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Comments:

Comment draft plan - CGNF

Apr 12, 2019

Forest Plan Revision Team

PO Box 130

Bozeman, MT 59718

Dear Revision Team,

I am commenting on the Absaroka Beartooth, Madison, Henrys Lake, and Gallatin areas, which provide important wildlife habitat, headwater streams, and diverse recreational opportunities within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

Human overpopulation, urban growth, recreation, and climate change are putting more pressure on public lands. The new management plan must control threats by protecting wildlife and implementing strategies to adapt to a changing climate.

I support the full incorporation of the Gallatin Forest Partnership (GFP) Agreement into the plan for the Gallatin and Madison ranges. While alternative C incorporates parts of that agreement, it does not accurately reflect the GFP's recommendations for wildlife protections or recreation monitoring. Looking outside the GFP agreement, it is critical we protect and enhance other areas, including WILDLIFE LINKAGE AREAS and existing wilderness, and include enforceable climate change components.

I recommend the following revisions to the draft plan:

Ensure wildlife connectivity in portions of the Madison, Henrys Lake and Gallatin Geographic Area that aren't protected by the grizzly bear recovery zone. Madison is 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.

There should be no more putting cattle first on public lands. Ranchers should not be telling other Americans what we can or can't do with bison.

West Pine and Porcupine Buffalo Horn backcountry areas must mirror Cabin Creek Wildlife Management Area in wildlife protection and wild character plan components.

Recreational use must be monitored more extensively by area, and standards must ensure that increasing recreation is balanced with wildlife protection. Too many people are hazing bison.

Manage existing wilderness areas in line with the 2020 Vision.

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 eligible for Wild and Scenic designation, please include Taylor Creek, Hellroaring Creek, and the South Fork of the Madison due to their outstanding wildlife values.

I'm glad that Custer Gallatin NF is taking a new look at our ecosystems and the many species interwoven in them.

With some revisions, the new management plan will help guide sustainable forest management.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Mr. John Hinkle
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