



# **Gallatin Forest Partnership Agreement**

**Final**

**January 2018**

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## Gallatin Forest Partnership

### ***Introduction:***

The Gallatin Forest Partnership formed in November 2016 as a diverse group of citizens, landowners, entrepreneurs, recreational interests, businesses and natural resource professionals with a shared and direct connection to southwest Montana's Gallatin and Madison Ranges. The Partnership's shared goal was to craft management recommendations for the Custer Gallatin National Forest's management plan revision process.

Over the course of 2017, the Gallatin Forest Partnership worked together with the primary purpose of creating a shared vision and management recommendations for the public lands managed by the Custer Gallatin National Forest in the Gallatin and Madison Ranges. This proposal will be presented to Custer Gallatin National Forest officials as part of the scoping process on the draft Forest Plan/ Proposed Action released by the CGNF in early January 2018.

The following ***Gallatin Forest Partnership Agreement*** represents the results of our collaborative discussions. Topics and specific geographic areas were discussed individually and tentative agreement was reached on each. Tentative agreements were captured in writing and edited by the group to ensure we accurately reflected the nature of our agreements. Each member of the partnership agreed to each topic individually and to the agreement as a whole.

Decisions were made according to the process outlined in the Gallatin Forest Partnership Charter, which is included as an appendix at the end of this document. Each member's signature below demonstrates their support for the Agreement in its entirety.

## **Gallatin Forest Partnership Membership**

The voting members of the Gallatin Forest Partnership include the following individuals and organizations/ constituencies.

**Adam Oliver**, *Southwest Montana Mountain Bike Association*

**Barb Cestero**, *The Wilderness Society*

**Christian Appel**, *Montana Backcountry Hunters and Anglers*

**Darcie Warden**, *Greater Yellowstone Coalition*

**Denise Wade**, *Lone Mountain Ranch*

**Hilary Eisen**, *Winter Wildlands Alliance & Outdoor Alliance-MT*

**Ian Jones**, *Southwest Montana Mountain Bike Association*

**John Greene**, *Livingston Bike Club*

**John Mutter**, *Gallatin Valley Back Country Horsemen*

**Melissa Cronin**, *Southwest Montana Mountain Bike Association/ Big Sky Mountain Bike Alliance*

**Mike Fiebig**, *American Rivers & Montana Backcountry Alliance*

**Sally Cathey**, *Montana Wilderness Association*

**Steve Johnson**, *Big Sky*

**Tom Owen**, *Big Sky Mountain Bike Alliance*

**Whitney Tilt**, *Mountain Sky Guest Ranch*

**Signature Page**

My signature attests to my endorsement of the Gallatin Forest Partnership Agreement and my commitment to support this agreement throughout the Custer Gallatin Forest planning process. I further agree to assist the Partnership in working toward appropriate implementation of the recommendations contained in this Agreement that fall outside of the purview of the forest planning process.

[illegible]

## Shared Interest Statement:

The Gallatin Forest Partnership is a coalition of partners coming together to create a shared vision for public land within parts of the Bozeman, Yellowstone, and Hebgen Ranger Districts. We represent diverse voices and aim to create broadly supported recommendations for the Forest Service's revision of the Custer Gallatin forest plan.

We want to see a forest plan that provides thoughtful management for the future of our backyard public lands, and preserves the health and integrity of the resource. We identified the following shared values that will inform our recommendations:

- **Ecological**: We agree on the value of fish and wildlife habitats, clean water, clean air, and diverse forests. We recognize the uniqueness of western part of the Custer Gallatin National Forest and its role in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Protecting the health of these ecological values is a commonality of our work together.
- **Economic**: We agree that our local economies are fundamentally connected to the public land in the Gallatin and Madison Ranges. Both the unique natural values (fish & wildlife, clean water, clean air) and recreational access to public lands make our area an attractive place to live, work, recreate, and visit, bringing diverse and extensive financial contributions to the local and state economy - through special use permitting, contracting, recreational access, and the ecosystem services (such as clean water, clean air, productive forests, healthy fisheries, and abundant wildlife) that the Forest provides.
- **Recreation**: We agree there is enormous recreation value to residents and visitors alike. There is a wide spectrum of recreation activities that occur on our public lands. We believe we need to manage recreation to ensure the quality of diverse recreation opportunities and to sustain the integrity of the natural landscape in the face of increasing visitation.
- **Social**: We agree on the value of working together. We seek solutions that respect the ways that we enjoy the land and create balance between human uses and protection of the natural values of our public lands for future generations.
- **Wilderness Character**: We recognize the value in sustaining a wild and natural Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Maintaining diverse opportunities for solitude, primitive and quiet types of recreation are key to the uniqueness of this ecosystem.

## **Gallatin Forest Partnership**

### **Summary of Individual Recommendations:**

#### **Invasive Weeds**

*The Partnership recommends a cooperative and adequately funded invasive species plan to identify, manage and eradicate noxious and invasive weeds.*

#### **Wildlife**

*The Partnership recommends maintaining and enhancing the current high-quality habitat and connections that ensures the diversity and abundance of wildlife species in the Gallatin and Madison Ranges. This includes identifying high value habitats like winter range and migration routes as well as working with partners to gather data and educate the public about safe recreation in important wildlife habitats.*

#### **Water Resources**

*The Partnership recommends maintaining the ecological health, clean water and connected character of the headwaters streams in the Gallatin and Madison Ranges in order to sustain the vibrant, low-impact recreation in the area.*

#### **Outfitting and Guiding**

*The Partnership recommends establishing sustainable (socially, administratively and ecologically) levels of outfitted and guided activities to protect public land resources and provide economically viable business opportunities.*

#### **Wildland, Prescribed Fire and Timber**

*The Partnership recommends focusing active vegetation and fire management outside of designated areas and in the Wildland Urban Interface to reduce the risk posed by high severity fires and restore more resilient conditions to forested habitats.*

#### **Designations**

*The Partnership proposes a combination of conservation and recreation designations in the heart of the Gallatin Range and portions of the Madison Range to protect wildlife habitat, clean water, undeveloped lands and diverse recreation access. The map of the Gallatin Forest Partnership's Agreement depicts the exact locations and types of designations we have agreed to.*

#### **Recreation**

*Outside of the proposed designations, the Partnership identifies several key areas in the Gallatin Range and along the western flank of the Absaroka Wilderness where the Forest Service could enhance diverse recreation opportunities, cooperative land stewardship, and public land access.*

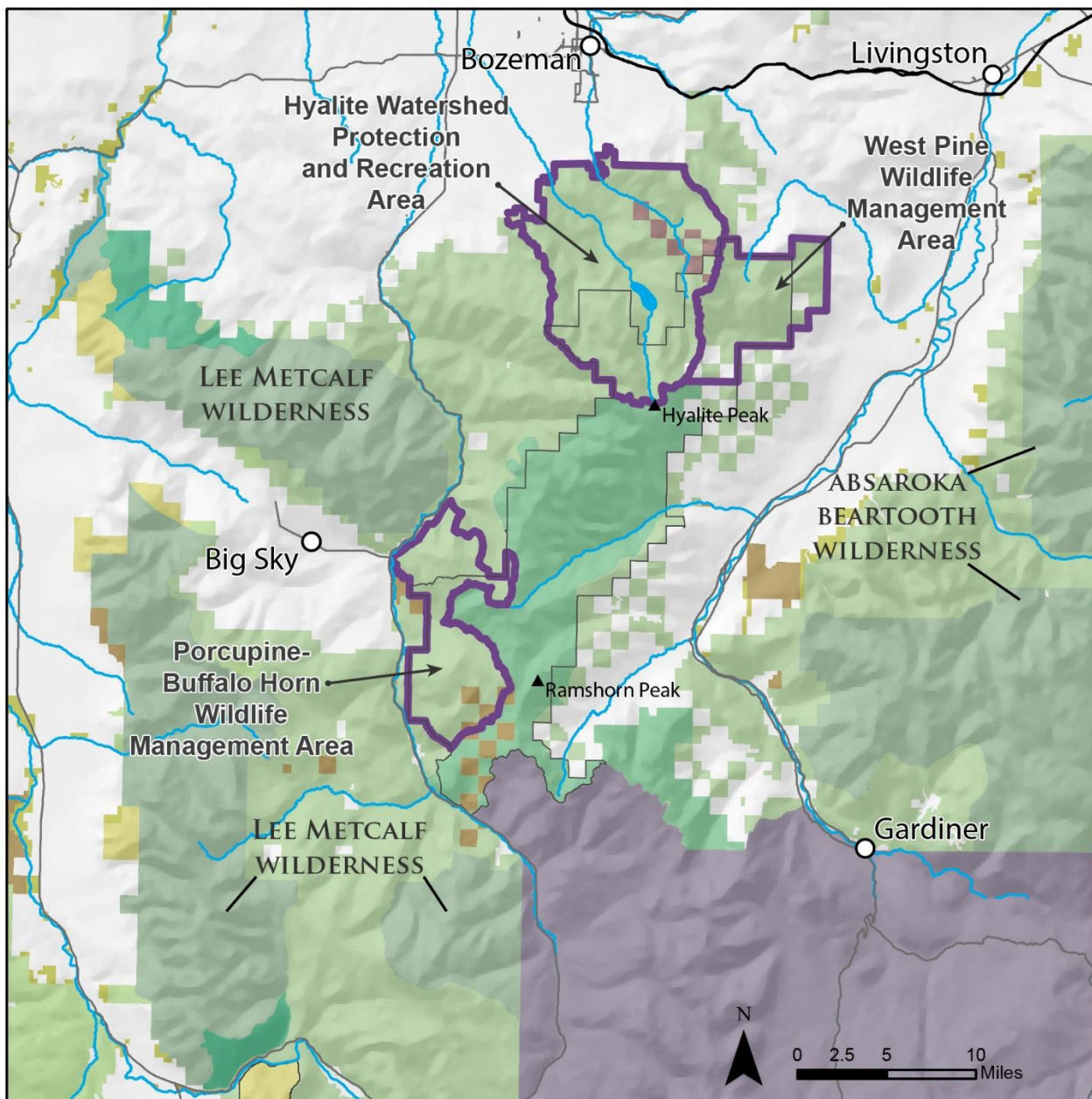
## **Gallatin and Madison Geographic Area**

### **A Brief Sense of Place**

- The area is defined by its mountains and rivers. Moving east to west, the Yellowstone, Gallatin, and Madison rivers, and the Gallatin and Madison mountain ranges.
  - The Yellowstone River arises on the Continental Divide in the southeastern corner of Yellowstone National Park and flows northward and eastward across Montana. The upper river connects the towns of Gardiner, Emigrant and Livingston, and the people and landscapes in between. It is framed to the west by the Gallatin Mountain Range and Hyalite Peak (10,229').
  - The Gallatin River originates at 9,950 feet above sea level in Yellowstone National Park and flows some 120 miles to help form the Missouri River at Three Forks. It connects the towns of West Yellowstone, Big Sky, and Bozeman, and the broader Gallatin Valley. Along its course the river is framed by the Gallatin Range to the east and the Madison Range and Spanish Peaks to the west. Topped by Hilgard Peak (11,316'), the Madison Range is part of the western ramparts of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.
  - The Madison River arises at the confluence of the Firehole and Gibbon rivers in Yellowstone National Park, and flows some 183 miles to its confluence with the Jefferson and Gallatin rivers to form the "Mighty Mo." The river emerges from the park into a landscape framed by mountains, connected with broad grassland valleys. The river knits together the towns of West Yellowstone, Ennis and Three Forks, and smaller communities in between.
- The region has a rich, colorful history, both typical of the American West, yet unique, with ancestral use by Native Americans followed by cattlemen, miners, and homesteaders. The Gallatin National Forest was designated by Congress in 1899 at the urging of President Theodore Roosevelt.
- Much of the landscape is public land, especially the forestlands. The U.S. Forest Service is the largest landowner in the region, with lands managed by the Custer Gallatin National Forest, and the Beaverhead Deerlodge National Forest.
- The region provides a distinct rural quality of life that is highly valued by residents and visitors alike.
- The region enjoys a diverse economy with ranching and agriculture still a dominant part of the landscape and with recreation and tourism a growth industry.
- The Gallatin and Madison ranges provide myriad front and back country recreational opportunities ranging from motorized to primitive wilderness experiences across all four seasons as well as substantial, long-term commercial recreation interests.













- Gallatin County is one of the fastest growing counties in the United States. In just two decades, at conservative growth rates, the population of Bozeman/Gallatin County, Montana will be equal in size to Salt Lake City. Park and Madison counties are also undergoing significant growth.
- With significant growth in the Urban-Wildlife Interface, wildfire, cost of services, and other related issues will increasingly demand the attention of federal, county, and city managers.
- The region supports a rich diversity of habitats and plants and animals that depend on them. Examples of this diversity include, but not limited to: vital habitats supporting the recovery of grizzly bear and gray wolf, Yellowstone and westslope cutthroat trout, trumpeter swan and bald eagle, as well as big game species, like elk, bighorn sheep, pronghorn, and mule deer.
- The region is rich in natural resources, open space, and access to public lands. In addition, it is home to Montana State University, provides a regional hub for health care, enjoys good highway and rail connections, and supports Montana's busiest airport.



## Gallatin Forest Partnership Agreement

### Land Management Designations

 US Forest Service	 National Park Service
 Existing Wilderness	 Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks
 Proposed Recommended Wilderness	 Bureau of Land Management
 Proposed Special Management Areas	 City of Bozeman
 Existing Recommended Wilderness	 Private Lands

Map Created: January 2018  
Gage Cartographics

## **Designations**

*The Partnership proposes a combination of conservation and recreation designations in the heart of the Gallatin Range and portions of the Madison Range to protect wildlife habitat, clean water, undeveloped lands and diverse recreation access. The map of the Gallatin Forest Partnership's Agreement depicts the exact locations and types of designation.*

## **Hyalite Watershed Protection and Recreation Area**

### **Background:**

The Hyalite Watershed at the northern end of the Gallatin Range is a popular recreation destination in all seasons. The watershed also provides the majority of Bozeman's municipal water supply.

The area sees heavy recreation pressure and visitation in all seasons due to its proximity to Bozeman. Various trails and areas are open to diverse forms of recreation, including mountain biking, motorcycling, hiking, horseback riding, skiing (both backcountry and cross country), ice climbing, rock climbing, paddling and snowmobiling.

In winter, visitation is focused in the upper reaches of the drainage, with the majority of traffic traveling to the reservoir and beyond (67.9%). Findings show approximately 18,765 cars passed by the lowest counter along the road (at the entrance gate) between January and March 2013 with 12,742 passing by the counter just below the reservoir.

<http://hyalite.org/what-we-do/road-use-study/Winter%20Road%20Use%20Study.pdf>. While there's never been a similar study done in the summer, visitation from May through the return of winter is an order of magnitude higher, with full parking lots and busy trails throughout the season.

The popularity of the area, combined with its high water and natural resource values, necessitates the Forest Service and the public to work cooperatively to ensure proactive management and sufficient funding.

### **Management goals:**

- To protect the Hyalite and Bozeman Creek watershed(s) to ensure a clean and reliable municipal water source for the city of Bozeman.
- To maintain and, where appropriate, enhance the existing high quality and diverse recreation experiences offered in the watershed.
- To protect the wild and remote character of the high peaks in the upper reaches of the drainage.

- To manage for stable and resilient wildlife populations.

**Management recommendations:**

- Areas and trails that are currently non-motorized will stay non-motorized, and no new motorized trails will be constructed.
- In the portions of the Hyalite watershed that are within the Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn WSA, there shall be no new trail construction to ensure the high peaks (Flanders, Mt. Bole, Divide Peak, Maid of the Mist) and alpine basins currently without trails continue to provide remote, pristine, and wild backcountry character.
- As recreational use increases in the Hyalite Watershed Protection and Recreation Area, the Forest Service should consider managing more trails through time-share trails agreements such as the one currently in place for the Emerald Lake trail.
- Investments in new trail development to create better connections and loop opportunities could be made in the parts of the watershed that are outside of the Wilderness Study Area. Trails should be maintained throughout the Recreation Area.
- Identify opportunities in winter to provide greater access and shared multi-use trails for winter non-motorized recreation.
- The Forest Service should increase enforcement efforts to ensure that recreational use is confined to those routes and areas where it is allowed.
- The Forest Service should develop partnerships with non-government organizations to increase maintenance and funding capacity within the recreation area;
- The Forest Service should develop a fee-based system (ie: annual pass, parking permit fee, etc) for all or part of the Hyalite Watershed Protection and Recreation Area with revenues generated used to support investments in recreation infrastructure and enforcement in the HWPRA, freeing appropriated recreation funds for use in other parts of the Gallatin Range.
- The area should be withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under mining laws and from disposition under laws pertaining to mineral and geothermal leasing.

- Establish baseline data regarding existing recreational use as well as wildlife occupancy and known movement patterns. Monitor ongoing recreational and wildlife use of the WMA to ensure increased recreational use is not having a detrimental impact on wildlife.
- Active vegetation management can occur outside of the WSA and inventoried roadless areas to address watershed health and wildfire hazards. Within the WSA and inventoried roadless areas prescribed fire can be used for active vegetation management.

**Approved by unanimous consensus of the Gallatin Forest Partnership on November 27, 2017.**

## **Porcupine-Buffalo Horn Wildlife Management Area**

### **Background:**

The Porcupine-Buffalo Horn area in the southern Gallatin Range, due to its proximity to Yellowstone National Park, provides important wildlife habitat for a wide range of native species, including elk, grizzly bear, moose, bighorn sheep, and wolverine. Due to these habitat values, the area includes nine sections of Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks [Gallatin Wildlife Management Area](#) intermingled with Custer Gallatin National Forest lands. The area provides important habitat connectivity between the Gallatin and Madison Ranges for migrating wildlife moving out of Yellowstone.

This area is also a popular recreation destination in all seasons, particularly for the Big Sky community. Various trails and areas are open to diverse forms of recreation, including mountain biking, motorcycling, hiking, horseback riding, cross country skiing and snowmobiling. Outfitters and guest ranches along Highway 191 also regularly use the trails. The Big Sky Snowmobile trail connects Buffalo Horn to Porcupine Creek and the Portal Creek trailhead to the north.

Recreational use is currently managed with some seasonal limits in the summer. The MFWP sections are closed to visitors from December 1 – May 14<sup>th</sup> each year to protect wildlife during the critical winter season. [CGNF trails](#) in the area are open to bicycles from June 16-March 31<sup>st</sup> and to motorcycles from June 16 – September 4<sup>th</sup>. There is a designated snowmobile play area on the north slope of Eaglehead Peak around Golden Trout lakes.

The high wildlife and recreation values require proactive management strategies to prevent degradation of the important wildlife habitat values and increased conflicts between wildlife and recreationists. The management goals and recommendations for the Porcupine-Buffalo Horn Wildlife Management Area were developed based on the Congressionally designated Cabin Creek Wildlife Management Area in the Madison Range and the Rocky Mountain Front Conservation Management Area on the Helena Lewis and Clark National Forest.

### **Management goals:**

- To conserve, protect and enhance important fish and wildlife habitats.
- To maintain existing recreation access consistent with the goal of protecting the fish and wildlife habitat values.
- To maintain the presently existing wilderness character of the area.

### **Management recommendations:**

- The area should be withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under mining laws and from disposition under laws pertaining to mineral and geothermal leasing.
- No commercial timber harvest or new road construction should be permitted.
- To the extent compatible with the protection and conservation of wildlife within the area,
  - maintain existing non-commercial recreational access.
  - maintain outfitting and guide operations and opportunities in this area.
- Establish baseline data regarding existing recreational use as well as wildlife occupancy and known movement patterns. Monitor ongoing recreational and wildlife use of the WMA to ensure increased recreational use is not having a detrimental impact on wildlife.
- Immediately following completion of forest plan revision conduct travel analysis for all trails within the P-BH area, designate additional system trails as necessary, and allow no new trail construction following this process.
- Maintain, and as necessary adjust, existing seasonal closures to recreational use to ensure the protection of secure wildlife habitat and connectivity.
- As recreational use increases in the Porcupine-Buffalo Horn Wildlife Management Area, manage trails through time share trails agreements such as those currently in place for heavily used trails in the northern Gallatin Range to minimize conflicts between different types of recreational uses.
- The Forest Service should increase enforcement efforts to ensure that recreational use is confined to those routes and areas where it is allowed.
- The Forest Service should develop partnerships with non-government organizations to increase maintenance within the Wildlife Management area.
- The Forest Service and Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks should consolidate the checkerboard land ownership pattern that currently exists around Ramshorn Lake and in the Porcupine and Buffalo Horn drainages to improve management of the area, including trails and recreation access.

**Approved by consensus of the Gallatin Forest Partnership (GVBCH thumbs sideways, all others thumbs up) on November 27, 2017.**

## Recommended Wilderness

### Background

The Custer Gallatin National Forest (CGNF) holds some of the wildest public lands in Montana and beyond. Nearby communities have discussed the management of these wild places for decades. The Gallatin and Madison Ranges have a long management and legislative history associated with protecting the existing wilderness characteristics of this landscape. This corner of the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem includes important fish and wildlife habitat as well as world class primitive recreation opportunities.

The management goals and recommendations presented in this agreement only apply to the four proposed Recommended Wilderness areas described below and do not reflect agreement regarding Recommended Wilderness management policy generally.

### Management Goals:

- To maintain and/or enhance the presently existing wilderness character;
- To conserve and protect wildlife and fish habitat;
- To provide primitive recreational opportunities for present and future generations;
- To secure a permanent endowment of wilderness in the Gallatin Range for future generations.

### Management Recommendations:

- The Gallatin Forest Partnership recommends that portions of the following areas be recommended as wilderness in the revised forest plan (See attached map). These site-specific recommendations were negotiated by the specific organizations participating in the GFP and incorporate commitments to other stakeholders.
  - **Cowboy Heaven:** The recommended wilderness connects the Spanish Peaks and Bear Trap Canyon units of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness. It is also adjacent to the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest's recommended wilderness directly to the west. This area was left out of the 1983 Lee Metcalf wilderness bill yet remains a wild and untrammelled place today. This recommended wilderness should exclude the #405 trail and the #401 trail to its junctions with the #405.
  - **Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area:** The core of the WSA from Hyalite Lake south to the boundary of Yellowstone National Park, including some small adjacent roadless areas, should be recommended as wilderness, excluding the otherwise identified Hyalite Watershed Protection and Recreation



Area, Porcupine-Buffalo Horn and West Pine Wildlife Management Areas. The majority of this area was proposed to be designated Wilderness in statewide wilderness legislation that passed both chambers of Congress in 1988.

- **Sawtooth Inventoried Roadless Area**: The Gallatin Forest Partnership recommends the Sawtooth IRA along the border of Yellowstone National Park be recommended as wilderness, excluding the Sphinx Mountain area.
- Addition to the **southern end of the Taylor Hilgard unit** of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness: This roadless addition to the Taylor Hilgard unit has steep terrain and no trails.
- The following management recommendations apply to the four areas specifically identified above as the GFP's agreed upon recommended wilderness areas. These management recommendations are specific to the areas within the GFP agreement and are not intended to influence recommended Wilderness management elsewhere on the forest:
  - Manage to protect the opportunity for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System.
  - Manage to maintain the undeveloped, untrammeled, natural characteristics and to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.
  - Prohibit uses (such as motor vehicles, aircraft, and mechanical means of transport) that are not allowed within Congressionally designated Wilderness Areas.
  - Maintain the Windy Pass cabin rental opportunity in the Gallatin Range recommended wilderness, as consistent with maintaining the existing wilderness character.
  - Withdraw from all forms of appropriation under mining laws and from disposition under laws pertaining to mineral and geothermal leasing.
  - Do not permit commercial timber harvest or new road construction.
  - Do not permit new communication sites or new utility corridors; existing sites should be removed if/when possible. While there are existing communications sites along the edges of the GFP's proposed Gallatin Range recommended

wilderness, they should not preclude recommending this portion of the area as wilderness.

- Allow restoration activities (like the use of prescribed fire or weed management) when necessary where the activities protect and/or enhance the existing wilderness character.
- Maintain outfitting and guiding opportunities consistent with the existing wilderness character.
- The Forest Service and Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks should consolidate the checkerboard land ownership pattern that currently exists at the southern end of the Gallatin Range recommended wilderness to improve management of the area, including trails and recreation access.
- Establish baseline data regarding existing recreational use as well as wildlife occupancy and known movement patterns. Monitor ongoing recreational and wildlife use of the recommended wilderness areas to ensure increased recreational use is not having a detrimental impact on wildlife.

**Approved by unanimous consensus of the Gallatin Forest Partnership on November 27, 2017.**

## **West Pine Wildlife Management Area**

### **Background:**

The northeast corner of the Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study area remains wild, remote and relatively untraveled. It provides important habitat for myriad species of wildlife, including elk, bighorn sheep and mule deer and serves as an important migration corridor for wide ranging species including, but not limited to, grizzly bears.

The area was burned in 2003 in the Fridley fire and public access from the east is limited due to adjacent private lands. Two trailheads – West Pine and North

Dry Creek – just outside the boundary of the Wilderness Study Area serve as access points for an existing mountain bike trail and additional trails open to foot and horse travel.

### **Management Goals:**

- To conserve, protect and enhance important fish and wildlife habitats;
- To maintain and enhance semi-primitive, non-motorized recreation opportunities;
- To maintain the presently existing wilderness character of the area.

### **Management Recommendations:**

- The area should be withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under mining laws and from disposition under laws pertaining to mineral and geothermal leasing.
- No commercial timber harvest or new road construction should be permitted.
- Active management for ecological resource benefit is allowable to restore or enhance wildlife habitat and reduce wildfire hazards in the Wildland Urban Interface consistent with the 2001 Roadless Rule.
- To the extent compatible with the protection and conservation of wildlife within the area,
  - maintain existing non-commercial, non-motorized semi-primitive recreational access.
  - Allow mountain bike use on all existing Forest Service system trails in the area.
  - Maintain outfitting and guide operations and opportunities in this area.
- To ensure the protection of secure wildlife habitat and connectivity, maintain and, as necessary, adjust existing seasonal closures to recreational use.

- Develop two new trails in the area as feasible based on terrain, habitat, and budget to improve trail connectivity. The first trail would connect the existing West Pine trail to the North Dry Creek trailhead outside of the WSA, creating a loop ride. The second trail would head north from the existing Dry Divide Trail (#135) and connect into the Bear Lakes Trail (#53) as practical based on terrain. If these routes are not practical, other trail routes should be considered in the area of similar length so as to provide a similar quality trail experience. Beyond these proposals, there should be no net change in the system trails.
- Establish baseline data regarding existing recreational use as well as wildlife occupancy and known movement patterns. Monitor ongoing recreational and wildlife use of the WMA to ensure increased recreational use is not having a detrimental impact on wildlife.

**Approved by consensus of the Gallatin Forest Partnership (GV BCH thumbs sideways; all other partners thumbs up) on November 27, 2017.**

## **Recreation:**

*Outside of the proposed designations, the Partnership identifies several key areas in the Gallatin Range and along the western flank of the Absaroka Wilderness where the Forest Service could enhance diverse recreation opportunities, cooperative land stewardship, and public land access.*

## **Gallatin Range: General management recommendations**

**Background:** The GFP is proposing a combination of conservation designations to protect roughly 233,000 acres of the Gallatin Range. There are several key portions of this range for which we do not propose specific designations, but do have some management recommendations to address access issues and management/ stewardship opportunities. We have identified four general areas:

- the Gallatin roaded area from the proposed Hyalite Watershed Protection and Recreation area south to Portal Creek road;
- the public/private checkerboard lands on the east side of the Gallatin Range outside of the WSA;
- the Chestnut Mountain, Frog Rock, Goose Creek area; and
- the Gallatin Corridor Day Use Area.

All of these areas provide access into the GFP's designated areas, provide high quality recreation experiences for a diversity of uses in their own right, and in many cases, are in the wildland urban interface identified by community wildfire protection plans.

**Gallatin Roaded Area:** This part of the Gallatin Range is heavily roaded and in various stages of regeneration from past timber harvests and forest fires. The area provides opportunities for a variety of recreation including summer motorized recreation and groomed snowmobiling in the winter.

- Management goals:
  - Enhance diverse recreation opportunities;
  - Improve watershed health and landscape resilience.
- Management recommendations:
  - After forest planning, conduct travel analysis and trails planning in order to provide more high-quality recreation experiences including some use-specific trails, "destination" trails and improved trail connectivity from the north to south to link the communities of Bozeman/Gallatin Gateway to Big Sky and West Yellowstone.

- Utilize restoration focused active vegetation management to move the landscape's forest habitats to a more resilient condition and reduce fuels in the Wildland Urban Interface.
- Continue reducing the number of unneeded legacy roads by decommissioning them or converting them to recreation trails as appropriate.
- Consider trailhead facilities and access for vehicles with trailers for existing and new trail heads.

**East side of the Gallatin Range, outside of the WSA:** The east side of the Gallatin Range is a complex checkerboard of public and private land ownership which makes management and access challenging.

- Management goals:
  - Facilitate cooperative stewardship and land management;
  - Address wildfire hazards and public access issues.
- Management recommendations:
  - Support continued Forest Service work with landowners on the east side of the Gallatin Range to consolidate checkerboard lands in order to facilitate improved land management and access.

**Chestnut Mountain, Frog Rock, Goose Creek area:**

- Management goals:
  - Continue the current management direction for this area.
- Management recommendations:
  - If possible, improve connectivity by trail between the Goose Creek and Chestnut trailheads.

## **Gallatin Corridor Day Use Management Area**

### **Background:**

The Gallatin Corridor area along the western flank of the Gallatin Range, receives significant and growing pressures from recreation users of many types due to its proximity to Yellowstone National Park and the Big Sky community. River access throughout the corridor is used extensively by rafters, kayakers, and anglers. Various trailheads along Highway 191 also provide access to the mountains for diverse forms of recreation, including mountain biking, motorcycling, hiking, horseback riding, cross country skiing and snowmobiling. Outfitters and guest ranches along Highway 191 also regularly use the trails.

### **Management goals:**

- Mitigate the impact of growing use of CGNF lands along the Gallatin corridor, by maintaining and, in some cases, enhancing trailhead access and facilities.
- Engage and train volunteer resources where feasible to accomplish this goal.

#### **Management recommendations:**

- As recreational use increases in the Gallatin Corridor Day Use Area, manage heavily used trailheads with conflicting uses through shared trails agreements such as those currently in place for heavily used trails in the northern Gallatin Range.
- Regularly maintain high usage trailhead access points and facilities, including trash pickup, toilet cleaning and resupply, road repair (top dress, fill potholes, grading), and public notice updates.
- Where feasible (given land available and other limitations), expand parking and provide turnaround for trailer rigs at trailhead locations.
- Existing trails should be inventoried and signed to clarify which trails are open and which trails are closed.
- Increase enforcement efforts to ensure that recreational use is confined to those routes and areas where it is allowed.
- Develop partnerships with non-governmental organizations to increase maintenance, awareness, monitoring and education with volunteers within the Gallatin Corridor Day Use Area. Consider hiring a “Gallatin River Ambassador” and instituting a “Respect the River” program over the summer season.
- Harden access sites and boat ramps as needed, add education, stewardship and interpretive information (e.g. Lava Lake/35 mph Bridge area). Decrease sedimentation from trails, roads and river access points along the Gallatin River corridor.

#### **East side Paradise Valley – Mill Creek and Mission Creek Travel Planning Areas:**

**Background:** The Gallatin Forest Partnership recognizes that there is a relative lack of moderate grade semi-primitive non-motorized trails in the Livingston area. We have identified some opportunities on the east side of the Paradise Valley where we encourage the Forest Service to build new or rehabilitate existing trails to meet this need.

#### **Management Goals:**

- Maintain the current diverse recreation settings and opportunities in these areas;
- Enhance semi-primitive, non-motorized access outside of Wilderness.

#### **Management Recommendations:**

- Withdraw the areas around Emigrant Peak from all forms of appropriation under mining laws and from disposition under laws pertaining to mineral and geothermal leasing.
- Invest in new trail development outside of Wilderness, while maintaining a semi-primitive, non-motorized recreation setting between Pine Creek and Mill Creek and the lands around Livingston Peak trailhead.
- Ensure land allocations do not conflict or prohibit these future trail opportunities.

**Approved by unanimous consensus of the Gallatin Forest Partnership on January 8, 2018.**



## **Invasive Weeds**

### **Background**

Invasive weed control is a problem vexing land managers and users. Invasive weeds threaten to alter the ecosystem by outcompeting native plant life. They also affect wildlife habitat, alter fire frequency, and change soil nutrients as stated in the Custer Gallatin National Forest's specialist report on existing conditions of invasive weeds.

Disturbances of varying kinds aid invasive weeds' aggressive spread. Disturbances include wind, water and wildlife, but it is known that humans are the main contributor to the spread of weeds. This assertion is re-iterated by a majority of weeds on the CGNF located within 2000 feet of a disturbed area (roads, trails, recreation sites, developed facilities and other activity areas). [1]

Increasingly there is also evidence that weed control programs can be harmful to native plants and biodiversity when herbicides are improperly applied. Habitats once occupied with native forbs are being converted to stands of non-native pasture grasses in the name of weed control.

As the Forest Service determines its guiding plan for the coming decades, the comprehensive weed management plan is critical. The Gallatin Forest Partnership also recognizes that weed control is an on-going effort and funding is limited. Due to the magnitude of the problem and funding limitations, it is imperative that the Forest Service create a strategic plan for invasive weed prevention, identification, management and eradication. The specialist report points to prevention as the most effective strategy for weed management, for both economic and ecological reasons.

To achieve a plan that prioritizes prevention while also managing and potentially eradicating invasive and noxious weeds, it will be important for the Forest Service to:

- Inventory weed populations. This includes collecting data on location, species, and infestation size.
- Prioritize species based on ecological and economical threat, and the capability to manage and control. Including but not limited to species listed as noxious by the state and counties (e.g., spotted knapweed, Canada thistle, houndstongue, leafy spurge, common tansy[TW1] )
- Consider the cost/benefit of management and prioritize location, species and method of treatment
- Evaluate most effective treatment method (manual, mechanical, biological, agricultural, chemical)

## **Management Goals**

- Identify, manage and eradicate noxious and invasive species on the Custer Gallatin National Forest.

## **Management Recommendations:**

- Adequately fund invasive species management planning and implementation plan. The plan should include a public education effort and aggressive on-the-ground management and surveying.
- Engage with relevant entities (MSU Extension, county extension offices, adjacent landowners, etc.) in applying for cooperative grants & seeking funding on a national level for weed management.
- Create a “clearinghouse” for invasive weed locations and information. A version of the clearinghouse should be available for public review to aid volunteer weed management efforts.
- Seek out partnerships with organized, volunteer stakeholder groups to tackle weed management on highly-used corridors (create an adopt-a-trailhead program). Also, train willing partners in proper weed identification to help fill out the CGNF “clearinghouse.”
- In partnership with adjacent landowners, MSU extension, and others, develop a set of best management practices, and ensure that all forest users are using these best management practices to prevent the spread of invasive and noxious weeds.

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[1] Existing Conditions, Invasives report

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**Approved by unanimous consensus of the Gallatin Forest Partnership on January 8, 2018.**

## Wildlife

### Background:

The 20-million-acre Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is the realm of grizzly bears, bison, wolves, and the large elk herds and is well known as one of the last remaining intact temperate ecosystems in the world. As wild as it is rare in today's rapidly changing world, Greater Yellowstone still represents one of the best examples of unspoiled nature once found across the American West.

A significant portion of the Custer Gallatin National Forest is part of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE). Notably, the Gallatin Range is the last unprotected mountain range connected to Yellowstone National Park. Its wild, roadless lands are home to some of our most rare and iconic wildlife species and is *the* doorstep for Yellowstone in terms of wildlife connectivity. The forest and its variety of habitats provides an important travel corridor for wildlife coming from the park, winter range for foraging ungulates, and secure cover for bears, elk and bison through the Gallatin and into the Madison Range.

In the face of a changing climate several things need to be in place to support the wildlife on the forest: habitat connectivity, core secure habitat, quality and diversity of habitat. The Gallatin Forest Partnership identified the following desired conditions to ensure healthy wildlife populations, healthy wildlife habitat and co-existence among wildlife and humans.

The Gallatin Forest Partnership understands the Forest Service manages the habitat for native species. The desired conditions and recommendations reflect the Forest Service's ability to manage wildlife habitat to best maintain and enhance wildlife on the Custer Gallatin National Forest (CGNF).

### Management Goals:

- Ensure current diversity and abundance of wildlife species in the Gallatin and Madison Mountain Ranges.
- Maintain and enhance core secure habitat.
- Maintain and enhance habitat connectivity.
- Maintain and enhance habitat quality and diversity for native species.

### Management Recommendations:

- Identify critical big game habitat, migration pathways and corridors important to species movement across the landscape and manage as appropriate consistent with the entire agreement.

- Continue to work with Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks to obtain best available science regarding wildlife movement and habitat needs.
- Seek out partnerships with wildlife organizations to broaden the data for the Forest Service to manage wildlife habitats.
- Develop forest plan components that will protect and preserve these areas and processes, and restore them including trail closures when necessary.
- Develop coordinated administrative actions that result in cross-boundary recognition and protections for migration routes to ensure the region's iconic wildlife survive in a time of climate change and increasing human pressure.
- Educate the general public about responsible and safe interaction with wildlife across the forest. Invest in partnerships for this educational effort.
- Monitor wildlife and recreationists movements in highly recreated areas to gain understanding of recreational impact on wildlife movement.
- Identify high diversity and high value habitats to manage for keystone species indefinitely.
- Utilize adaptive management techniques to remain flexible and respond to terrestrial changes due to climate change.

**Approved by unanimous consensus of the Gallatin Forest Partnership on January 8, 2018.**

## **Water**

### **Background**

The headwaters of some of the most spectacular and important waterways in our region emanate from the Gallatin and Madison Ranges in the Custer Gallatin National Forest (CGNF). Large rivers such as the Yellowstone, Gallatin and Madison, as well as mountain streams like Big Creek, Taylor Fork, Hyalite Creek and Spanish Creek, all owe at least part of their flow to precipitation that falls, collects and percolates through these mountains. The water in these headwaters streams remains clean and cold thanks to their high elevation, relatively low incidence of riverside development, and the thousands of acres of roadless lands that surround them. These rivers and streams support rare and iconic species such as grizzly bears, wolverines, Yellowstone cutthroat trout and Westslope cutthroat trout, as well as a number of thriving towns and agricultural lands surrounding the national forest. This area is renowned for its world-class recreational opportunities and thriving outdoor industry, much of which takes place in, on or along its rivers and streams.

Threats to these rivers do exist. Growing population centers and development in the wildland-urban interface, increasing outdoor recreation, warming temperatures, invasive species and the potential for new hydropower projects, water storage proposals, and transbasin diversions in a climate-altered and carbon-constrained future emphasize the importance of permanently protecting the most important streams in the area.

Consistent with our focus on water and wildlife throughout the partnership agreement, and our engagement in administrative tools that the Forest Service has at its disposal, we encourage the use of all management tools to conserve our watersheds. These include the creation of management areas and geographic areas that prioritize watershed health, utilization of best management practices in restoration and enhancement projects, collaboration with other entities for on the ground stewardship and education, utilization of the administrative protections required for inventoried wild and scenic eligible streams, and the monitoring and adaptive management that is consistent with the best available science in the field.

### **Management Goals**

- Maintain the ecological health of headwaters streams, focusing especially on the fish and wildlife habitat that occurs in and along rivers in the Gallatin and Madison Ranges
- Preserve the wild, clean, cold, connected character of headwaters streams in the area
- Sustain vibrant, low-impact recreational resources in the area

### **Management Recommendations**

1. Ensure that streams inventoried by the Forest as eligible under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act are maintained as free-flowing and that their outstanding values are maintained or enhanced, as required by law and policy. A priority list of Wild and Scenic eligible streams, in their public lands reaches, includes Big Creek, Cabin Creek, Gallatin River, Upper Hyalite Creek, Madison River and the Yellowstone River.
2. Identify, protect and enhance riparian areas, streambeds and water resources that provide native fish spawning and wildlife habitat.
3. Address aquatic invasive species in collaboration with the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee, the State of Montana and local groups.
4. Identify and protect important cold-water fish refugia for the life of the plan.
5. Restore riparian areas and high-altitude wetlands with green infrastructure such as beavers and beaver mimicry, and by monitoring water quantity and thermal character (e.g. Swan Creek).
6. Identify and protect source-water needs for Bozeman, Big Sky, Gardiner, Livingston and West Yellowstone for the life of the forest plan. Prioritize the use of green infrastructure and conservation to meet future needs.
7. Identify and enhance, sustainable water-based recreation needs for the life of the forest plan. Become a leader in sustainable recreation as our region grows in population by promoting stewardship, education, accountability and ownership through outreach, engagement and local partnerships with recreation and conservation organizations.

**Approved by unanimous consensus of the Gallatin Forest Partnership on February 15, 2018.**

## **Outfitting and Guiding recommendations**

### **Background:**

Outfitting and guiding is a time-honored use on the Custer Gallatin National Forest, and permitted operators offer a wide range of recreation services across the forest.

Thirty five percent of the Forest Service's Region 1 outfitters and guides operate on the Custer Gallatin National Forest, representing approximately 175 outfitter and guide permittees.

Horseback rides and rafting/boating represent the highest amount of authorized days. Other activities include environmental education, fishing, hunting, hiking, and backpacking in the summer and fall. Snowmobile guiding and rentals represent the largest amount of authorized days in the winter.

Across the country, the Forest Service's outfitting permitting system is clogged up and the Custer Gallatin is no exception. Existing permit holders are experiencing challenges in growing their authorized permit days and/or expanding into new uses or seasons. New permits are not being issued. The Custer Gallatin reports receiving dozens of requests annually from both commercial and noncommercial operators who would like authorized permits on the forest.

### **Goals:**

- Establish sustainable (ecologically, administratively and socially) levels of outfitted and guided activities to protect public land resources and provide economically viable business opportunities.

### **Recommendations**

- Conduct a programmatic analysis of the overall capacity of the Custer Gallatin National Forest for permitted outfitted/guided user days. The Forest should establish the levels of outfitted use it can manage administratively, ecologically, and socially. The Custer Gallatin initiated work on this type of analysis in 2015 but does not currently have the capacity to finish.
  - When analyzing capacity, consider seasonality of use so that activities that occur in completely different seasons or locations are not competing for the same user days
- Work with outfitters to adapt the allocation of user days to address needs related to ensuring business viability and stability. For example:

- do not penalize outfitters by decreasing user days based on 5-year average of actual use. Instead, account for 75% of allocated user days as potential full usage.
- Allow outfitters to request pool use days up to 2 years in advance of anticipated need to enable outfitter business planning.
- Based on sustainable levels identified in the programmatic analysis, work to increase flexibility in the administration of outfitting and guide special use permits in the following ways:
  - Allow existing outfitters to allocate user days to other related and less use-intensive activities (for example, switching hunting use days to horse riding or backpacking) when environmental and economic conditions warrant.
  - Work with education and youth oriented programs to grow the next generation of National Forest enthusiasts by streamlining the permitting process for education and youth oriented programs.
  - When existing outfitters and permit holders offer youth and/or educational programs, allow them to apply for educational user days instead of using other permitted use designations such as horse, fish, hike, etc.
  - Ensure the outfitter and guide program can respond to changing demographics and recreation interests by encouraging additional outfitting and guide services on the forest beyond traditional uses like hunting, fishing, and horseback riding.
- Improve reporting requirements and transparency in reporting to ensure outfitters are complying with permit requirements as outlined in the approved operations plan and best practices for outfitting on shared public lands.
- Consider credits for stewardship activities (ie: clearing system trails, weed management etc) conducted by outfitters on public lands and encourage coordination of these activities with other stewardship groups through the CGNF volunteer coordinator.

**Approved by unanimous consensus by the Gallatin Forest Partnership on January 8, 2018.**



## **Wildland, Prescribed Fire and Timber**

### **Background**

The Madison and Gallatin Ranges have a long, well-documented history of wildland fire. The predominant fire regimes for our area of interest are low-frequency/high-severity in nature, which result in “stand-replacing” fire events, returning the forest to early successional stages for regeneration. This pattern of large, stand replacing fires can threaten private property, structures, and human safety. In addition, large stand replacing fires have the potential to adversely impact watersheds, fisheries, and other natural resources including suitable commercial timber areas.

Fire management by the USFS in the CGNF has evolved significantly since the last forest plans, with updates and amendments in 2006 and 2011. These changes “allow consideration of one or more management strategies for unplanned, naturally-caused fire to achieve a variety of management objectives.” Reasons for these changes include a reevaluation of the role fire plays in the health of the ecosystem, together with the realities of constrained budgets for fire suppression, as well as the risks associated with suppression.

Of particular interest are the wildland-urban interface and major travel corridors that are highly valued resources in our area, and constrain land managers’ ability to use fire to restore ecosystems.

### **Management Goals:**

- Outside of the GFP’s agreed upon designated areas, focus active management of fire and timber on restoring the forest habitats of the Gallatin and Madison Ranges to more resilient conditions based on the natural range of variation where necessary and appropriate.
- Focus active vegetation management in the Wildland Urban Interface to reduce the risk posed by high severity wildfire to homes, infrastructure, and municipal water supplies.

### **Management Recommendations:**

- Manage hazardous fuel loads using all the tools in the toolkit including timber harvest, prescribed fire, as well as support for private landowner management of fuels on their property and around their structures. This recommendation will help reduce the impacts and costs of wildfires.
- Use prescribed fire where and when appropriate to modify fuels on National Forest lands with an emphasis on areas outside of the suitable timber base.

- Coordinate with local fire authorities in surrounding communities to support private property owner education and sensible incentives for management of wildland-urban interface concerns.
- Prioritize as forest management goals increasing the diversity of forest species, age class and stand size, with particular focus on the restoration of whitebark pine.
- Develop vegetation management projects in a manner consistent with the [principles developed by the Montana Forest Restoration Committee](#) which represent a broadly supported zone of agreement for ecologically-appropriate, scientifically-supported forest restoration.

**Approved by unanimous consensus by the Gallatin Forest Partnership on January 8, 2018.**

## **Appendix A:**

### **Gallatin Forest Partnership Charter**

January 3, 2017

The Gallatin Forest Partnership is a diverse group of citizens, landowners, entrepreneurs, recreational interests, businesses and natural resource professionals who have a shared and direct connection to the Custer Gallatin National Forest lands found in portions of the Bozeman, Hebgen and Yellowstone Ranger Districts in southwest Montana.

#### **PURPOSE**

Over the course of the year 2017, the Gallatin Forest Partnership will work together with the primary purpose of creating a shared vision and management recommendations for the public lands managed by the Custer Gallatin National Forest located on portions of the Bozeman, Hebgen and Yellowstone Ranger Districts. This proposal will be presented to Custer Gallatin National Forest officials as the desired management direction for the Custer Gallatin National Forest lands found in these portions of the Bozeman, Hebgen and Yellowstone Ranger Districts for the upcoming forest plan revision.

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in the Gallatin Forest Partnership is designed to be representative of those who care about the Custer Gallatin National Forest in southwest Montana.

Initial members of the Gallatin Forest Partnership represent the following constituencies:

American Rivers	Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
Big Sky Mountain Bike Alliance	Greater Yellowstone Coalition
Gallatin Valley Back Country Horsemen	9 Quarter Circle Guest Ranch
International Mountain Bicycling Association	Lone Mountain Ranch
Livingston Bike Club	Montana Backcountry Alliance
Montana Wilderness Association	Southwest Montana Mountain Bike Alliance
Montana Outdoor Alliance	Mountain Sky Guest Ranch
The Wilderness Society	Winter Wildlands Alliance

The U.S.F.S. and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks will be invited to attend in an advisory capacity.

Responsibilities:

Membership is defined as those who are willing to regularly attend meetings and who agree to participate according to the terms of this charter. Members will:

- Engage in collaborative problem solving to find solutions that address the range of interests brought to the table. Members must be willing to seek agreements that meet the variety of interests included in Gallatin Forest Partnership not just their own.
- Work with their own groups, organizations, and constituencies to understand and articulate their interests, to secure their on-going input and, as appropriate, to build support for final proposals,
- Adhere to the charter and code of conduct,
- Periodically review membership; identify missing interests; and recruit, as needed new members to ensure diverse participation in the collaborative,
- Participate actively in meetings. Only through constructive dialogue among diverse stakeholders can the Gallatin Forest Partnership achieve its purpose.

Members will strive to attend all meetings and assigned committees. If unable to attend, members shall notify the steering committee in advance of the meeting. Each organization listed as a member may designate and educate an alternate. Recognizing that there are inevitable conflicts in scheduling that may prevent full attendance, the member will seek to be informed of actions taken at meetings at which the member is absent. Decisions made in a members' absence are binding. Members will be replaced if too many meetings are missed, as determined by the members.

Gallatin Forest Partnership will periodically review its membership to ensure that all interests are represented. If a change in membership results in the absence of a specific interest, Gallatin Forest Partnership will recruit new members who can represent the same interest and/or perspective.

A new member may be nominated by a current member and approved by our decision-making process, whether or not the nominee is in attendance. New nominations will be discussed in executive session where only members are present. A new group or person that attends and wants to join may be nominated and decided upon at that meeting. If that potential member is not nominated at that time, he or she may attend two more meetings which indicates significant interest and may ask for another vote at that time. Any new members will agree to conduct themselves according to this charter and code of conduct.

Sub-committees may be appointed as necessary to work on specific issues or tasks and report back to the full group. Committees shall function according to this charter and may recruit non-members to participate in committees based on their knowledge or experience on specific issues.

## **COORDINATION**

The Gallatin Forest Partnership will select a steering committee to organize regular meetings by consensus of a quorum of the full Gallatin Forest Partnership. The steering committee will be responsible for convening Gallatin Forest Partnership meetings, setting meeting agendas, facilitating meetings, providing oversight, and serving as points of contact for communications. The steering committee will supervise the preparation of Gallatin Forest Partnership documents

and strive to ensure that all relevant duties are accomplished. The steering committee will rotate facilitating meetings and performing other duties required.

### **OBSERVERS**

Members of the public may have observer status at any meeting. Observers may make or submit a comment to the Gallatin Forest Partnership during the Public Comment Period at the end of each meeting.

### **QUORUM**

At any meeting of the Gallatin Forest Partnership where significant decisions will be made, at least 50% plus one member of the total number of members eligible to cast votes, must be present to create a quorum. For the purposes of calculating a quorum, members who miss three consecutive meetings will not be included in the calculation of the quorum for that meeting. Voting members may assign proxies to other voting members by notifying the steering committee prior to the meeting. A member who has assigned his/ her proxy to another voting member will be considered present for the purposes of calculating a quorum.

Meetings may be held where a quorum is not present, but no decisions may be made in these low turnout meetings.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSIONS**

The Gallatin Forest Partnership may occasionally designate part of a meeting as an executive session where only members are present to discuss sensitive topics such as new member nominations. These sessions will be identified on the agenda and organized in such a way that observers will know the start/end times of the public portions of the meeting.

### **DECISIONS**

Decisions made by the Gallatin Forest Partnership will be input that may or may not be adopted by the Forest Service. A formal decision process will be used to generate official Gallatin Forest Partnership input and comments to the Forest Service on behalf of Gallatin Forest Partnership.

The Gallatin Forest Partnership will approach its deliberations as a collaborative problem-solving body seeking to produce consensus recommendations that address, insofar as possible, the needs and interests of all participants. As necessary, the group will work jointly to educate and build understanding regarding the participants' values and interests related to the issues, while also developing a baseline understanding of essential information and identifying zones of agreement.

Collaborative problem-solving is most successful when parties agree that their major interests have been heard, considered meaningfully, that other participants have made every effort to address their interests in any final recommendations, and that the final recommendations accurately characterize any outstanding differences.

The Gallatin Forest Partnership will strive for consensus on all decisions.

Consensus means the willingness to go along with the decision either in active support of it or in not opposing it. The goal is for support of consensus decisions. Votes will be conducted via thumb-raising, full support (thumb up), can live with (thumb sideways), opposition (thumb down).

Where participants vote thumb sideways they will be required to explain their concerns or reservations, and they will be duly noted. When participants vote thumb down, they will be required to explain their vote and provide an alternative, as discussed below. A sideways thumb cannot be interpreted as the intent to defer or delay a decision.

Consensus agreements will be built by those present.

Tentative agreements may be made at meetings pending the opportunity for members to consult with their necessary constituencies. This will be done on a timely basis.

The commitment to work for consensus means that members will:

- Participate in the give and take of the process in a way that seeks to understand the interests of all;
- Actively generate proposals thought to be workable for all, and
- Work together to reach consensus.

If the group is in general agreement on an issue with the exception of one or two members, the group will ask the dissenting members what it would take for them to raise their thumb. Dissenting members are responsible for proposing alternatives they believe might achieve group consensus.

The meeting facilitator will call for decisions. On some very straightforward, simple matters, the meeting facilitator may simply ask verbally for consensus, and if no objection is raised, a decision will be taken. Decisions of the Gallatin Forest Partnership will be recorded in the meeting notes. Voting members may assign proxies to other voting members by notifying the steering committee prior to the meeting.

The Gallatin Forest Partnership always strives for consensus. However, if consensus cannot be reached on any given decision, the Gallatin Forest Partnership may choose to bring in an impartial facilitator from outside of the group to help come to a solution. Should impasse not be resolved, the Gallatin Forest Partnership will provide no management recommendation to the U.S.F.S. on that subject or area of conflict.

## **RECORD KEEPING**

Official record keeping and communication functions will be the responsibility of the steering committee, including taking minutes, attendance and other record-keeping functions. It is the intention of the Gallatin Forest Partnership to make all its official proceedings openly accessible

to all interested parties upon request. Records of attendance will be brought to each meeting of the Gallatin Forest Partnership.

Official minutes of each meeting shall be compiled and circulated to members at the first practical date after a meeting. Notes from a prior Gallatin Forest Partnership meeting will be approved at the following Gallatin Forest Partnership meeting. All official Gallatin Forest Partnership committees should provide a written summary of decisions made at each of their meetings to the Gallatin Forest Partnership.

Minor revisions to notes prior to the next meeting may be made through independent contact with the steering committee, although any changes from original drafts may be subject to discussion from other Gallatin Forest Partnership members during the subsequent meeting where notes are approved.

### **COMMITTEES**

The Gallatin Forest Partnership may form unofficial subcommittees or working groups to advance tasks necessary to fulfill its purpose. Subcommittees or working groups shall report activities and findings during agenda items placed on a full Gallatin Forest Partnership membership meeting at the discretion of the *steering committee*.

### **FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Gallatin Forest Partnership will strive to reach agreement on recommendations to the USFS by the fall of 2017. The Gallatin Forest Partnership will compile its decisions and recommendations in a “Gallatin Forest Partnership Agreement” document signed by all members of the Gallatin Forest Partnership. This document will be delivered to the Supervisor of the Custer Gallatin National Forest for inclusion in the forest plan revision record as part of the local community’s expression of its thinking regarding future management of the portions of the Bozeman, Hebgen and Yellowstone Ranger Districts. Further, each member of the Gallatin Forest Partnership agrees to support the entire Agreement and its recommendation without exception.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Gallatin Forest Partnership wishes to take comment from the public who are not members. Each meeting of the Gallatin Forest Partnership will end with a designated public comment period. The public comment period will not exceed 10 minutes in length. Members of the public are encouraged to be concise with their comments and to not exceed 3 minutes in duration. The meeting facilitator has the authority to ask commentators to summarize their comments to stay within the 3 minutes period. The members of the Gallatin Forest Partnership will refrain from questions and answers during the public comment period.

### **EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Members of Gallatin Forest Partnership who represent larger stakeholder groups are encouraged to communicate with those they represent to ensure that their decisions reflect the desires of their communities and organizations. However, INSERT NAME agrees to not

widely circulate meeting notes, draft ideas and proposals, maps etc. via email, social media or other channels until the group has agreed on a common message to be shared via public statements, outreach, and/or maps summarizing the group's work. Meeting minutes (which represent summaries of decisions made) may be shared after they have been approved by the group at a regular meeting. No preliminary decisions should be shared publicly by any participants unless there is joint agreement on the message to be shared.

If the Gallatin Forest Partnership reaches agreement on recommendations and/or proposals, joint earned media efforts and public outreach are important tools to strengthen trust and commitment to the group. The communications and outreach strategy around any joint agreements will be developed together.

#### **AMENDING THIS CHARTER**

This charter may be amended according to the decision-making process outlined above.

#### **DISSOLUTION**

The Gallatin Forest Partnership may at any time receive a call for dissolution from one of its voting members. The decision to dissolve the Gallatin Forest Partnership will use the same consensus decision process as is used in all other decisions.

Approved by unanimous consensus of the Gallatin Forest Partnership, January 3, 2017.