

December 19, 2016

Mary Erickson, Forest Supervisor
Custer Gallatin National Forest
P.O. Box 130
10 East Babcock Ave.
Bozeman, MT 59771

Subject:

Extend Public Participation Deadline on Custer Gallatin Forest Plan

Dear Ms. Erickson,

Hi, I live in SW Florida, so sometimes it takes me a while to get important information about things that I am concerned about. I love our National Parks and Forests, and I especially love wildlife...

Your Forest plan revision is of utmost importance to the wild buffalo of Yellowstone country because Gallatin is the only National Forest occupied by wild, migratory and intact bison. But you have not identified bison as a potential Species of Conservation Concern. After reading the definition of the Forest Planning Rule, I am wondering why the bison are not listed, rather are identified as a Species of Interest, which is not defined. The rule requires you to document in the report how the best available information was used to inform assessment.

I am wondering if you might reassess the available science supporting bison being on the list. The Union for Conservation of Nature lists bison as near threatened. Scientists consider bison ecologically extinct in their original range. The Montana Heritage Program and Montana FWPs lists bison as a species of concern, that makes me think they are candidates for this program. I have been speaking with others and would like to ask you to extend the period of public participation a little longer. With the holiday season coming up so quickly, many of the folks I spoke to feel like they would like to be heard, but are very busy right now. Many never heard anything about this until I spoke to them, and have opinions and comments they would like to have you hear about. Granting an extension will allow the public more time to provide meaningful input, and effectively contribute content and direction for the Forest Plan. It will engage and encourage more informed participation by a diverse array of people.

I do not see why it would not be possible to extend the public involvement in reviewing the assessment, which is designed to inform the development of the next Forest Plan.

I would appreciate being put on your mailing list and being kept informed throughout the public process. I am hoping you can extend this public comment period. I assure you, many people are interested in participating. Thank you so much for your time, and for all you do to help our wildlife.

Sincerely your,



Joanne Guka

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