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Comments:

   The draft plan being considered has little direction for administering the Absaroka-Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses. Research shows that impacts increase significantly when group-sizes exceed eight head of stock and 12 people. Current wilderness management plans allow destructively large groups of up to 25 head of stock (horses and mules) and 15 people in most areas. To protect all Wildernesses on the forest from harm, group size limits should be reduced in accordance with the research standards. Additionally,the forest plan should end ecologically destructive fish stocking, which significantly alters the areas' natural conditions, in naturally-occurring wilderness lakes that traditionally have never had fish.

    Feces contamination ny humans and their pack animals seeking artificially stocked fish lakes and streams on the Beartooth Plateau in the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness should also be considered. Eliminating fish stocking might reduce the traffic of humans and pack animals,but additional measures must be included as a backstop.

   Vacant grazing allotments in the Wildernesses should be closed so these areas can return to a wild condition, which would enhance recovery efforts of threatened species in those areas.

   The currently trailless areas of the Absaroka Beartooth and Lee Metcalf Wildernesses should be kept so, to conserve remote areas for wildlife and premier areas for solitude. The plan should prohibit all motorized and mechanized uses, and any other activities not consistent with wilderness protection, in the Recommended Wilderness areas so as to preserve their wilderness qualities until Congress acts on the wilderness recommendations.

   While I support the wilderness recommendations in Alternative D of the Revised Draft Forest Plan,they would be improved by adding the entire 230,000 wild, roadless acres of the Gallatin Range as Recommend Wilderness in the final forest plan.