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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Our letter is attached.

We are Jeff and Cristi Hunnes who live and work in Billings Montana. We were born and raised in Montana and raised our children here because we appreciate this state and love the natural landscapes of Montana [ndash] including the Beartooth, Absarokee, Crazy and Pryor Mountains and the prairies of Eastern Montana.

Thanks for your hard work and effort in on the Custer Gallatin National Forest planning. These are our comments on the Forest Plan revisions.

Given the likely long term effect of the Custer Gallatin Forest Plan, we recommend that the USFS err on the side of conservation and preservation in its planning decisions to the greatest extent possible. Increased population and increased pressure and use in these unique and vulnerable places is inevitable. The management decisions made now will have long term effects on the preservation of the natural character of these areas.

As to the Pryor Mountain geographical area, we appreciate your recognition of the special geographic attributes of the Pryors. There is no place like this in Montana or we believe in the world and this area needs serious land use protection. While we wholeheartedly support identifying the four separate geographic backcountry areas and the limited protections set forth in Alternative D, we believe these should be designated as proposed wilderness. This is the highest and most protective designation and the wealth of cultural, archeological, historical and botanical treasures in these areas cries out for such protection. We strongly encourage you to recommend the Lost Water Canyon, Punch Bowl, Big Pryor and Bear Canyon as wilderness.

The Pryor Mountains are adjacent to other federally managed lands [ndash] under management of the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service. Both of these agencies have proposed a significantly larger proportion of the land under their management as wilderness. We encourage the Forest Service to follow the lead of its sister agencies and coordination roadless protection in the Pryors.

As to the Crazy Mountains, this area is special to our family for backpacking, fishing and climbing. It has extensive public use from every surrounding city in Montana. We enjoy the fact that there do not seem to be grizzly bears in this range but it is highly primitive and unspoiled. We have heard talks and references to the importance of these mountains to the Crow people. Please protect the Crazy[rsquo]s wild, primitive characteristics and cultural significance by recommending it as wilderness. We encourage the Forest Service to explore means to eliminate the checkboard ownership in this area through land purchase or exchange. This is For areas only open to foot and horse, please change the Recreational Opportunity Spectrum from [ldquo]semi-primitive non-motorized[rdquo] to [ldquo]primitive.[rdquo]

Our family spends considerable time in the Beartooths around Red Lodge and Luther. Please retain the areas currently recommended for wilderness [ndash] particularly Line Creek Plateau and Burnt Mountain. We would also recommend that Red Lodge Creek, Woodbine and East Rosebud to Stillwater be recommended for wilderness designation.

Thank you for continuing to recognize the Cook Mountain Backcountry Area, King Mountain Backcountry Area and the Tongue River Breaks Backcountry Area. We believe the management of these areas should be as recommended wilderness.