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Comments: Comment draft plan - CGNF

As an integral part of Greater Yellowstone, the Custer Gallatin's undeveloped wild lands deserve a strong forest plan that strikes a balance between increasing recreation pressures and protecting the remote backcountry, wildlife and clean water that define the region. Your proposed draft plan is a good start and could be strengthened in several key ways.

First, I support the Gallatin Forest Partnership's agreement for the Gallatin and Madison Ranges. For several years, this group has worked together to develop an agreement that maintains existing recreational uses of these cherished lands, ensures wildlife have room to roam, safeguards the area's clean water and protects the wild undeveloped landscape that defines the region. I hope you will incorporate this agreement into your revised forest plan.

Please strengthen the designations you propose for the Gallatin and Madison Ranges by adding Big Creek, Hyalite Peak, and the Cowboy Heaven area to your wilderness recommendations. All of the Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area in the Gallatin Range should be protected by some type of conservation designation in the new forest plan to limit further expansion of human development in this important area.

Finally, the draft plan proposes managing recommended wilderness areas by prohibiting motorize and mechanized uses, which are not consistent with the Wilderness Act. I support this management direction, which is critical for maintaining wilderness character and the potential for designation in the future.

Thank you.