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First name: Nancy

Last name: Ostlie

Organization: Bozeman Broadband, Great Old Broads for Wilderness

Title: Leader

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this report. From my notes after reading the report, I have the following comments:

I appreciate the point about climate change necessitating potential access restrictions to provide necessary refugia for wildlife and plant species. I think that models of anticipated effects should be consulted to plan for new potential species of conservation concern.

I think that changing volumes of population in the area will affect air quality, with increased pollution from agriculture, fossil fuel use and general air pollution, so planners should be conservative about accommodating more development in and around the National Forest.

I appreciate the mention of beavers as an "engineer species" and believe they could contribute in the future to improved ecosystem health, if supported and encouraged. Trapping of beaver should be restricted in the forest system to allow watersheds to recuperate from past uses that have degraded ecosystem health. Allowing beavers to engineer the landscape could provide benefits to tree and vegetation levels that would have numerous positive effects. In view of insect outbreaks, climate warming and other phenomenon we are beginning to see, more study and focus on beaver reintroduction is advisable.

Carbon storage is a critical function of our forests, and while these forests may sequester more carbon than others, we need to limit deforestation to provide balance to our many other public lands that are sources of CO₂ rather than sinks.

The 1976 FLPMA mandate for "multiple use" does seem in contradiction to intentions to maintain habitat suitable for wildlife. Under pressures from growth in nearby communities and tourism, habitat fragmentation may become more significant in the future. I would like to see considerable weight given in the planning process to establishing more effective corridors for wildlife connectivity. Our current populations of sheep, lynx, grizzlies, moose and wolverine are likely to change drastically as climate effects change habitat.

It is good that grazing has decreased from earlier levels. There is plenty of evidence that riparian areas are endangered by grazing cattle. Water is likely to become a more critical resource going forward as climate changes, and ranchers who cannot make it without public lands grazing may need to change their practices or their livelihood in the long run, in terms of sustainability. I love to eat beef but it is not at all sustainable and I am changing my diet accordingly!

In particular I would like to see changes in grazing allotments in the southern Paradise Valley, in concert with more progressive steps toward restoring a wild bison population. The initial step of allowing bison out of the park should be seen as just a precursor for expanding bison habitat onto our public lands.

On page 81 of the report, a statement is made about how timber harvesting can be used as a tool to restore ecosystem health. I would challenge that statement, wondering how cutting down forests can improve ecosystems that are built around forested areas. The mention of maintaining a legacy for future generations seems contrary to the idea that one can cut down the forests and still have them.

Having participated in the Gallatin Community Collaborative, I think it could be pointed out that the reason for no recommendations had to do with a lack of consensus, as well as pointing out that local citizens are not in a position to say what should be done with lands that belong to all U.S. citizens.

