



January 6, 2017

Forest Plan Revision
Custer Gallatin National Forest
PO Box 130
Bozeman, MT 59771

RE: Assessment of Existing Conditions / Need to Change Feedback

Custer Gallatin National Forest Plan Revision Team,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Assessment of Existing Conditions Report and Draft Preliminary Need to Change Report. Stillwater Mining Company supports the need to change the existing Custer Gallatin National Forest Plans for all the various reasons and examples given in the Draft Preliminary Need to Change Report.

We believe the individual Specialist Reports are well researched, written with essential detailed information necessary to assess current conditions. However, we believe the condensed Draft Assessment Report subsection on Social and Economic Benefits and Conditions needs substantial additional work. This subsection appears to be seriously lacking in the contributions of the Custer Gallatin National Forest multiple uses for the economic benefit of local communities in each county.

For example, there is no information in the condensed Draft Assessment Report subsection on Social and Economic Benefits and Conditions on employment and income by industry sector for each county, nor median and per capita income diversity among the eleven counties or larger region affected by the Custer Gallatin National Forest Plan. The demographic information seems to be limited to current population and little or no information population dynamics, such as change over time, aging, urbanization trends or on economic benefits and conditions for each county. There is also no summary of PILT funds by county in the summary report.

Some information on the role of the Custer Gallatin National Forest contributions to economies of local and regional communities is available in the Specialist Reports but, does not appear to be utilized or even referenced in the Draft Assessment Report subsection on Social and Economic Benefits and Conditions.

We believe the social and economic sustainability and integrated resource management language of the U.S. Forest Planning Rule 2012 could be more appropriately addressed if the Draft Assessment Report subsection on Social and Economic Benefits and Conditions is substantially revised to include more information on the social and economic benefits and conditions relevant to the area influenced by the forest plan..

These comments are submitted in the spirit of improving on the draft documents to make the eventual revised Custer Gallatin National Forest Plan the best possible.

Sincerely,


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