

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 6/5/2019 1:43:03 PM

First name: Linda

Last name: Healow

Organization: Great Old Broads For Wilderness

Title: Leader, Bozeman Broadband

Comments: Dear Custer Gallatin Forest Planning Team and Supervisor Erickson,

I am writing in support of Alternative D with an additional 230,000 acres of wilderness in the Gallatin Range.

No other CGFS proposed Alternative or collaborative plan provides true habitat protection. I think demoting a Wilderness Study Area into something less protected is a patently horrible idea. I find it alarming. With the many attempts to remove protection on so many WSAs across the west, with climate change at our door, I cannot find any logical rationale for choosing to remove protection for habitat in favor of tasking chronically underfunded, understaffed monitoring agencies with enforcing management of areas at high risk of exploitation.

Regarding the Hyalite Porcupine Buffalo Horn in particular, the work, negotiations and land trades that went into being able to obtain this area and make it a WSA was substantial. It was described by Olaus Murie, noted elk biologist and national director of the Wilderness Society in a letter after spending time there in 1958. "I have traveled in many wilderness areas and while I feel that public wilderness is a perfectly legitimate use of national forest lands and needs no apology, this Gallatin area impressed me strongly as being preeminently suitable for such designation without encroachment on other interests." ¹

I have attached a summary of the 155-page Wilderness, Wildlife and Ecological Values of the Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area. The 2015 report is a review of existing data regarding current available information on the ecology of the WSA, providing a solid scientific foundation as to its suitability for preservation as wilderness as mandated by the Montana Wilderness Study Act.

The information found in this work completed by Lance Craighead of the Craighead Institute provides ample scientific basis for permanent protection of the Hyalite Porcupine Buffalo Horn (HPBH) WSA, and ideally the whole Gallatin Range. Craighead's closes his summary with the following: "Based on the data in this report, the HPBH WSA can be considered an intact 'ecosystem' or critical component of a larger ecosystem, the GYE, and as such should be protected from further human alteration and disturbance. This protection should be as restrictive of human uses as possible and should be as permanent as possible."

I want my grandchildren to be able to come to Yellowstone and see the same flora and fauna that have been present for millenia. High quality habitat found in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is the underpinning for Yellowstone's amazing collection of species, plant and animal. The wildlife in the area need room to live, to travel through the ecosystem. With climate change, they will need even more space. That is something we are still able to provide, if you decide to do so. The chance to make that sustaining decision will not come again.

Thank you for your consideration of this input.

¹ <https://mountainjournal.org/gallatin-wilderness-debate-goes-national-with-prominent-people-weighing-in>