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Comments:

I am very much in favor of Alternative D, and specifically, since I live in Bozeman and am most familiar with this area, I will comment specifically on the Gallatin Range area including the Bridgers. My main vision for the forest plan focuses on wildlife, especially endangered and special concern species, and their needs for wildlife habitat, migration of wildlife species, for the closeness of this forest to the greater Yellowstone ecosystem, for the impacts of climate change/global warming on the wildlife, for the ecosystem they depend upon including food availability, migration availability to maintain the proper amount of gene diversity to save the species. I think these issues are high and above the desires for humans to recreate, including myself. I am 73 years old and now am primarily a walker, bird watcher, flower identifier and photographer, and want to either be amongst the beauty of our mountains and nature for my spirituality; or to just know all of this natural forest/mountain splendor and wildlife is able to exist and thrive without the detrimental aspects of human recreation, management, development, extraction, etc. I used to fish, hunt, and ski but age has its limitations.

Wilderness: we humans have an obligation to continue to protect as wilderness the Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area. This is the only alternative that does this. I don't agree with any of your other alternatives which divvy up the wilderness for human bicycling and other activities. The entire proposal of 230,000 acres of wilderness is the minimum amount to meet my vision. This includes the Bridger Range and should include I-90 under or overpass methods for wildlife to pass safely to and from this range and the Gallatin Range. Such passages across major highways in the US and Canada prove this is possible and viable. Funding needs to be included for such. The Gallatin Range is absolutely necessary as a link between Yellowstone National Park and Wyoming national forests and mountain ranges/forests in Montana. It is critical grizzly bear, elk winter range and corridor, wild bison (the nation's Mammal) habitat along with many other species of wildlife. The United States federal, state and other levels of government treatment of wildlife is outrageous with numerous species gone forever. Connectivity to and from wildlife habitat is crucial and wilderness is the most critical way to do this! We already have thousands of acres of developed, extracted, roaded, federal lands. You can't allow any single unprotected acre to be shared amongst all forest service uses.

Wildlife Habitat: You must treat the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, the largest intact functioning ecosystem in the temperate zones of the Earth, the "Serengeti of the North America" as top priority to protect. We aren't making any new lands like this and you'll be sorry that you allowed this precious land to be carved up amongst multiple uses. The other alternatives do nothing to meet my comments above and lack scientific requirements for wildlife. High mountain rocks and ice and mountain bike and motorized/mechanized recreation do not address wildlife needs. There is also illegal biking allowed in the Study Area which is not a justification to allow it in the new plan. There are thousands of miles of roads and trails in and out of the forest that are already available to biking and motorized travel to all Americans. When are we going to prioritize the needs of wildlife about humans before we destroy what God gave us? You must consider the melting of glaciers, the damaging insects, more fires, the loss plant and animal species due to the warming of the climate (scientifically proved by 99% of climate scientists) and more carbon and methane in the atmosphere. Humans can recreate in thousands of man-made places on the Earth and if we keep encroaching on wildlife habitat, we will continue to destroy species. "The last five years were the five hottest on record. The amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has soared past 410 parts per million. As many as 150 species die off each day.", per Climate Kids. You need to prioritize wildlife habitat over human recreation. Timber harvesting puts more carbon in the atmosphere.

Clean Water: The US Forest Service's Strategic Plan Objective D: "More than half of America's freshwater flows from public and private forest land, and about 60 million Americans rely on drinking water that originates on the national forests and grasslands. Healthy forests provide a host of watershed benefits, such as purifying water, sustaining surface water and ground water flow, maintaining fish and wildlife habitat, controlling erosion, and stabilizing streambanks." This is another top priority for the Custer Gallatin Forest Plan. Note it includes wildlife habitat.

Species of Special Conservation: The change in the planning rule from Sensitive Species has allowed terrible reductions in the native wildlife species that need to be protected, from 29 to 2. How dare you allow bureaucracy instead of science to determine what species should be protected. It makes no sense for you to eliminate over twenty species and only add sage grouse and white-tailed prairie dog. Your draft plan states, as a desired future condition: "A complete suite of native species is present, with sufficient numbers and distribution to be adaptable to changing conditions for long-term persistence." US Forest Services Strategic Plan Objective A says in part: "and a full suite of habitats for plant, aquatic, and wildlife species (including threatened and endangered species)." You should be adding to the existing list wild bison, bighorn sheep, greater prairie-chicken, wolverine, moose, swift fox among others. You need to improve Alternative D by setting strong standards to achieve the "desired condition" of viable, self-sustaining populations of American bison on the National Forest. You and other federal agencies do all kinds of habitat enhancements for cattle, but none for bison and in fact harass, slaughter, and disallow natural migration.

Bicycles: I realize that this forest plan is not the travel plan providing which trails allow what kind of use. However, I want you to know that existing forest service allocations for who can use what trail when, is totally biased and dangerous against walkers/hikers. Numerous times, I have had to jump off the trail because suddenly a biker comes speeding down the curvy, narrow, close-vegetative stand trails. Most times the bikers, don't slow down, don't apologize, look scary with their helmets and clothes. You absolutely need to consider that when you plan for human recreation in the forest plan, you cannot consider that bicycling is equal to human walking/hiking and if I'm scared, we know the forest wildlife is scared. There are plenty of studies that show how wildlife is disrupted and cannot live in areas where there are speeding bicycles, along with motorized and mechanized methods of travel, and other developments. Reminder - the Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study area is part of the greater Yellowstone ecosystem and we need wildlife habitat and migration paths from and to Yellowstone area as a top priority, regardless of illegal and inconsiderate trails that the Forest Service has allowed to encroach.

North American Model of Wildlife Management: Your sister agency, US Fish & Wildlife Service abides by this important principle to protect wildlife in our country from over hunting and human development. You need to read this, especially my underlined sections, and abide by it. "Seven features make the North American model distinct.

1. Wildlife is a public resource. In the United States, wildlife is considered a public resource, independent of the land or water where wildlife may live. Government at various levels have a role in managing that resource on behalf of all citizens and to ensure the long-term sustainability of wildlife populations.
2. Markets for game are eliminated Before wildlife protection laws were enacted, commercial operations decimated populations of many species. Making it illegal to buy and sell meat and parts of game and nongame species removed a huge threat to the survival of those species. A market in furbearers continues as a highly regulated activity, often to manage invasive wildlife.
3. Allocation of wildlife by law. Wildlife is a public resource managed by government. As a result, access to wildlife for hunting is through legal mechanisms such as set hunting seasons, bag limits, license requirements, etc.
4. Wildlife can only be killed for a legitimate purpose. Wildlife is a shared resource that must not be wasted. The law prohibits killing wildlife for frivolous reasons.
5. Wildlife species are considered an international resource. Some species, such as migratory birds, cross national boundaries. Treaties such as the Migratory Bird Treaty and CITES recognize a shared responsibility to manage these species across national boundaries.
6. Science is the proper tool for discharge of wildlife policy. In order to manage wildlife as a shared resource fairly, objectively, and knowledgeably, decisions must be based on sound science such as annual waterfowl population surveys and the work of professional wildlife biologists.
7. The democracy of hunting. In keeping with democratic principles, government allocates access to wildlife without regard for wealth, prestige, or land ownership. "

In summary, please strengthen Alternative D and prioritize it as the best alternative for the future of the Custer Gallatin National Forest. Thank you.