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Comments: I am a fifty year resident of the Greater Yellowstone with a graduate degree in Conservation Biology. I have spent many decades hiking, skiing and climbing in the Custer Gallatin National Forest.

Over the years I have watched the ecosystem absorb more and more backcountry users as the entire region experiences unprecedented growth. Especially recently.

As a scientist and now a grandmother, I believe the next generation deserves to know and value Wilderness and the ecological integrity that designation bestows.

I support the wilderness recommendations in alternative D of the Revised Draft Forest Plan.

The value the public places on Wilderness designation has eroded so much since the passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964 that alternative D - the one asking for the most protection for the most acres - is now considered "extreme".

As public lands and the wild animals who inhabit them are increasingly under attack by oil, gas, mining and recreational development (not to mention climate change) it is more important than ever to be prudent... to set aside as many wilderness acres as possible.. in this case over 700,000 acres.

Montana only has 3.4% (3.4 million acres) of its 94 million acre landscape protected as designated wilderness under the 1964 Wilderness Act. We can do better than this.

In addition...

* In "Recommended Wilderness" the forest service should establish clear and enforceable policies that prohibit non-conforming uses.

* In particular...

The plan should prohibit all motorized and mechanized uses, and any other activities not consistent with wilderness protection in these Recommended Wilderness Areas.

For example: the pressure from cyclists on the Hyalite-Buffalo Horn Porcupine Wilderness Study Area is immense. It has been proven over and over in scientific studies * that backcountry cyclists who travel quietly and at high speed on the descent have a negative impact on wildlife - grizzlies in particular.

* Noted Wildlife Biologist Lance Craighead in a 2015 report on the HBHP Study area pointed out that "Disturbance due to human activities reduce the amount of habitat available for use by wildlife, increases stress, and depletes energy reserves, thus reducing the carrying capacity of the habitat: the best habitat for wildlife is found in areas with the least human disturbance."

* Also.: the Forest Service must begin thinking 'connectivity' between federally protected wildlands. Connecting large protected areas to each other is the best way to preserve natural ecological processes such as wildfire, predation and migration - all essential to Wilderness classification. This draft plan is our golden opportunity to ensure connectivity is still an option in the future.

In the visitors center in Grand Teton National Park there is a large engraved stone wall with the words of Margaret Murie who with her biologist husband Olaus Murie, helped draft the Wilderness Act.

WILDERNESS ITSELF IS THE BASIS OF ALL OUR CIVILIZATION
I WONDER IF WE HAVE ENOUGH REVERENCE
FOR LIFE TO CONCEDE TO WILDERNESS
THE RIGHT TO LIVE ON?

I do too.

Thank you