bison population within tolerance areas on National Forest System lands.

\*West Pine and Porcupine Buffalo Horn backcountry areas must mirror Cabin Creek Wildlife Management Area in wildlife protection to retain it's wild character components.

\*Recreational use must be monitored more extensively by area, and standards must ensure that increasing recreation is balanced with wildlife protection.

\*Manage existing wilderness areas in line with the 2020 Vision.

\*Given the uncertainties of climate change, monitoring questions for vegetation, invasive species, aquatic resources, fire, and more must explicitly assess the effects of climate change and guide adaptive management as required by the 2012 planning rule (219.12(a)(5)(vi)).

\*In addition to the 30 rivers recommended as eligible for Wild and Scenic designation, it is important to also include Taylor Creek, Hellroaring Creek, and the South Fork of the Madison due to their outstanding wildlife values.

I am grateful that the Custer Gallatin National Forest taking a fresh look at our ecosystems and the many species that depend on them. The Draft Plan and DEIS includes many strong points, and with some revisions the new management plan will be an important tool to guide decades of sustainable forest management.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

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