

Custer Gallatin 2020 Land Management Plan

Objections to the preferred alternative F

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Custer Gallatin National Forest, Mary Erickson Forest Supervisor, Beartooth Ranger District

Introduction: I am submitting the following objections to the Draft Record of Decision selecting Alternative F as the preferred alternative for the 2020 Custer Gallatin National Forest. I believe there has been a significant amount of information either left out or not addressed that should guide the Forest Service to a more conservative alternative. As the increasing effects of climate change, habitat loss, potential species extinction accelerate, it is imperative that the agencies responsible for our land stewardship focus more on conservation and protection and less on providing resources to the extractive industries.

Objections:

-Alternative F designates too few areas for wilderness consideration. The Burnt Mountain inventoried roadless area should be included as wilderness designation as it already borders the Absaroka/Beartooth wilderness and has a natural palisade border to the north. This is one of the few "wild" areas in the lower elevations that provides critical habitat for Grizzly bears, lynx, and wolverine.

-The protections for lynx habitat should include suitable habitat whether or not it is yet occupied (scenario 1) . The point of protecting habitat is to provide the opportunity for it to become inhabited by the threatened species that depend on it.

-The Upper Red Lodge Creek area was left off the list of grizzly bear habitat management areas yet it is now known to support a growing population of bears and should be protected to allow for their continued establishment.

-The development of the Greater Red Lodge Vegetation and Habitat Management project corrupts the integrity of the decision making for the 2020 Land Management Plan because it incentivises the lack of protections for this specific area.

-Alternative D is the only Alternative that allows for habitat and ecosystem protections that is the stated mission of the Forest Service.

-Conclusion: I do not believe the Forest Service evaluated the values of many areas in the Custer Gallatin Forest adequately. The entire Upper Red Lodge Creek area was left out of any significant discussion regarding its ecosystem integrity and its need for protection and indeed appears to be targeted as a suitable area for a logging project. This area is seeing significant increases in recreation as well as providing critical habitat for many threatened species that otherwise could not exist here.

-Thank you for your consideration.

Henry Dykema

