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Comments: Comments on Custer-Gallatin National Forest revised forest plan

Mary Erickson, Forest Supervisor

Custer Gallatin National Forest

P.O. Box 130

10 East Babcock Ave.

Bozeman, MT 59771

Dear Forest Supervisor Erickson,

I urge you to please include provisions for migratory buffalo in the Custer-Gallatin National Forest revised forest plan.

Specifically, please include the following:

1. Adopt standards to manage habitat in the Custer-Gallatin National Forest to support viable populations and genetic diversity of migratory buffalo.
2. Update the long-term habitat plan to include a keystone wildlife species: America's last wild buffalo.
3. Use the best available science to ensure a place for migratory buffalo in Custer-Gallatin National Forest
4. Assess local, traditional, and scientific knowledge of how migratory buffalo have used Custer-Gallatin National Forest. Biologists view buffalo as a keystone grassland species whose presence on the land enhances animal and plant diversity. In Hebgen Basin, buffalo seek out fire burned lodgepole pine forest and help restore fire-dependent habitats. Buffalo don't linger near water sources, making a positive contribution to watershed recovery.
5. Assess using migratory buffalo as an indicator species for grassland recovery, animal and plant diversity, and watershed restoration.

Please note that the National Forest Management Act requires the Custer-Gallatin National Forest 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." 16 U.S.C. 1604(g)(3)(B). As a driver of biological diversity, the health of grasslands and watersheds, the buffalo are well suited to indicate whether key conditions on the forest are declining or improving based on the natural distribution and migrations of this native keystone species.

Please allow migratory buffalo have a place and a secure future in Custer-Gallatin National Forest.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Paul Moss  
1849 Whitaker St.  
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