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First name: Michael

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Organization: Alliance For The Wild Rockies

Title: Executive Director

Comments: 10 E Babcock, P.O. Box 130, Bozeman, MT 59711 Dear Forest Plan Revision Team; Please accept these comments from me on the Draft Assessment of Existing Conditions and Draft Preliminary Need to Change document on behalf of the Alliance for the Wild Rockies and Native Ecosystems Council. Please also see the attached University of Montana Thesis: Correlates of Canada Lynx Reproductive Success in Northwestern Montana by Megan K. Kosterman.

Kosterman finds that 50% of lynx habitat must be mature undisturbed forest for it to be optimal lynx habitat where lynx can have reproductive success and no more than 15% of lynx habitat should be young clearcuts, i.e. trees under 4 inches dbh. This contradicts the agency's assumption in the Lynx Amendment that 30% of lynx habitat can be clearcut, and that no specific amount of mature forest needs to be conserved. It is now the best available science out there that describes lynx habitat in the Northern Rockies related to lynx viability and recovery. Kosterman's study demonstrates that the Lynx Amendment standards are not adequate for lynx viability and recovery, as previously assumed by the Forest Service.

Since this is now the best available science and the Forest Service has reinitiate consultation with the FWS for the Lynx Amendment we ask that you include this best available science and publicly disclose and address the findings of this study, and to allow for further public comment on this important issue of lynx recovery.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely yours,

Michael Garrity  
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and for

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