



**MONTANA
FARM BUREAU
FEDERATION**

502 S. 19th Ave. Ste 104
Bozeman, MT 59718

Custer Gallatin National Forest
Ms. Mary Erickson
Forest Supervisor – Custer Gallatin National Forest
PO Box 130
Bozeman, MT 59715

RE: Review & Comment – Custer Gallatin National Forest Draft Revised Forest Plan, Draft Environmental Impact Statement and associated Appendices

Dear Ms. Erickson and Planning Staff,

The Montana Farm Bureau Federation would like to thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on the Custer Gallatin National Forest Proposed Forest Plan. MFBF is the largest agricultural organization in the state, representing over 20,000 members – many of which are proud stewards of the Custer Gallatin National Forest. For this reason, the final management directives included in the Custer Gallatin National Forest Plan are of the utmost importance to our organization and members.

Alternative Selection

We primarily favor alternative E. However, there are management directions in other alternatives that are preferred over alternative E. The specific comments with our preferred alternative, E, and parts of other alternatives are listed below.

Recommended wilderness: We strongly oppose the designation of any additional wilderness areas in the Custer Gallatin National Forest. Such designations prevent the Forest Service's ability to effectively manage and protect our resources. Likewise, additional wilderness areas disproportionately constrain certain economic sectors, such as agriculture and timber industries.

Timber: Alternative E includes the most acres of suitable and unsuitable timber for timber production. The timber industry provides important employment, financial, and conservation benefits to local communities.

Grazing: Alternatives B and C are the best alternatives for grazing due to the additional animal units within those alternatives. Increased AUM capacity benefits the lessee, the county, as well as the United States Forest Service by increasing the amount of revenue generated from the land.

Bison: Alternative E is the best alternative for bison management as it does not include an objective for bison habitat improvement. The Custer Gallatin National Forest Plan should emphasize the importance of lessee land stewardship by minimizing impacts to livestock operations. Alternative E's guidelines certainly reflect that by favoring livestock in management actions taken to resolve bison-livestock conflicts.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on behalf of our farming and ranching members and hope you'll take our comments into consideration as you finalize the proposed Custer Gallatin National Forest Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Youngberg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" and last name "Youngberg" clearly distinguishable.

John Youngberg, Executive Vice-President
Montana Farm Bureau Federation