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Organization:

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Comments: Hello, my name is Ben Goertzen. I'm 23, was born and raised in Bozeman and now continue working in the area as a wildlife filmmaker and non-profit director. I own a snowmobile, love to mountain bike and have the utmost respect for wildlife and wild places, which places me in the "grey" area when talking about wilderness. However, I do have some strong comments that are backed by years of experience in these lands and considerations for the future life I plan to live in this state.

First and foremost, I support the Gallatin Forest Partnership Agreement (GFPS). This is a coalition of groups working together to find solutions in the "grey" area! Cooperative groups like this don't happen often and when they come together to create a comprehensive plan, it should be given extra attention.

On top of the GFPA, I would like to see wilderness protection for the crazy mountains and to manage the area closely with the Crow tribe seen in Alternative D. This area can act as a massive connective corridor for wildlife, especially grizzly bears, as we try and connect the isolated population segments in the GYE with those in the north. However, I align with the Alternative C for the Bridger range.

I also recommend retaining the current protections for the Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness with added wilderness protection for Dome Mountain, Emigrant Peak, Chico Peak, Woodbine, East Rosebud to Stillwater, and Red Lodge Creek (As mentioned in Alternative D). Once again, this area is the gateway out of Yellowstone for wildlife and will have long standing benefits on the continued success of Montana's wildlife populations.

The population of Bozeman and the surrounding areas is growing rapidly. If we do not consciously make an effort to protect corridors for wildlife the encroachment will slowly swallow them up. I love to recreate almost more than anything, but I also understand the ecological importance of keeping healthy wildlife populations and habitat. I'm willing to "sacrifice" my mechanized access for the benefit of our wildlife--beings that have constantly gotten the short straw. We are in the midst of the greatest loss of biodiversity in recent history and if we can't set precedents that benefit our wildlife now, then how can we ever?

Thank you for all your work,
Ben