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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Re:Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem - revising the Forest Plan future of our wilderness

Protect our wilderness areas and the natural predators who help to control the spread of disease within Elk and Deer herds in and around Montana and Wyoming who help to contribute economic prosperity in surrounding communities near Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons National parks. The first reason for protecting the wilderness and areas where natural predators exist is that Chronic Waste Disease is spreading quickly throughout the Grand Tetons and beyond. According to a recent article published in the Jackson Hole News & Guide as well as many other publications: "In Montana, for the first time ever, concern about the disease was elevated to high alert. Early in November 2017, a test confirmed Montana's first-ever case of CWD in a wild cervid. The diagnosis was based on tissue samples taken from a dead mule deer buck harvested near Bridger just north of the Montana-Wyoming state line." Wyoming feed the Elk (feed lots) during the winter placing the Elk population in confined areas which lead to the spread of Chronic Waste Disease. Nothing is being done to stop the spread of the disease except for passing the buck. By removing protected areas for wolves in surrounding areas of the Yellowstone National park will be detrimental to health herds and will lead to spread of Chronic Disease Wasting by Elk and Deer to healthier herds in the areas. By removing wilderness areas where natural predators such as Wolves and bear exist will contribute to the spread of the disease. Secondly, whether locals appreciate this or not -- Wolf watching in the Yellowstone National Park generates a lot of tourism dollars within communities that border the park. Gardiner Montana, Cooke County, West Yellowstone are key areas where dedicated wildlife watchers spend a lot of tourist dollars year after year. Tourists, research scientists as well spend live nearby and spend their money on restaurants, hotels, outfitters, hiking guides, photography guides, and in nearby campgrounds not only during the summer but during the winter as well. The wildlife, especially wolves and bears are 2 of the greatest tourist attractions that Yellowstone National Park has to offer! Why not consider protecting the wilderness areas that they inhabit,. There are many more good reasons to continue to protect our wilderness areas than not. Thank you, I love and appreciate the wilderness areas in Montana and Wyoming and especially our national parks and the wildlife that live in these parks. This is why for the past 15 years my family has visited Yellowstone at least twice a year.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Yolanda Ochoa & Stephen J. Husey