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Title: Communications Team Memeber

Comments:

Mary Erickson, Supervisor

Custer-Gallatin National Forest

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February 8, 2018

Dear Ms. Erickson:

The Custer-Gallatin National Forest is widely known for its wilderness and wildlife qualities, and I believe these recommendations represent the highest and best uses of this forest. Please secure these Recommended Wilderness areas in the draft Forest Plan for the Custer-Gallatin Forest Plan Revision.

#### GALLATIN RANGE

Please recommend 229,000 acres as described at [Gallatinwilderness.org](http://Gallatinwilderness.org). Since 1977 approximately 155,000 acres have been protected as the Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area. There are about 229,000 total acres of potential wilderness, but the CGNF has only recommended about 85,000 acres in two units. The Porcupine and Buffalo Horn drainages are the most important wildlife habitat in the entire Gallatin Range-if any area should be wilderness it is these drainages. Another important Gallatin Range drainage left out of wilderness recommendations is South Cottonwood.

#### MADISON RANGE

Cowboy's Heaven, a 17,000 acre roadless portion of the Madison Range connecting the Beartrap Canyon Wilderness and Spanish Peaks units of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness. It should be added for Wilderness preservation.

#### PRYOR MOUNTAINS:

Wilderness in the Pryors could be expanded with the closure of a few tracks and dirt roads. Please request the following for Recommended Wilderness in the Pryors:

- 13,000 acres in the Lost Water Crooked Creek area
- Punch Bowl/Dryhead Creek Canyons RWA (~8,500 acres)
- Big Pryor Recommended Wilderness Area (12,000 acres)
- Bear Canyon RWA (10,000 acres).

[For more information see [www.priormountains.org](http://www.priormountains.org).]

#### CRAZY MOUNTAINS

I am shocked that the Custer-Gallatin Proposed Action recommended no wilderness in the Crazy Mountains despite identifying 90,690 acres as roadless. Wilderness designation is especially vital in the Crazies due to the large segments of private land that prevent access. I ask that at least 90,690 acres be recommended for wilderness with the caveat that private in holdings should be removed through land trades or purchase.

#### ABSAROKA BEARTOOTH WILDERNESS ADDITIONS:

- Line Creek Plateau, 30,000 acres, including the 16,127 Line Creek Research Natural Area.
- The West Fork and Lake Fork of Rock Creek and the Beartooth Front, 34,640 acres. The Proposed Action recommended only 801 acres.

- The East Rosebud to Stillwater Roadless area along the Beartooth Front, 25,000 acres.
- Deer Creek drainage, 129,000 acres, including lands surrounding the East Boulder, Lower Deer Creek, Upper Deer Creek and Bridger Creek.
- Mount Rae, 5,000 acres between the Boulder and West Boulder Rivers.
- Tie Creek/Mission Creek/Livingston Peak/ Shell Mountain, 8,000 acres
- In Paradise Valley, Deep Creek to Strawberry Creek, 13,000 acres; Chico Peak, Emigrant Peak and Dome Mountain, 56,000 acres.

#### BRIDGER RANGE

Recommended Wilderness in the Bridger Range should be 45,000 acres in two pieces. The Bridger Range is a critical corridor for wildlife migrating between Greater Yellowstone and the Glacier/Bob Marshall ecosystem.

-Blacktail Peak in the northern Bridger Range has about a third of this roadless component and should be recommended for wilderness.

#### LIONHEAD (SOUTHERN MADISON RANGE)

The 32,000 acre Lionhead Roadless area, 32,000 acres. Although CGNF has recommended nearly 18,000 acres as wilderness, the recommended wilderness should be enlarged to include most of the 32,000 acre roadless area.

Thank you for your careful consideration of inclusion of these areas in wilderness designation. In this time of climate change and population increases, preserving wilderness areas is becoming more vital as carbon sinks and sanctuary for wildlife and humans.