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Comments: Updating the Custer-Gallatin National Forest Plan

To Whom It May Concern:

As you commence the work to update the Plan for this National Forest, please consider all the changes that have occurred over the years and ensure a place for migratory wild bison in this National Forest based on the best available science.

This includes creating standards to manage the long-term habitat so that the Forest will support viable, genetically-diverse, wild bison populations since bison are a keystone species. For example, in Hebgen Basin bison seek fire burned lodgepole pine forest and help restore fire-dependent habitats; they don't linger near water sources and thus positively contribute to watershed recovery.

It is well documented that grassland recovery, flora and fauna diversity, and watershed restoration follow in the wake of bison returning to their native, historical range. Research at this National Forest along these lines would expand our knowledge of best wildlife management practices as well as fulfill the the National Forest Management Act requirement for Custer-Gallatin National Forest: 16 U.S.C. 1604(g)(3)(B), to "provide for diversity of plant and animal communities based on the suitability and capability of the specific land area in order to meet overall multiple-use objectives."

Last but not least, you are nicely situated to take advantage of both local and traditional native american knowledge of the role bison play in a National Forest as well as national scientific knowledge when creating a revised Custer-Gallatin National Forest Plan that includes a thriving wild, migratory bison population.

Best wishes,

Don Robinson Jr.