

BOULDER RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

Post Office Box 749
Big Timber, Montana 59011
Phone: 406-932-5160,
Extension 106

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Mary Erickson, Forest Supervisor
Virginia Kelly, Forest Plan Revision Team Leader
Mariah Leuschen-Lonergan, Public Affairs
Custer Gallatin National Forest
Post Office Box 130
Bozeman, MT 59715

Regarding: Custer Gallatin Forest Revision Plan

To all concerned:

On behalf of the Boulder River Watershed Association Board of Directors, we wish to submit the following comments regarding the proposed revision plans for the Custer Gallatin National Forest.

We support the continued harvest of timber resources in and around the Boulder River Watershed and encourage efforts to increase timber production, especially in those areas where this would prove beneficial to wildlife habitat and improved water quantity. Implementation of existing FS tree harvest planning goals are essential to improved forest health, especially as we deal with changing climate variability conditions.

We support the grazing allotment program in the Custer Gallatin Forest. Responsible livestock grazing on these lands provides a valuable resource to local livestock producers and local communities. This program also provides much needed rangeland improvement and wildfire suppression benefits.

We support the resource extraction industry in and around the Boulder River Watershed. Sibanye-Stillwater is the largest industrial employer in Montana and have proven themselves to be good stewards of both public and private lands in the area. These industries provide strong economic sustainability and tremendous public benefit to local communities.

We support the continued effort on behalf of the USFS to control noxious weeds and invasive species in and around the Boulder River Watershed. Greater efforts should be made to improve these efforts, especially given the increased use by the public in the Custer Gallatin Forest.

We do not support any increase in Wilderness Study areas in the Custer Gallatin Forest. Existing inventory in these areas have proven to be both controversial and a hindrance to productive land use decisions. Removal of existing lands now open to the public for trail and off-road activity in the watershed, could increase negative impacts on the watershed by concentrating recreational opportunities to fewer locations. This would also increase traffic on roadways and encourage trespassing on private lands. Emergency services access to Forest Service lands during an emergency or rescue situation is already problematic and becomes even more difficult in lands with wilderness status.

We do not support any efforts to designate streams and rivers in the area as "Wild & Scenic". We are concerned that these designations if determined in the Boulder River Watershed, could interfere with public access and recreational usage and hinder agricultural operations in and around the river corridor.

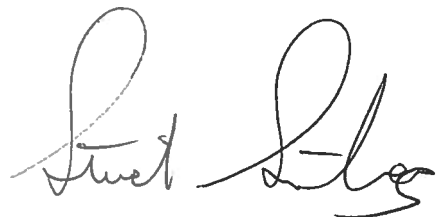
The Boulder River Watershed Association is committed to addressing the resource issues and concerns that are important to its members and the watershed by working to maintain and improve the health of their land and water resources.

We support a continued effort to consider multiple use of Custer Gallatin Forestlands. Maintaining a vibrant discussion led by the Advisory Committee, that includes all stakeholders, will assist in the development of sound revision management planning.

Sincerely,



Bill Brownlee, Chairman



Stuart Stenberg, Vice-Chairman