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Comments:

Strengthen Alternative D

In its' direction for American bison, the Custer Gallatin must rely upon the best available scientific information.

The State of Montana's arbitrarily defined zones for American bison on the National Forest are not based on the best available scientific information.

The Interagency Bison Management Plan is not based on the best available scientific information.

The Interagency Bison Management Plan is a flawed plan operating on an outdated Environmental Impact Statement (the 15-year life of the plan analysis expired in 2015).

The Custer Gallatin must recognize the best available scientific information of genetically distinct subpopulations of American bison in the Northern and Central Interior herds.

The Central herd or subpopulation is under threat and being driven down under the stress of the Interagency Bison Management Plan.

According to National Park Service biologists, the number of Central herd buffalo declined from 3,531 in 2006 to 847 in 2017.

Reintroduce fire to restore American bison habitat and connectivity to habitat.

In its' direction for American bison and connectivity to habitat, the Custer Gallatin should develop and fund a program to reintroduce fire.

Given the range of American Indian Nation ties to and knowledge of the aboriginal territories on the Custer Gallatin, and each Treaty and public trust responsibility the National Forest is legally mandated to fulfill, the Custer Gallatin has the authority to build relationships to support such an endeavor.

Given the National Forests are governed by separate Treaties reserving rights for at least eighteen American Indian Tribes, aboriginal leaders are in the best position to provide direction, guidance, and involvement in the preservation of American bison diversity and recovery of the species' habitat.

Fire and fuels management funding should be included and designated for the recruitment of scientists and biologists from American Indian Tribes with ancestral ties and or treaty rights to the National Forest.