

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/6/2017 8:56:34 AM

First name: Amanda

Last name: Garant

Organization:

Title:

Comments: It is impossible to read the forest plan revision without considering the larger national context we are now in. I was thrilled to see how much the plan emphasized and prioritized climate, wildlife, recreation, and soil. However, I understand that to achieve many of the plan's goals, our national forest will have to (a) remain in the hands of the federal government and avoid being sold to private interests; (b) hire many more people to do the work in the field; and (c) maintain our standards in the Custer Gallatin even if national standards at the EPA change.

To avoid losing our federal lands to state and eventually private control, let's push for the wilderness designation and protection of lands (especially out east like the Tongue River Breaks and any of the roadless areas that we have out west). Also, perhaps designating the White Bark Pine as an endangered or threatened species would increase the amount of area that we are protecting in our forest.

As for hiring boots on the ground, the forest service will need more trail workers to prevent soil erosion, surveyors to monitor wildlife and changing soil conditions, and law enforcement to ensure that grazing, logging, and mining are done in accordance to the law. Communities will greatly benefit from more job opportunities, and that may mean taking money from the fire budget to pay for the employment of more workers.

Some folks in Washington DC may not believe in the existence of climate change and may not see the need for the EPA to regulate our water quality, our air quality, or our industrial waste. However, we here see the impacts and we must hold to the priorities of our forest service plan even if the goals and priorities change in DC. The more we can monitor and document the effects and changes in our area, the more support and data we will have to prove that the Custer Gallatin is worth sharing with everyone and everything and is worth protecting for the present and for the future.